

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 #33

January 2016

The Forum: *Sacrificial Living*

We had three questions this month, however we did something a little different, instead of having printed answers we had Bro. Troy McGahan discuss his response to our questions on our weekly podcast earlier this month. You may listen to the podcast at these links

[Episode 36 What Is Sacrifice And Application - A](#)

[Episode 36 What Is Sacrifice And Application - B](#)

Sacrifice

That is our thought as we put this issue together and desire to share with you. Just a short thought from me on this subject before you dive into these pages.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:1&2

Change requires sacrifice. Whither that is the change in our very nature causes us to give up former lusts & habits, or some kind of change in our circumstances demanding a sacrifice in our since of security of the known & familiar. That's probably why so many of us hate any significant changes. Yet sacrifice and change are an important part of our lives, especially as God's children.

"O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

~ Psalm 51:15-17

INDEX

Sermon: "Immersed in Christ" by Bro. Todd Bryant, page 2
"I Am Looking For Sinners" by Bro. Curtis Pugh, page 3
"Well Done, Satan, Well Done" by Bro. Nathaniel Hille, page 5
Law & Order: Stories Of A Broken System, page 8
A Militia Stand Off, pages 8
Scripture for both sides: *Conservation*, page 11
March For Life, Planned Parenthood, & Activist Legal Trouble, page 11
"Father, Glorify Thy Name" by Bro. M.J. Seymour, Sr. page 12
State of The Culture War, page 13
Economy: Gas Prices & Other Crazy Numbers, page 14
Devotion: "Of Their Abundance" by Bro. Jeff Short, page 15
U.S. Presidential elections & Debates, page 16
"It Cannot Be Both Ways" by Bro. Curtis Pugh, page 17
Updates From Ireland: "Greetings"
by Sis. Sarah Dorhety, page 17
World Politics, page 18
Devotion: "In Those Sacrifices There Is A Remembrance"
by Bro. Jeff Short, page 19
"Substitution" by Bro. Todd Bryant, page 20
"The Effect Of Christ's Sacrifice" by Bro. Curtis Pugh, page 21
Devotion: *Leviticus 1:8-9* by Bro. Jeff Short, page 22
Labor In Love - Leap Of Faith, page 23
"A Call To Fasting And Prayer"
by Bro. Wm. Doyal Thomas, page 24

Giving and Living

by Bro. Jeff Short

Giving necessarily involves some sacrifice or it is not really giving in a biblical sense. David refused to offer to God that that cost him nothing. In David's case, he would merely have been transferring and not giving. Giving means willingly taking something that rightly belongs to us and giving it to another. It comes at some cost to the giver. It was out of "deep poverty" that the Macedonian churches gave to support Paul in the mission work the Lord called him to (2 Corinthians 8:2).

Ironically, this type of giving tends to strengthen rather than weaken the giver. It may seem to us that the opposite would be true, but Solomon avows, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth" (Proverbs 11:24). This is Scripture truth and practical reality. The greedy hand tries to cling tighter and tighter to what he has and cannot seem to find any room for giving to someone else, but in the end he has less.

The only real living is giving and that by sacrifice. But, let us apply the biblical test to the sacrifice. If the sacrifice harms us, we may be trying to play the martyr rather than giving in line with the life of Christ. Christ sacrificed and gave more than all, but rather than weakening Him, He was strengthened, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father" (Acts 2:33).

Sermon: "Immersed in
Christ"
by Bro. Todd Bryant



"There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" – I Peter 3:21

Perhaps no verse in the Bible has been more misused than the one before us. No doubt, billions have been deceived into believing that they were saved by passing through the waters of baptism. One group in particular has made a habit of quoting "baptism doth also now save us" (KJV) while leaving the rest of the passage alone. But, these words and even this whole verse are part of a greater context. To rightly understand **I Peter 3:21**, we must look at this entire passage.

We are given the main theme of this passage in verse 18. "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit". The remainder of this passage rests on this theme. If we ever stray from this subject, we are missing the main point of this passage. By the work of Jesus alone, we are brought into fellowship with God. Our faith must never be founded on any work, including baptism. Our confidence must always rest in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He suffered for our sins. He paid the debt that we could not pay. He alone is the Way to the Father (**John 14:6**). He was "put to death in the flesh" to give His people eternal life. Yet, He rose from the dead three days later as proof that His sacrifice for our sins was accepted by God. And surely, we are accepted by God through Him (**Ephesians 1:6**). This is the great theme of **I Peter 3:18-22**.

During the interval between His death and resurrection, Jesus went to the lower parts of the earth (**Ephesians 4:9**) to empty Abraham's bosom. He informed His elect children that He had finished the work of redemption. He had done what no other was worthy to do – He had paid the sin debt of every one of God's elect children. He "preached" to these, His children. Let us not forget, there was another place in the lower parts of the earth. This was a place of torment. These two abodes were separated by a great gulf that no one could cross (**Luke 16:26**). However, they could converse back and forth as we see in the case of Lazarus and the rich man (**Luke 16:19-31**). Jesus not only preached to those in Abraham's bosom, but also to those in torment. This was not done to give them any so-called "second chance". This was merely done to proclaim that God's Word was true, and that He had bruised the head of the serpent (**Genesis 3:15**).

These spirits in torment "...were disobedient, when once the

Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared..." (**I Peter 3:20**). Though Noah had preached faithfully for 120 years that God's judgment was coming, these had refused to believe. They continued to carry on with normal life without taking any precautions (**Matthew 24:38**). As a result, when the flood came, it destroyed them all. Since that time, they have been dwelling in the same torment that the rich man found himself in after this life. No doubt, billions alive today will find themselves in just such a place.

Though these "disobedient" souls died in the flood, God miraculously saved Noah and his family. **I Peter 3:20** informs us "...a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water." This is an extremely important phrase in this passage. This statement sets up what we are to learn in our text verse. Let it be stated plainly, Noah and his family were not saved by water. A mere casual reading of Genesis will clearly point out that they were saved "through" the water. The water is what Noah and his family was saved from. The flood waters were God's judgment on that evil age. However, God had given Noah clear instructions on how to escape that judgment. Noah was to build an ark by following a specific design. As we all know, this ark kept Noah and his family safe through the flood waters.

Perhaps we should remind our readers of the subject of this passage at this time. The theme of this passage is the meritorious work of Jesus Christ in the place of His sheep. Why then did God inspire Peter to pen anything about the flood? The answer is simple. The ark is a type of the work of Jesus Christ. As the ark bore the judgment of God while keeping those inside safe, so Christ bore the judgment of God in His body and kept those safe who died in Him. He is our Ark! Praise the Lord, we are safe from the judgment of God in Christ. He died as our Ark, taking all that we deserved while we escape the wrath of God. This is what happened with Noah physically during the flood and this is what happens spiritually for the believer in Christ.

Knowing this, we will now attempt to show the meaning of our text verse. **I Peter 3:21** reads, "There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ". One can easily see the importance of keeping this verse in context. If this passage is showing that the work of Christ is sufficient to save all of God's elect, then verse 21 is clearly not teaching that baptism adds to that work. Knowing the true meaning of this entire passage, we can easily see that many have yanked this verse out of the clear context and misused it.

Baptismal regenerationists have used this verse to teach the exact opposite of what this passage is saying. That said, many good Bible believing Baptists have had difficulties with this passage themselves. Hopefully, we can lay some of those problems to rest in this small treatise.

There are two confusing terms in this passage that need to be explained. The first is, "antitype". The Greek Word translated thusly is Antitupos. Strong's defines this word as, "A thing formed after some pattern" or "a thing resembling another, its

counterpart". This word does not mean "another similar type" as is often employed. "Antitype" refers to the counterpart of the previous type. That is, the words that are about to follow are the fulfillment of the type represented in Noah and his family being saved by the Ark. This word is used one other time in the Greek New Testament. In **Hebrews 9:24** we read, "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us". The word translated "copies" here is the same Greek word as the one we are now considering. In this verse, there are obviously not two types. The temple on earth was a type of the real temple in Heaven. The temple in Heaven was the antitype of the temple on earth. Considering the definition of the Greek word as well as the normal New Testament usage, it seems that "antitype" is, in fact, a good representation of the Greek word Antitupos.

The second confusing term isn't quite as obvious. Oddly enough, the second confusing term is the word, "baptism". We often assume that every use of the Greek word baptizo (or similar) is a reference to New Testament water baptism. But, this is not true. The Old Testament saints are said to be "baptized into Moses" (**I Corinthians 10:2**). Surely this is not a reference to New Testament baptism. More importantly, Jesus spoke of a baptism that He would be baptized with in **Matthew 20:22-23**. Jesus said, "Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?". This is definitely not speaking of New Testament water baptism. Jesus was speaking about the judgment of God which He was about to be immersed into. Moreover, He was about to bear this judgment for us as He acted as our Ark. This baptism...this immersion of Christ into the judgment of God...saves us. It is this baptism that **I Peter 3:21** speaks of.

With these two confusing terms having been clarified, we can easily see that **I Peter 3:21** is not speaking about water baptism at all. The baptism (immersion) that is spoken of is Christ's immersion as our Ark into the judgment of God. This is, no doubt, the antitype of the previous verse as it relates to Noah's physical salvation from the flood waters by the ark. Noah's physical salvation pictured our spiritual salvation. The ark of gopher wood surely pictured the real Ark of God that bore the necessary penalty of our sin. He was immersed into the judgment of God for us.

Some may ask what the meaning of the parenthetical part of the verse is – (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God)". This part of the passage is further proof that water baptism is not part of this verse. Peter is acknowledging that this "baptism" is nothing external. There is nothing ceremonial in the passage. Water baptism is not under consideration here. A good conscience before God is to be sought in one thing – the meritorious work of the risen Savior. The purchase of God's elect is proven to be sufficient "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Surely a child of God should follow his Lord in New Testament baptism. Baptism is important. Baptism even pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. But, water baptism is simply not the "immersion" being spoken of in **I Peter 3:21**. This passage from

start to finish is speaking of the work of Jesus Christ as our all-sufficient Savior.

I pray that the Lord uses this short treatise on this ever important passage. If you have ever believed that baptism had a part in saving your soul, I pray you now have been shown differently. If you've had a difficult time with this passage, my hope is that you may now be better able to explain it. More than anything, I pray we have all been reminded that the only way into fellowship with the Father is by the work of the Son as He, acting as our Ark, bore the price of our sin as He was immersed into the judgment of God on our behalf.



If you are reading this and you feel that you are a good person, this is not for you. You may as well cease reading this paper and put it down. At this point in your life, at least, you have no part in these things. "How dare I write such a thing about a good person such as you are," you ask? It is because Jesus said the same thing that I dare to write as I do. He said, "**They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance**" (Mark 2:17). Of course there are none who are truly righteous, but the point is this: if you feel that you are righteous, if you feel that you are a good person, you have no interest in the work of Christ. He came to call sinners to repentance, not good people. This is not for you.

If you are reading this and you feel that your religious observances and good deeds are pleasing to God and therefore you have a place reserved in Heaven, this present article is not for you either. I write that on the authority of what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8,9. He wrote, "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**" You may go on feeling that your religion, your observance of religious holidays, your church activities, your works of kindness, your being a good neighbor, your giving of money to good causes - you may go on feeling that these things will secure God's favor for you if you wish to do so. But to do so is to think contrary to the revealed Word of God. This writer is well aware that the general opinion of the world is that Heaven is gained by working your way there, especially by being religious and a "Christian" in some sense of the word. But the majority of mankind is on the broad religious road that leads to destruction as Jesus said in Matthew 7:13, 14: "**Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few**

there be that find it." Often we think of the "broad way" as being the way of drunkenness and debauchery, but it is in contrast to the way of salvation by grace and most certainly includes the "broad" or popular way of religion - that way of salvation-by-works that is so popular with humanity the world over.

It is an incontrovertible fact that every religion in the world except Biblical Christianity teaches that a person is saved because of his good works - especially by his religious observances. One group says you must abstain from certain foods, observe prayers five times a day and make pilgrimages to certain holy sites. Another says you must bathe in a certain sacred river. Even some "Christian" groups teach the same basic thing. One group says you must be baptized, faithfully attend church services, take the Lord's Supper every Sunday, and continue in good works. Others say live by your conscience, observe the "golden rule," and be sincere and that these works will get you into Heaven at last. All these religions teach essentially the same thing whether pagan or "Christian:" they all teach that good works will earn you favor with God. But the Bible, God's Word, still says that salvation is **"not of works,"** and that is the truth. Neither does the Bible say that salvation is partly of good works and partly of grace for this is an impossibility. Works and grace cannot be mixed as Paul so strongly stated regarding election in 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 is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."** This is a principle that you must understand. Grace is unmerited favor. If you work for something it is not given to you by unmerited favor: rather you earned it. So it is with salvation. It is either by works or by grace. Salvation cannot come by a mixture of the two for the two cannot be mixed without destroying the intrinsic nature of both works and grace.

During the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, most of the religious leaders in Israel were known as Pharisees. Those who specialized in studying and copying the Old Testament were known as scribes. These religious zealots went to excess in their ritualistic observances of the Old Testament law. None were more strict and faithful in their religious exercises. Outwardly they were correct and righteous in their observances. About these people the Lord said, **"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven"** (Matthew 5:20). Outward observance is not enough! Inward purity and genuine love for the Lord is required as well as unselfish love for your neighbors. Would you compare yourself to the Pharisees? Are you as zealous for your religion as they were for theirs? Are you as zealous about keeping all the commandments as they were? If you are trying to get to Heaven by your religious zeal and good works, your righteousness must exceed that of these ancient devoted people. Jesus said so!

So I am still looking for sinners. If you are reading this and feel that you are no worse than the average person, this is not for you. Comparing yourself with others and assuming that because

you are no worse than those around you does not make you prepared for Heaven. Paul wrote about some people who made these kinds of comparisons. He wrote that these people who were **"measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise"** (2 Corinthians 10:12). These people were not thinking clearly. "Others" are not the standard by which we are to measure ourselves! In Romans 3:23 it is written: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."** The revealed glory of God is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14; 14:9). Jesus Christ, by His life and character, showed us what the Father is like. So if you would compare yourself with the right standard, compare yourself with Him! If you do so, you will find yourself coming far short in your life and character!

But I am still looking for sinners! As I preach and visit with people I find it is the same everywhere I go. Everywhere it is the same. Human beings are "good enough" in their own eyes. They are ignorant of the Word of God and thus are often satisfied with themselves: convinced that they are "good enough" to meet God. They think that their good deeds will somehow cause God to overlook their base sins and wicked hearts.

I am looking for sinners: the kind of sinners who feel their sin. I am looking for sinners who ashamedly admit to being sinners. I am looking for sinners who dare not compare themselves with others. I am looking for sinners who know the emptiness of religion without Christ and who are in despair over their sins. I am looking for sinners who are helpless and hopeless to do anything about their sin and know it. I am looking for sinners.

I am looking for sinners who, like the wicked thief, see that whatever happens to them in this life and the next is the "due reward" of their deeds (Luke 23:41). I am looking for sinners who expect God to be just and know in that justice they will receive eternal punishment for their sins in the Lake of Fire. I am looking for sinners who know that whatever good they might do henceforth, they can never erase or cover their past sins. I am looking for sinners who know they are powerless to cease from sinning. I am looking for sinners who see themselves in a hopeless and helpless condition.

Where shall I find such sinners? Such sinners as these are sinners in whom God has begun a good work (Philippians 1:5). Such an understanding of self and an honest view of self is not natural to any person: it is a result of the work of God through the Word of God in the heart of the individual. And say! I have Good News for such sinners as these! I can tell them that Christ suffered the "due reward" for their deeds. I can tell them that Christ bore the payment for their sins! I can tell them that Christ met the just demands of a holy God and his holy law! I can tell them that salvation is not of works that could never un-do their past sins, but is of the free grace of God. I can tell them that while they are indeed helpless to do anything about their condition, they are not hopeless for there is hope in Christ for all to whom God makes known in a feeling way their sin. I can tell them that Christ is the Savior, the Redeemer, the Justifier, the Sanctifier, and the Glorious Shepherd of His people!

I can urge such sinners to trust Christ and His finished work at Calvary! I can tell them that Christ has paid the sin-debt for His people. I can tell them that only Christ brings them to see themselves as helpless and hopeless sinners in order that they might see their need of Him. And I can tell them that Jesus said, "**All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**" (John 6:37). On the basis of the finished work of Christ and His promises, I can urge such sinners to come to Christ, knowing He never turns away even the worst of sinners.

Sinners who have felt the weight of both their sin nature and their acts of sin are like Paul who wrote, "**This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief**" (1 Timothy 1:15). Paul, though a moral and upright man, considered himself to be the chief of sinners! God had begun a good work in him (Philippians 1:6) and Paul was insistent that Christ came into the world to save sinners - even the chief of sinners! What a glorious Gospel we have to herald far and wide - to sinners!

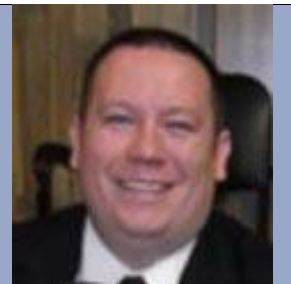


"-God be merciful to me a sinner."

Luke 18:13

"Well Done, Satan, Well Done"

by Bro. Nathaniel Hille



2 Corinthians 2:11—"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices"

Ephesians 6:11—"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Two events, one by the United States Supreme Court and one by the state of South Carolina have caused quite a stir amongst some Baptist people. And many God-fearing people became incensed at these decisions. Satan has "pulled the wool over the eyes" with these two events. Let us examine these things in the light of the Scriptures as opposed to our personal biases. After all, the Scriptures are to be our sole rule of faith and practice.

EVENT #1: The Supreme Court's decision with respect to Sodomite Marriage:

Once again, Satan has tempted God's people to settle for a half-truth. "Christians" are against "gay-marriage". That is good. It is good to be against what God is against. However, Sodomy is only a part of what the Scriptures have forbidden when it comes to marriage. Jesus taught that marriage was between a man and a woman for life (till death do they part).

"The Pharisees also came unto him, testing him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read that he who made them at the beginning, made them male and female; And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

Wherefore, they are no more two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He [Jesus] saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her who is put away doth commit adultery." **Matthew 19:3-9.**

"but from the beginning it was not so." What a statement! We must ask ourselves the question "how was it in the beginning?" Did God simply put one man and one woman together? Is that all the Lord said concerning marriage? NO! EMPHATICALLY NO!

"And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This

is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.

Genesis 2:22-24

Please note that God made man a woman, not another man. In addition, please note, that God “*brought her unto the man.*” The LORD did not did NOT bring the woman to Adam, then take her away, give her to another man; then give the man a different woman. The Lord brought one woman (Eve) to man (Adam). This is how it was in the beginning. We then look at **Genesis 2:23**— where Adam gives this new creation a name: Woman. God had given Adam the duty of naming all of creation (**Genesis 2:19**). Adam named this new creature Woman. We now look at **Genesis 2:24** which is when the LORD institutes marriage and the law of marriage. **Genesis 2:24** is actually spoken by the Lord! Many err in that they attribute this unto Adam, but this is not so. When we compare Scripture-with-Scripture, we find that **Genesis 2:24** is attributed to the Creator by Jesus! NOTE: Matthew 19:4,5— “*And he [Jesus] answered and said unto them [pharisees], Have ye not read that he who made them at the beginning, made them male and female; And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*” Jesus states when answering the Pharisees that it was “*He [God] who made them at the beginning...*” who spoke **Genesis 2:24**. It was God, not Adam who spoke those words and those are the words of the law of marriage and the institution of marriage.

One of the principles of Scripture is this: When God states a principle, He excludes all others. For example: When God instituted the ordinance of baptism all other means were excluded. The fact that baptism is by immersion in water, excludes all other modes of “baptizing”. The fact that baptism is done under the authority of the Lord's church, excludes all others from administering it. The principle that baptism is administered upon a confession of faith, excludes all other manners of baptism, such as “infant baptism”.

When it comes to marriage, this principle also applies. When the Lord instituted marriage he stated: “*And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*” **Genesis 2:24**. Please note that God spoke of a union, not a living together. A union between a man and a woman; not a man and a man, or a woman and a woman. A union that has taken two and made them one.

Furthermore, let us note what is missing from the “law of marriage”. The omission is very telling. What did the Lord omit from **Genesis 2:24**? The Lord omitted any dissolving of the union. He said that the man should leave his mom and dad and “*cleave [cling] to his wife and they two shall be one flesh.*” **Genesis 2:24**. How do you dissolve a union of one? The Lord tell us what dissolves this union: DEATH!

“Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman who hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead she is

loosed from the law of her husband. So, then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.” **Romans 7:1-3**

Do not the words of the Holy Spirit through Paul the apostle unto the church at Corinth agree with what Jesus spoke unto the Pharisees in **Matthew 19** and what Jesus said when He instituted marriage in **Genesis 2:24**? Certainly they do!

Some will say, “Well what about divorce?” Well, what about it? Did not Jesus testify that it was permitted by MOSES BECAUSE OF THE HARDNESS OF THEIR HEARTS? **Matthew 19:8**— “*He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered (permitted) you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.*” I have never known the “hardness of heart”, physical or spiritual to be a good thing; or yield anything that is good. Yet, it was for this reason that Jesus said that MOSES did permit the people to divorce; but remember the words of our Savior: “*but from the beginning it was not so.*” Now if God instituted marriage in the beginning and divorce was not a part of the marriage institution, and God does not change (**Malachi 3:6**— “*I am the LORD, I change not...*”); then where did this institution of divorce come from? Jesus stated, “*Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives*”. Do we not read in **Ecclesiastes 7:29**— “*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions [devices].*”

One thing I do NOT understand is that the entire “belief system” taught in the Bible is based upon forgiveness, reconciliation, forbearance—not only between God and man, but also between man and man. Yet, when it comes to marriage, we have forsaken the basis of our beliefs: forgiveness, forbearance, reconciliation. Why is it that many “Christians” neglect to forgive 'seventy times seven' (**Matthew 18:22**) when it comes to marriage? If “Christianity” is based on love (and it is), then why is our love not suffering long, kind, envying not, seeking not its own, thinking no evil, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things, and never failing (**1Corinthians 13:4-8**)?

The LORD has instituted marriage as one man, one woman for life-till death do they part. The Scriptures declare it. History declares it. It was not all that long ago that in our own nation divorce was not the norm! Divorce was preached against in pulpits and husbands and wives sought to reconcile with one another. Yet today, some seem to know better than God!

Have we ever known society to “get better” or “evolve” into being more right with God today than yesterday? Is the United States of America more Biblical or Spiritual today than it was 200 years ago? Certainly not. Satan has slowly lulled us into darkness. We have become use to the darkness to the point that we are willing to settle for a half-truth. And as you know, a half-truth is nothing more than a lie with some truth in it! The truth is Sodomy is wrong! Not just Sodomy-marriage, but Sodomy is wrong! And we stand on that point. Yet, it is not where the Scriptures end with the subject of marriage. The Bible declares

that marriage is to be between a man and a woman until that union is dissolved in death. Let us not settled for half of the truth when it comes to marriage.

Event #2: The Removal Of The Confederate Flag From The South Carolina Capital Building:

The removal of the Confederate flag from the South Carolina Capital Building has caused an uprising amongst Baptists and for the life of me I cannot figure out why! While the removal of the Confederate flag is just another sign of infringements upon all things personal, it has NO affect on spiritual things! In fact, there is another banner that ought to be displayed by God's people, particularly His Church:

Psalm 60:4—*“Thou has given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah”*

Song of Solomon 2:4—*“He brought me to the banquetting house, and his banner over me was love.”*

Exodus 17:15,16—*“And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi (The LORD our Banner): For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”*

Beloved, these verses indicate that there is another flag, another banner that needs to be flown. The Banner of God's Love has been taken down voluntarily, yea even surrendered. It is not a flag that is visual, but spiritual. There is no so-called “Christian Flag”; at least not in the Bible. We do have a banner. And that banner must be hoisted. The colors must be displayed. It must stand as a beacon of the ongoing warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It must be displayed that there is a place of true freedom, true and genuine salvation to all who come to God in repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

We do know that Jesus walked on this earth while the Jews were under a Roman yoke. Yet never do we ever read of our Lord making any type of civil protest about the Roman flag being over Jerusalem; or the Romans infringing on His Jewish rights. Jesus told Pilate that He had a kingdom, but that His kingdom was not of this world (**John 18:36**). Furthermore, we find that Jesus never entered the political arena. Rather, Jesus was busy about the work that His Father had given Him to do— *“...know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?”* **Luke 2:49**. The work of God is not in establishing civil liberties of citizens from a tyrannical government, but rather in setting the souls of men, women, boys, and girls free from the tyranny of sin and Satan's kingdom. The Spirit of Christ warned us through the writings of the apostle Paul to not be entangled with the affairs of this life, if we wish to war a good warfare (**2 Timothy 2:4**).

While the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ in the United States have more freedoms than any other people. Yet, what have we done with them? Have we used these freedoms for the furtherance of the gospel and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom? Did Jesus, Churches at Jerusalem, Antioch, Thessalonica have the same freedoms we do? Did Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Silas, John, the Waldenses, the Paulicians, the Catharics, etc. have the freedoms that you and I have? No. Yet,

did they not preach the truth regardless? Did they not worship the Lord in spite of what they were told (**Acts.5:27-32**)?

The removal of the Confederate Flag is not our fight! The United States of America, nor the Confederate States of America is NOT the kingdom of God any more than America is Israel (see article by Bro. Curtis Pugh:

http://gracebbc.dyndns.org:81/PughsCorner/united_states_is_not_israel.html).

The Kingdom of God IS the Kingdom of God. And God's Kingdom provides a freedom for all its citizens by the benevolent rule of its Sovereign: Jesus Christ the Righteous. And it is such a freedom that is incomparable with anything that the Confederate States of America could have ever offered from the United States of America. Therefore, we ought to be promoting the freedom which is in Christ: *“If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed”* **John 8:36**.

While I do NOT have any interest in living in another country, we must not forget that we are citizens of a city whose builder and maker is God. We must remember that this world is not our home. *“For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from which also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”* **Philippians 3:20,21**.

Therefore, let us carry forth the banner that our God has given us:

There's a royal banner given for display
To the soldiers of the King;
As an ensign fair we lift it up today,
While as ransomed ones we sing.
Marching on, marching on,
For Christ count ev'rything but loss!
And to crown Him King, toil and sing
'Neath the banner of the cross!
Though the foe may rage and gather as the flood,
Let the Standard be displayed;
And beneath its folds, as soldiers of the Lord,
For the truth be not dismayed!
Marching on, marching on,
For Christ count ev'rything but loss!
And to crown Him King, toil and sing
'Neath the banner of the cross!
Over land and sea, wherever man may dwell,
Make the glorious tidings known;
Of the crimson banner now the story tell,
While the Lord shall claim his own!
Marching on, marching on,
For Christ count ev'rything but loss!
And to crown Him King, toil and sing
'Neath the banner of the cross!
When the glory dawns, 'tis drawing very near,
It is hast'ning day by day,
Then before our King the foe shall disappear,
And the cross the world shall sway!
Marching on, marching on,
For Christ count ev'rything but loss!
And to crown Him King, toil and sing

Neath the banner of the cross.
(Lyrics to the Hymn Commonly Known as:
The Banner of the Cross)

Beloved, let us not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Marriage IS between a man and a woman for life (till death do they part). And there is but one banner that God's redeemed people and His church ought to be concerned about displaying: The Banner of His Love. Let us follow the example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Maran-atha. AMEN.



NEWS

NOTICE: The inclusion of quotes or link to an article is NOT an explicit agreement with all the views expressed therein, we endeavor to inform readers of opposing views and stories they may unaware. We include only portions of articles along with the author's name & original publication and encourage our readers to read the complete articles at the links provided.

If you are reading a printed copy of this newsletter you will find all the links listed here in the PDF version of this issue on our website, <http://baptistsforliberty.weebly.com>

Law & Order: Stories Of A Broken System

Jan. 5th ["You Might be a Terrorist If..."](#)

by Jeff Knox at Ammo Land

"Are you a terrorist? A potential terrorist? A suspected terrorist? A suspected potential terrorist? Or potentially a suspected terrorist?"

Furthermore "We do know that there have been numerous cases of "false positives," people, including small children and babies,

being delayed or denied flights based on erroneous identification as being on one of the lists, and numerous cases of people actually being added to the lists based on bad information or for invalid or even illegal reasons. In one case, over 50 peaceful anti-war and anti-death penalty activists in Maryland were added to the lists as suspected terrorists by the state police. On the other hand, a federal inspector general's audit of the Transportation Security Administration turned up 73 people whose names were on the terrorist watchlist but who were allowed by TSA to work in airports around the country. We don't know if those suspected terrorists are still employed in airports or how (or even whether) they were fired without revealing the secret that their names are on the watchlist. That information is apparently still a secret." Read the complete [article here](#)

Jan. 15th ["Making a Murderer' shows that our justice system needs a healthy dose of humility"](#) by Keith A. Findley published in the Washington Post

"Making a Murderer" is about more than Avery and Dassey's guilt or innocence, because the injustices the series suggest are hardly unique. The enduring takeaway ought to be the recognition that the criminal justice system, as a human system, is inevitably flawed. It does sometimes send innocent people to prison. And while most police, prosecutors, defense lawyers and judges are good, honest people who do their best to achieve justice, they do sometimes fail and even, on occasion, cross the line into misconduct in their zeal to secure what they perceive to be a just outcome.

Wrongful conviction doesn't only mean an innocent person ends up in prison. It also means a guilty person goes free. When the system fails, there is no justice for victims and their loved ones. We have known for decades that the system is prone to error. Since the advent of forensic DNA testing in the late 1980s, at least [337 people](#), who each have spent an average of 14 years in prison, have been proved innocent by DNA evidence. According to the [National Registry of Exonerations](#) hosted by the University of Michigan Law School, exonerations based on all types of evidence, not just DNA, amount to at least 1,728 people who have been exonerated of serious crimes since 1989. The number is continually growing." Read his complete article at [this link](#)

Jan. 20th ["ATF Finds 'Fast and Furious' Rifle at El Chapo Hideout"](#)

by Derrick Broze Truth In Media

"Operation Fast and Furious was a program in which the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) knowingly sold guns to Mexican drug cartels."

"The program led to arrests of smaller criminals, but up to this point no cartel leaders have been arrested. Instead, Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry lost his life, along with hundreds of Mexican citizens on the border. These deaths can be traced directly to weapons sold under Fast and Furious.

It should also be noted that as recently as January 2014 El Chapo was reported to have some sort of partnership with the U.S. government." Full article is at [Truthinmedia.com right here](#)

Jan. 25th [“Daniel Holtzclaw and the Limits of “Community Policing””](#)

by Victoria M. Massie at The Intercept reports

“At the sentencing last week of Daniel Holtzclaw — the 29-year-old former Oklahoma City police officer convicted on 18 counts of rape and sexual assault of African-American women in the neighborhood he was assigned to patrol — District Attorney David Prater **told** the media: “I think people need to realize that this is not a law enforcement officer that committed these crimes. This is a rapist who masqueraded as a law enforcement officer. If he was a true law enforcement officer, he would have upheld his duty to protect these citizens rather than victimize them.”

Holtzclaw was sentenced to 263 years in prison for his crimes. From December 2013 to June 2014, while working the night shift in a low-income neighborhood on Oklahoma City’s northeast side, Holtzclaw developed a modus operandi: By design, he targeted black women, and among them, women who had a history of drug abuse or an existing criminal record. By framing his unsolicited sexual advances as an exchange for reprieve from warrants or jail time, he used his badge to leverage the women’s backgrounds as blackmail.

Yet his crimes, while egregious, are not an aberration. Sexual misconduct is the second most common form of police misconduct after excessive force, comprising 9 percent of cases reported in the media, according to an analysis by the Cato Institute’s National Police Misconduct Reporting Project.” Read her [complete article here](#)

Jan. 26th [“Supreme Court Gives New Hope to Juvenile Lifers, But Will States Deliver?”](#) by Liliana Segura at The Intercept

“On the night before the U.S. Supreme Court issued its ruling Monday in *Montgomery v. Louisiana*, giving new hope for release to prisoners serving life without parole for crimes they committed as juveniles, Sister Alison McCrary received a collect call from the Louisiana State Penitentiary, better known as Angola. It came from a man she had met during her 10 years visiting the prison as a spiritual adviser to those on death row. Nicknamed “Reverend Joe,” he did not face execution, but like most of Angola’s residents, nonetheless confronted the prospect of dying in prison.”

Also, “From state to state, the question of who will make these decisions is still up in the air. After *Miller*, several states simply abolished juvenile life without parole, restoring parole eligibility or imposing lesser determinate sentences on those already imprisoned. Other states opted for resentencing hearings, putting individual prisoners’ fates in the hands of a judge. For those recalcitrant states that refused to do either, Justice Kennedy sought to provide reassurance in *Montgomery* that the 6-3 ruling “does not require States to relitigate sentences, let alone convictions, in every case where a juvenile offender received mandatory life without parole.” Instead, he suggested, writing for the majority, states can give a chance for such prisoners “to be considered for parole.”

In New Orleans, the Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights was quick to embrace this suggestion. The state “has a choice to make,” the legal nonprofit explained on its website following Monday’s ruling. It can offer prisoners “costly, lengthy, substantive hearings” to the tune of \$3 million to fund the first

year of defense attorneys alone, according to an estimate by the Louisiana Public Defender Board. Or it can grant juvenile lifers some shot at release by allowing them to go before a parole board — an option the group’s director argues saves money, preserves public safety (“by ensuring that nobody is released without review”), and is “fairer for victims, because it will mean that they do not have to go through the difficulties of a new court hearing.” [Read the article here](#)

Jan. 27th [“Judge Rips Attorneys Who Fight Bail System”](#)

by Maria Dinzeo in Court House News Services writes

“Telefeyan represents two women arrested in October 2015 - Riana Buffin, 19, and Crystal Patterson, 29 - on suspicion of grand theft (Buffin) and assault (Patterson). Both were released without charges, after spending several days behind bars because neither could afford bail. Buffin’s bond was set at \$30,000, Patterson’s at \$150,000.

Their putative [class action](#) lawsuit claims the City and County of San Francisco unconstitutionally criminalize poverty by keeping poor arrestees in jail because they can’t afford to post bail. They also claimed that California violated their rights because it requires its 58 counties to set money bail schedules.” Read the complete article at [this link](#)

A Militia Stand Off

Jan. 4th [“The Interests Shared by the Oregon Militia Movement, Koch Brothers and LDS Church”](#)

Chris Zinda discusses how groups such as those involved in the armed standoff in Oregon are influenced by the likes of the Mormon Church and others in a thirteen minute video, the link also includes a transcript of the program and an audio version if you prefer. [Click here](#)

Near the end Zinda had this to say: “On the flipside, the LDS church has substantial business interests in public lands. People need to understand the LDS church has a public and a private aspect to their operations. The private not-for-profit aspect is related to their church functions, and they’ve got a business aspect to them that is one of the largest corporations in the world. And because they are considered private they do not need to disclose financial statements. Bloomberg did a piece in 2012 that did a very good job at tying together the LDS moneyed interests, but suffice it to say they are the largest cattle operation in the United States. They hold agricultural interests throughout the West.”

Jan. 7th [“What the Oregon Standoff Is Really About”](#)

“The occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Burns, Oregon, by a group led by Ammon Bundy—yes, of [those Bundys](#)—was supposed to have focused attention on the plight of a rancher family that has been fighting decades-long efforts by federal officials to drive them off their land. Instead, this dramatic act of civil disobedience has done the opposite: amid debates over the Bundy family, their tactics, and ideology, the focus has been taken off the Hammond family, and their struggle to preserve their land and their way of life has been largely obscured. This is their story.” Writes Justin Raimondo for The

American Conservative.

Some of the problems the ranchers face that Mr. Raimondo recounts in detail is “Another big problem—one that would come to figure prominently in the Hammonds’ legal problems—is the invasion of junipers, which are crowding out other plant species and turning what were once fields—maintained by ranchers, who regularly cleared the land for grazing—into forests. [Junipers suck up water at an amazing rate](#), and the result is that those fields have now turned into desert. For years, environmentalists objected to cutting down the junipers because it might encourage grazing on “public” lands, and the federal bureaucracy’s “no use” policies encouraged the juniper invasion, which has now conquered over 6 million acres. Finally, the BLM got wise to the problem, but as with the carp invasion, they reacted far too late. This is another reason why the refuge is not popular with the bird population, who are losing their habitat and being driven out—along with the ranchers.” Read entire article [here](#)

[Also Jan. 7th “Oregon Standoff — Rancher Supporters Disagree With Occupation”](#) William F. Jasper writes for The New American

“Dwight and Steven Hammond have many supporters in their hometown area of Burns, Oregon, as well as many sympathizers nationwide, especially among rural populations of ranchers and farmers who identify with their plight. However, few of those supporters appear to support or endorse the armed occupation of the federal wildlife facility by a self-appointed “militia,” considering it misguided, at best, and dangerously counter-productive, at worst.

The Hammonds, father and son ranchers, were prosecuted as terrorists under the federal Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 for controlled burns on their own property in 2001 and 2006 that spread to bordering federal BLM (Bureau of Land Management) land, causing no real damage to around 150 acres and no threat to lives, homes, or property of other citizens. In fact, the BLM acknowledged that the 2001 fire for which the Hammonds were prosecuted had actually “improved range conditions” on the public lands. By contrast, federal agencies such as the BLM, Forest Service, National Park Service, and Fish & Wildlife Service regularly set “prescribed burns” that get out of control and burn up thousands of acres of forest, grasslands, and habitat, as well as destroying wildlife (including “endangered species”), homes, ranches, cattle and other livestock, and even taking human lives. (See [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).)

Controlled or prescribed burning is a common practice for controlling noxious weeds, as well as reducing fuel-load buildup to prevent dangerous wildfires. Federal, state, and local agencies, Indian tribal authorities, and private landowners nationwide regularly use prescriptive burning for these purposes.” [Read the full article](#)

[Jan. 24th “Oregon Gov. Asks Feds To Boot Militiamen From Wildlife Refuge”](#) by Chris White at Truthinmedia.com

“The governor’s letter to Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey and U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch claims the militiamen are intimidating the residents of Harney

County. She even suggests the group appears to be itching for a fight.” Read the article and the pdf of the governor’s letters at [this link](#)

[Jan. 27th “Bundy Family Claims Protestor was Unarmed, had Hands Up When Killed by FBI”](#) by Rachel Blevins at Truthinmedia.com reports

“The Bundy family claimed Arizona rancher Robert “LaVoy” Finicum was unarmed and had his hands up when he shot and killed by FBI agents during a confrontation Tuesday near Burns, Oregon.

Finicum, 55, was part of the group of protestors occupying the Malheur Wildlife Refuge headquarters in Burns. At least eight others, including protest leaders Ammon and Ryan Bundy, were arrested after the FBI and Oregon State police confronted them while they were traveling along U.S. Highway 395.” Read the whole article at this [link](#)

[Jan. 28th “Hands Up, Just Shoot! Claims Witness To Oregon](#)

[Protester Killing”](#)

by Jeff Knox at Ammo Land

“Sharp reported that shots were first fired at Ryan Payne as



he complied with orders to show his hands out of the window of the vehicle in which she was riding, but that the shots missed. Payne was calling for police to not shoot, as there were women in the vehicle, and exited the vehicle, asking that the women be allowed out.

At this point, LaVoy Finicum, one of the spokesmen for the occupiers, who was driving the vehicle in which Ms. Sharp was riding, yelled out the window that they were going to go talk to the sheriff (at the meeting in John Day), or that agents could just shoot him. He told the passengers to get down, and drove forward, precipitating heavy gunfire from the agents, and crashing the vehicle into a snowbank.

Sharp said that Finicum then exited the vehicle, hands in the air, yelling, “Just shoot me then!” A volley of shots rang out, and Finicum fell to his back, hands still over his head, and was shot several more times on the ground, Sharp said.” Read the [full report here](#).

Scripture for both sides: Conservation

"Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."

Proverbs 4:27

For The Left:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Genesis 1:26-28

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

Revelation 21:1

For the Right:

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

Luke 15:10

This column is too short to provide an in-depth look at rhetoric, lies, policies, and problems from one side much less both on this issue.

However, we do want to point out that who is responsible to conserve, as well as the what and how is a question of sacrifice that must be asked in the light of scriptures. Do we sacrifice lives and comfort out of fear? Ignore all concerns as leftist trash and waist like there is no tomorrow?

Recycling, global warming, population control, advances in technology, vaccines, natural resources, alternative energy projects, federal lands, state lands, Agenda 21, genocide, living off the grid, homesteading, genetically modified organisms (GMO) foods, Indigenous peoples rights and lands, all of these are all elements of this big debate and I may have forgotten to include some!

In each of these cases we must look at the general commands God has given such as those above as well as His particular purpose for you and your life. Simple examples: riding a bike instead of driving a car isn't a Biblical command but if you're able to choose to do that it certainly wouldn't be a sin either, while the impact on the environment of the choice is debatable it no doubt has is good exorcise.

Another example: Respecting private property (and private property is in the Bible) and the rights of Native Americans may mean saying NO to certain oil drilling or other big business policies, but not necessarily all oil drilling or big businesses.

"In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker." Psalm 95:4-6

In the end all of this will pass away, but we are to be found faithful stewards in ALL the things God has given us.

March For Life, Planned Parenthood, & Legal Battles

Jan. 21st "[Killing Babies](#)"

by Andrew Napolitano at The Ledger.com

"The Court's decision in Roe vs. Wade is arguably its most controversial in the post-World War II era. Its effect has been as pernicious to human life as was its 19th century intellectual progenitor, Dred Scott vs. Sanford, in which the Supreme Court ruled that African-Americans are not persons.

Roe declares that the states may not ban abortions during the first trimester of a woman's pregnancy because the states have no interest in or right to protect the baby during that time period.

This made-up rule was a radical and unconstitutional departure from nearly 200 years of jurisprudence, during which the states themselves decided what interests to protect, guided since the end of the Civil War by the prohibition on slavery, and the requirements of due process and equal protection.

During the second trimester of pregnancy, the Court declared in Roe, states may regulate abortions but only to protect the health of the mother, not the life or health of the baby, in which, the Court found, the states have no interest. This, too, was a radical departure from well-settled law.

Under Roe, during the third trimester of pregnancy, the states may ban abortions or they may permit them; they may protect the life of the baby or they may not protect it. This diabolic rule, the product of judicial compromise and an embarrassing and destructive rejection of the Civil War era constitutional amendments, permits the states to allow abortions up to the moment before birth, as is the law in New Jersey, where the state even pays for abortions for those who cannot afford them." Read his complete article by [clicking here](#)

Jan. 25th "[March for Life Success in Spite of Weather](#)"

by Lisa Shaw the New American

"Reading some media reports, one might believe that this year's march was minimal, at best. However, even with the cancellations of some groups planning to attend, the march was anything but meager, as the organizers of the march believed more than 400,000 to be in attendance. Among these marchers were college students, families, celebrities, and even barefoot monks enduring the bitter weather." [Read it here](#)

Jan. 28th "[David Daleiden's Attorneys: Use of Fake ID is Protected Under Law For Citizen Journalists](#)"

by Steven Ertelt Life News

"Attorneys for David Daleiden, the pro-life advocate indicted by a grand jury after he exposed the sale of aborted baby body parts at Planned Parenthood, says Daleiden is innocent of the two charges the grand jury filed.

[As LifeNews reported Monday](#), a Texas grand jury has ignored the videos exposing [a Houston-based Planned Parenthood abortion clinic caught selling aborted baby body parts](#) and has instead indicted the man behind producing the expose' videos. The Texas grand jury indicted David Daleiden and another pro-life activist, Sandra Merritt, behind the videos. Instead of

prosecuting Planned Parenthood for selling aborted baby parts, Daleiden was indicted for buying them. Daleiden and Merritt were charged with one felony related to tampering with a governmental record and a misdemeanor count related to buying human tissue. The felony charge was in reference to the use of a fake ID. If convicted, [Daleiden faces 20 years in prison](#) while Planned Parenthood officials face no legal consequences for their actions. [But in an interview with CNA](#), attorneys for Daleiden insist that the use of a fake ID is protected under Texas law for citizen journalists engaging in the kind of undercover activities Daleiden and his team were conducting.” Read the complete article at this [link](#)

Also Jan. 28th “[Ruling Sets Stage for Challenge to Northern Ireland’s Pro-Life Law Protecting Babies From Abortion](#)”
by Dave Andrusko

“When last we posted on abortion in Northern Ireland, Mr. Justice Mark Horner had largely agreed with The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission that Northern Ireland’s abortion legislation breached Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights by not allowing for abortions in cases of fatal fetal anomaly, rape, and incest. However, even though Justice Horner’s decision was a blistering denunciation of current law, delivered over the course of two hours, when he subsequently read his final conclusion in December, Justice Horner told a packed hearing at Belfast High Court it would be “a step too far” for him to interpret sections 58 and 59 of the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861 to allow for abortion in these three instances. Thus, Northern Ireland’s Parliament is not obliged to pass new legislation on abortion, although all agreed the decision laid the foundation for what pro-abortionists like to call a “relaxation” of the law. The very pro-abortion BBC argued the decision “placed an onus on the Northern Ireland Assembly to legislate on the issue.” Which brings us to two different but related appeals of Judge Horner’s decision.” Read the [article here](#)



“Father, Glorify Thy Name”

by Bro. M.J. Seymour, Sr.

It is written: “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: **but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.**” (Jn. 12:27,28) Jesus was in reference to his up coming sacrifice as the Lamb of God upon the cross.

In this age of “SELF-esteem” and “SELF-expression,” it has become extremely difficult to get folks to accept the Biblical teaching that they are to die to “SELF” and live unto God and the Lord Jesus Christ. The mind set of “SELF-centeredness” and lifting “SELF” up has its origin in the heart of Lucifer. It is this sin of “SELF above all” that caused Satan to be cast down. Why would the sons of God want to duplicate the sin of their Father’s archenemy? Is not the righteousness of God eternally superior to the sins of Lucifer?

Jesus acknowledges that the Father sent him for a particular purpose. His sacrifice was the “cause” for his coming into the world. Even with his divine nature and abilities, Jesus deliberately denies “SELF” to do the will of the Father. He delivered an object lesson for the saints to identify with! Every child of the living God has a “cause” for being in this world at his own particular “hour,” and he is expected to deny “SELF” that he might fulfill the will of the Father.

Another crucial point is this: even when man is in the “hour” of his purpose, he still does not have any power of his own to glorify the name of God. The believer does have part in the sovereign God glorifying His name, either through obedience to the Father or through rebellion against the Father. Come what may, God **WILL** glorify His name, but it will be much sweeter if the believer willingly and joyously denies “SELF” for the “cause” of the “hour” for which he came.

The prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ was “Father, glorify thy name.” If glorifying the name of God were left to us, we would make such a miserable wreck of it. Jesus reveals that if the name of the Father were to be properly and eternally glorified, then God is the only one fully qualified to do so. We are but clay in the Potter’s hand, unable of ourselves to glorify Him. The Name of the Potter is glorified when all the heavenly hosts behold the finished wonders of His GRACE. The Potter always has power over the clay because the clay cannot shape itself. Thus, we cry, **Father, glorify Thy Name!**



State Of The Culture War

Jan. 4th [“I’m Thinking It Over”](#)

by Alan Jacobs The American conservative

“-Anyway, a great many people are going off half-cocked on this issue; and what those emails I got remind me is that going off half-cocked is now widely perceived as a virtue, and the disinclination to do so as a vice. Moreover, that poorly informed and probably inflammatory statement of Your Incontrovertibly Correct Position must be on the internet — and according to my first protestor either directly on or accessible to Twitter — or it doesn’t count towards your treasury of merit.” Read the complete [article here](#)

Jan. 5th [“Unappreciated Tax on the Poor”](#)

by Walter E. Williams at Low Rockwell

“A few years ago, BET had a commentary titled “Where Are the Grocery Stores in Black Neighborhoods?” One wonders whether anyone thinks that the absence of supermarkets in predominantly black neighborhoods means that white merchants do not like dollars coming out of black hands. Racial discrimination cannot explain the absence of supermarkets in black communities. Compare the operation of a supermarket in a low-crime neighborhood with that of one in a high-crime neighborhood. You will see differences in how they operate. Supermarkets in low-crime neighborhoods often have merchandise on display near entrances. They may have merchandise left unattended outside the store, such as plants and gardening material. Often these items are left out overnight. Supermarket managers’ profit maximizing objective is to maximize merchandise turnover per square foot of leased space. The economic significance of being able to have merchandise located at entrances and outside is the supermarket manager can use all of the space he leases.”

And “It is by no means flattering to law-abiding black people that “black” has become synonymous with “crime.” Crime not only imposes high costs on blacks but also sours race relations. Whites are apprehensive of blacks, and blacks are offended by being subjects of that apprehension. That apprehension and offense are exhibited in many insulting ways to law-abiding blacks — for example, jewelers keeping their displays locked and store clerks giving extra surveillance to black shoppers.” Read his entire article at this [link](#)

Jan. 7th [“Why Isn’t My Professor Conservative?”](#)

by Samuel Goldman The American conservative

“Ideology is more obvious in the humanities and social sciences. When talking about discrimination in these disciplines, it’s important to distinguish among “flavors” of conservatism. Speaking broadly, economic libertarianism or foreign-policy hawkishness are considered eccentric but tolerable. Public criticism of the sexual revolution, on the other hand, is not okay. Of all the tribes of the right, conservative Christians face the biggest obstacles. There may be another contributing factor: the adjunctification of the faculty. During the same period the graph covers, instructors

working off the tenure track have become a considerable majority. Adjuncting is not an experience that promotes enthusiasm for conservative principles. A more precarious faculty is a likely to be a more left-leaning one.” Full article [here](#)

Jan. 26th [“New VR Film Perspective 2: The Misdemeanor Drops You in the Middle of a Police Shooting”](#)

by Angela Watercutter published on Wired.com

“The goal this time, Troche says, is to show an even-handed representation of everyone involved in a fictional police shooting: a teenager who gets shot, his brother, and two officers. The viewers’ perception of what happened in the shooting changes each time they watch a different perspective. Which is the whole point.

“Everybody has made a mistake in this whole thing, and it escalates so quickly,” says Troche. “But it’s really for you to experience, to try to feel what it’s like to have that fear, to feel like *Oh my god, what did I just do? I just shot someone.* We wanted to show the wholeness of the situation.” Read the complete article [here](#)

Jan. 26th [“‘Spotlight’ Gets Journalism Right but Fails to Promote It”](#)

by Daniel Duarte Panam Post

“Spotlight, the movie, is the story of how the courageous *Boston Globe* reporters — several of them practicing Catholics — put the pieces together in the pre-Internet era, talked to the victims, and confronted a millennial institution of great power.

Perhaps the most interesting fact is that it took an outsider to trigger the Spotlight investigation.

That spark was the [much-praised editor](#) Marty Baron, who now runs the *Washington Post*. A Jew just arrived from Miami, Baron told reporters on his first day at the *Globe*’s helm to dig deeper into a story about a priest who had molested young boys. He felt there was more to it” Read the complete [review here](#)

Jan. 27th [“Freedom House Declares 2015 the Worst Year in a Decade”](#)

by Rebeca Morla Panam Post reports

“The year 2015 saw the largest decline in global freedom in the past decade — so asserts human-rights NGO [Freedom House](#) in their latest report, “[Freedom in the World 2016: Anxious Dictators, Wavering Democracies.](#)”

Each year, the US-based organization evaluates the state of freedom in 195 countries and 15 territories across the globe. By taking into account political rights and civil liberties, they categorize each jurisdiction as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free.

In this latest edition, 86 countries (44 percent) were rated as Free, 59 (30 percent) as Partly Free, and 50 (26 percent) as Not Free. That means 72 countries [declined in freedom](#) from the previous year, whereas only 43 improved.” Read the complete [report here](#)

Jan. 27th [“The Demand for Villains”](#)

by Thomas Sowell

“The latest tempest in a teapot controversy is over a lack of black nominees for this year’s Academy Awards in Hollywood. The assumption seems to be that different groups would be proportionally represented if somebody were not doing somebody else wrong. That assumption carries great weight in far more important things than Academy Awards and in places more important than Hollywood, including the Supreme Court of the United States.

In an earlier era, the groupthink assumption was that groups that did not succeed as often, or as well, were genetically inferior. But is our current groupthink assumption based on any more hard evidence?

Having spent decades researching racial and ethnic groups around the world, I have never yet found a country in which all groups — or even most groups — are even roughly equally represented in most endeavors.” Read his complete article [here](#)

Economy: Gas Prices & Other Crazy Numbers

Jan. 5th [“The Forgotten Tax Increase”](#)

by Laurence M. Vance at Lew Rockwell

“The only good thing we can say about taxes going into 2016 is that at least they are not going up this year. Such was not the case in 2013, 1991, 1993—and especially 1994. In fact, the “Bush tax cuts” notwithstanding, the forgotten tax increase of 1994 is still with us.

Early in 2013, to avert the “fiscal cliff,” the lame duck Congress passed, with the help of 40 Republicans in the Senate and 85 Republicans in the House, the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (PL 112-240, [H.R.8](#)). The six tax brackets (10, 15, 25, 28, 33, and 35%) of the so-called Bush tax cuts (the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 and the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003) that were set to expire at the end of 2010 until they were extended, with modifications, by the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010 ((PL 111–312, [H.R.4853](#)), were made permanent. However, for those earning over \$400,000 a year (\$450,000 for married couples), the top marginal tax rate increased to 39.6 percent. Additionally, the estate tax rate increased, the tax rates on long-term capital gains and dividends were raised on higher-income taxpayers, the personal exemption and itemized deduction reductions were reinstated, the temporary payroll tax cut of 2011 and 2012 was not extended, and refundable tax credits were expanded.

Thanks to Obamacare, also beginning in 2013 was an additional 0.9 percent Medicare tax on the pay of those earning above a threshold of \$200,000 (\$250,000 for married couples)—“ read full article at [this link](#)

Jan. 21st [“Why Global Oil Prices Are Sinking”](#)

by Alejandro Demel at Panam Post

“Every major oil producer in the world is currently concerned with the price of this commodity, since it makes production unfeasible in certain areas where the cost of extraction is greater than the market price.

Faced with the reality that oil prices will likely remain low, countries like Russia are considering cutting back on government

spending, since oil is its primary export. Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov has said that the country’s budget would only be balanced with crude at \$82 per barrel, well above the \$50 per barrel that the government used to calculate its budget for 2016.” Read the complete [article here](#)

Jan. 22nd [“Union ‘greed’ helps close 16 Goodwill stores, 10 donation centers in Toronto”](#)

by Andrew Moran for Economic Collapse News

“Goodwill is a non-profit organization that helps the impoverished in the city of Toronto. Everything from second-hand shoes to used jackets, the impecunious can get some pretty cheap stuff – let’s not forget that it’s a paradise for hipsters. This week, many were shocked to find the closure of 16 stores, 10 donation centers and two offices in southern Ontario. Keiko Nakamura, CEO of Goodwill Industries of Toronto, Eastern, Central and Northern Ontario, who is being paid \$220,000 per year, blamed the closure on a low cash-flow, expensive rent and union rules.

It was even reported that staffers wouldn’t be receiving their paycheck on Friday. This report was proven false after it was announced employees would be getting their paychecks.

What about Nakamura? Will she step down? Here is what she [told](#) reporters Monday:

“I recognize this has all happened very suddenly. I am examining all possible situations — I’m trying to exhaust them,” Nakamura said. “I have a duty as the CEO for this organization to ensure I do the diligence in the best interest of this organization.”

Everyone is in upheaval. Everyone is calling for the head of Nakamura, which is a partially correct demand. Her ineptness and lavish expenses have no room in a non-profit organization designed to aid the poor. Does a charity need to spend \$53,000 on parties and manicures? Nope.

Why is its primary competitor, Value Village, flourishing? It’s simple: better management, effective marketing and competitive prices.” Full [article here](#)

Jan. 25th [“The Fed Passes the Buck: Blame Oil and China”](#)

by C. Jay Engel at The Mises daily explains

“There are a handful of themes out there on recent market action that are either totally wrong or otherwise highly misleading. For instance, regarding the recent calamity in the capital markets, one especially apparent dichotomy has presented itself as offering two choices as to what, exactly, is causing the painful turbulence. There are some who, in a complete echo of the news headlines, are quick to point the finger at both oil and China. And yet there are others who point the finger at the Fed for “raising rates too early.” Along with the second is the observation that “inflation is totally MIA” and therefore it was ludicrous that the Fed felt the need to “raise interest rates.” Both of these tend to express anguish over the “strong dollar.”

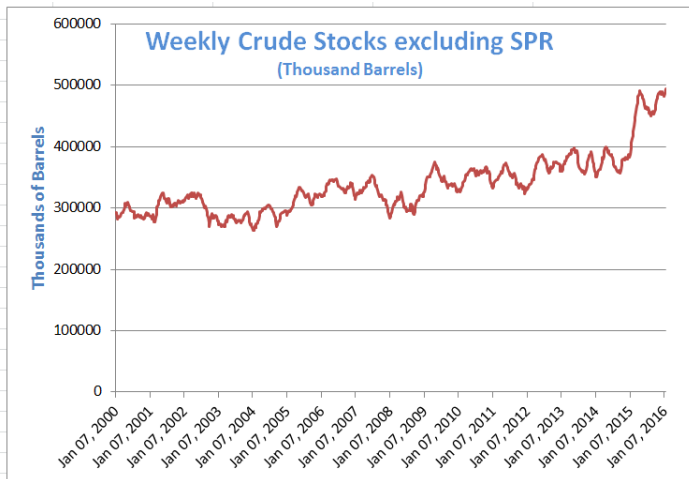
Both of these miss the entire point, and the cause of the current trouble. For one thing, it is ridiculous to blame oil for the falling markets when the falling oil is the *very thing that needs to be explained*. It is wholly unsatisfactory to *explain* something by *describing it*. It works well for headlines, and for shifting the blame away from where it really belongs, but one must learn to

look deeper. One cannot expect to impress anyone by explaining that the plane is crashing to the ground because it is no longer flying. What is the cause of oil's magnificent plummet toward the bottom? That is the true question.

Moreover, the problem with the "China thesis" is that it doesn't explain anything either. It merely observes a correlation in the markets and therefore makes it highly convenient to put the blame on "the other guys." Let me not be misunderstood here: the Chinese and US economies are certainly influenced by each other, especially in our age of fluctuating fiat currencies. But ultimately, both China and the US — indeed the entire world — are being dragged down by past actions of their respective central banks and more specifically the illusion of prosperity via monetary and credit expansion.

Which leads to the second theme: putting the blame on the Fed for "raising rates" too early. That is, there are a good many who argue that if the Fed had never announced in December that it was going to seek minuscule increases in the Federal Funds rate, none of the recent market drops would have happened. They will say things like "inflation was never a threat, so the Fed was irresponsible to raise rates." [Full article](#)

Jan. 27th "Oil Inventory Hits "Levels Not Seen in 80 Years"; Crude Jumps on News Russia May Cooperate with OPEC"
by Mike "Mish" Shedlock of MISH'S Global Economic Trend Analysis



"The above charts from [EIA Weekly Supply Data](#) shows the crude inventory of 494,920,000 (not counting strategic reserves) passed the previous high of 490,912,000 set on April 24, 2015.

Reserves, including the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), reached 1,190,038 barrels, also a record high." [Read full article here](#)

Jan. 27th "US Taxpayers Bear the Brunt of Health-Care Licensing Laws"

by Guillermo Jimenez Panam Post reports

"Medicaid is a health-care program that is jointly funded by the states and the federal government. The US government's

Medicaid website describes the program as providing "health coverage to millions of Americans, including eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults and people with disabilities."

In the Mercatus study, Timmons acknowledges that the "provision of health care to low-income Americans remains an ongoing policy challenge." The study asserts that while many Americans would rather opt to receive care from a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant instead of having to wait for a doctor, the ability of these professionals to respond to this demand is limited by state-imposed occupational requirements."

Read the [complete story here](#)

Devotion:

"Of Their Abundance"

by Bro. Jeff Short



"For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

~ [Mark 12:44](#)

Usually when we come to this text, we talk about the widow. She is worthy of admiration and emulation. No question. But, other people put money in the treasury that day also. Mark reports:

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much" [Mark 12:41](#)

From this description, people of all classes were putting money in and some of them were rich, and many put considerable offerings in the treasury.

Christ commends the widow's example, but He neither rebukes nor condemns the others. In other words, they were doing good by giving offerings into the treasury. Their gifts differed in size proportionally to their generosity and **"many that were rich cast in much."** Everyone probably gave more than the "two mites" the widow gave.

All the contributors had one thing in common that distinguished them from this widow. Jesus said, **"This poor widow hath cast more in, than all they . . . For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want"** ([Mark 12:43-44](#)). All the people of all the different classes gave of their abundance. They were not all classified as rich, some were, but they gave of abundance. This means their offerings were not sacrifices. They weren't wrong. They just weren't sacrifices. The widow sacrificed.

U.S. Presidential elections & Debates

Jan. 22nd [“Ariz. Sec. of State Calls for End to Taxpayer-Funded Presidential Primaries”](#)

by Barry Donegan Truth In Media

“Republican Arizona Secretary of State Michelle Reagan is reportedly working with legislators on a bill that would end taxpayer funding of presidential primaries in the state. According to The Associated Press, Sec. Reagan’s elections director Eric Spencer said that ending taxpayer-funded primaries would save the state \$10 million. He also argued that the legislation is necessary because independent voters are required to fund the Democratic and Republican parties’ primary contests but are not allowed to participate in them.” Read [article here](#)

Jan. 25th [“Clinton in Denial About Impact of Trade Policy on Immigration”](#)

Sharmini Peries of The Real News Network starts off her piece with: “Hillary Clinton has outlined what she would do on immigration if she becomes president. She claims that she would like to extend President Obama’s deportation relief programs, also known as the ACA and DAPA, and close private immigrant detention centers and introduce immigration reform legislation with a path to full and equal citizenship.

However, despite her positive-sounding campaign speeches on immigration, Clinton has a track record of making controversial statements about undocumented immigrants. For example, in 2003 in an interview on WABC Radio’s John Gambling show, Hillary Clinton said, and I quote, I am, you know, adamantly against illegal immigrants.” This is a video piece with a full transcript of this segment available at [this link](#)

Jan. 26th [“Six Serious Questions for an Unserious Campaign”](#)

By Andrew J. Bacevich at TheAmericanConservative.com

“A presidential election campaign ought to involve more than competing coalitions of interest groups or beives of [investment banks](#) and billionaires vying to install their preferred candidate in the White House. It should engage and educate citizens, illuminating issues and subjecting alternative solutions to careful scrutiny.

That this one won’t even come close we can ascribe as much to the media as to those running for office, something the recent set of “debates” and the accompanying commentary have made painfully clear. With certain honorable exceptions such as NBC’s estimable Lester Holt, representatives of the press are less interested in fulfilling their civic duty than promoting themselves as active participants in the spectacle. They bait, tease, and strut. Then they subject the candidates’ statements and misstatements to minute deconstruction. The effect is to inflate their own importance while trivializing the proceedings they are purportedly covering.

Above all in the realm of national security, election 2016 promises to be not just a missed opportunity but a complete bust. Recent efforts to exercise what people in Washington like to call “global leadership” have met with many more failures and disappointments than clearcut successes. So you might imagine

Most of us are not the widow, we are the others. We might even be many that are rich. Imagine you are walking down a city street on a cold, windy evening. You round the corner and see an old woman shivering and trudging up the street. She has a thin tattered piece of cloth pulled about her shoulders. The wind is blowing loose strands of her hair across her face and she puts up no resistance. You are moved with compassion and become suddenly aware of the warm hands balled up in your coat pockets. You take off your coat and put it around the woman saying, “Here, Ma’am, take my coat.” She grasps it tight around her, says, “Thank you,” and goes on.

Though your heart is warm, a sudden blast of chill brings you back to reality of just how cold it is. You shiver and think. There are a few blocks to go to get to your car, which will warm up quickly and you will be nice and toasty to return to your warm house and another coat. There is also a clothing store at the corner, which is still open. You could go in and just get another coat. If it is really cold, most of us would probably just go buy another coat right there, but even if we chose to be thrifty and go home to our older coat, we could buy one if we wanted to.

Would it be wrong to give your coat in that circumstance? No, it would not be wrong in any way. Would it be good to do it? Yes, it would absolutely be a good thing to do. But the point is: It is not really a sacrifice. We might trade a few moments of inconvenience, but we really wouldn’t be doing without to give. Please don’t misunderstand. I am not being critical of this act, it would be the right thing to do.

The point in all this is to impact the way we think about giving. At least part of the point Jesus was making was that in God’s economy the bottom line is not the same as that in men’s accounting. Let us not be proud and think more highly of our giving than we ought to think. Let us also be ready to give when it has to come out of our want ([2 Corinthians 8:2](#)) and not just out of our abundance.



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that reviewing the scorecard would give the current raft of candidates, Republican and Democratic alike, plenty to talk about.

But if you thought that, you'd be mistaken. Instead of considered discussion of first-order security concerns, the candidates have regularly opted for bluff and bluster, their chief aim being to remove all doubts regarding their hawkish bona fides."

Read the full article and the six questions at this [link](#)

"It Cannot Be Both Ways"

by Bro. Curtis Pugh

The great questions that divides Christendom are these: Is salvation by works or by grace? Or, is it by some kind of hybrid thing – a combination of works and grace? Is a person saved in the first place by something he does? Is he kept by being faithful in good works? Is a person saved by praying the right words? Is he saved by being baptized? Is he saved by making a decision? What about what some people call "accepting the Lord as Saviour?" Is salvation by works or by grace? Our title says, "It Cannot Be Both Ways," as we shall show.

Remember this fact: while the Bible teaches that a sinner must be born again in order to be saved, the Bible nowhere tells us what it is that a sinner can do in order to be born again. The reason? Because there is nothing a sinner can do to bring about his own spiritual birth. The new birth is a work of the Holy Spirit of God as Jesus said: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again," (John 3:6-7). Notice that the statement is passive. Jesus did not say you must do something to be born again. He said you must "be born." It is the action of another which accomplishes the new birth. A baby does not go into labor and birth itself naturally and neither can the sinner birth himself into the family of God. While a baby is a participant in its birth, it is passive not causative. So it is in the new birth!

In dealing with the Bible doctrine of election or God's choice of those sinners whom He would save, Paul wrote: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work," (Romans 11:6). In this verse he lays down a principle: the new birth and everything related to it (including election) must be either by grace or by works. It cannot be both. Salvation is either deserved because of something the sinner does or is – or salvation is by grace. If by grace then the actions of the sinner have nothing to do with the new birth. Nothing the sinner does can cause or bring about his new birth. In another place Paul wrote: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast," (Ephesians 2:8-9). Do not believe it if someone tells you "do this" or "do that" and you will be saved. If you are interested in salvation, know this: salvation is a gift bestowed by God. It is "not of works lest any man should boast."

Updates From Ireland: "Greetings"

by Sis. Sarah Doherty



To the dear readers of the Baptist for Liberty. Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! My name is Sarah Doherty, I am 16 years old and from Cork, Ireland.....the land of green fields and dairy farmers! You may or may not have read my previous article in the BFL, "Abortion in Ireland", a few months back. After it was published Ms. Joanna Works asked me to become a regular writer for the BFL; I was beyond chuffed and happily accept and so this is where our journey begins.

Each issue I will be writing on many different topics; everything from political to spiritual and what exactly is going on in this small, green, wet and predominantly Catholic island.

First I guess I should tell you a little about myself and my family (I'm new to this kind of thing so please, bear with me)! I am the youngest of six kids, five girls and one boy (poor fellow haha). My parents met each other nearly forty years ago and it was, of course, love at first sight! After five kids and 15 years of marriage, my parent (who were both Catholics at the time) visited Grace Missionary Baptist Church here in Cork, pastored by Bro. Robert Ellis, and joined a few months after God saved them both. I was born 4 years later (1999) a definite Surprise! 21 years later my Mom, Dad, (my sisters) Julie, Laura and myself are full-fledged members of the small, Baptist Church there in Glouthaun, Co. Cork.

At the moment I have but a little under two year left in homeschooling and am kept busy with writing, piano, harp, cross stitching, doing child minding/babysitting, dog sitting and of course volunteering at our local animal centre, C.S.P.C.A.! Lord willing, I hope to pursue a career in animal welfare and protection; if any of you have met me personally, know that I am a crazy animal lover Hahaha...so much so that our home has often been referred to as 'The Doherty's Zoo'! But volunteering at the centre has given me a lot of experience which can help me get into college, in the near future. So far I have worked with everything from dogs to cats, snakes to seals, goats to tarantulas and horses to lizards....as I said before I'm a crazy animal lover, and there is an emphasis on the 'crazy' part! Haha.

Dad and I spend many hour designing and writing for my Christian-based magazine, "Good News". We started work early last year and published our first issue in Summer 2015. It was originally tailored for a young audience (12-18), but after the first issue it was discovered that our readers were of mixed ages!

Now "Good News" is a family friendly magazine made for the entire family to enjoy; filled with stories, poems, recipes, jokes, prayer requests, puzzles and pictures! So far the magazine is reaching not only the US but also Thailand, Canada and Romania. My goal is to encourage other Christians in their walk with Christ and to give all the Honor and Glory to God during this endeavor!

If you would like any info on "Good News" or wish receive it please email me on goodnewsfromafar@eircom.net. I spend a good chunk of my time in contact with many Baptists in the USA and worldwide. I'm sure I will be forever fascinating with the 'Baptist grapevine' as they call it! The connections my family is making is more precious to me than can even be expressed. In the near future, I hope (Lord willing) to travel to the states for a conference or two so that I can finally put faces to names and can fellowship with saints I haven't seen in years. Now that I have fully introduced myself I can now look forward to telling you about our small country, its ups and downs; and both good and bad aspects of the island. I am excited for my new column, yet a little nervous; but I will try my utmost to write to the best of my ability. So please be patient with me as I said, it is all new. I know the Lord has a plan and I will just have to trust in His guidance and direction! God bless you all and have a glorious day! Until next time! Sarah E. Doherty

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24)

World Politics

Jan. 4th ["American Empire: A View From Iran"](#)

An exchange between The American Conservative's Rod Dreher, a reader from Iran, and looking at article on the resent history in the middle east.

Dreher begins "The worsening news about the Sunni-Shia tensions in the Middle East brought to mind an e-mail that a reader of this blog, Mohammad, who writes from Iran, sent to me before Christmas. I had forgotten to post it, but as I sit here worrying about a wider Mideast war breaking out, and the US being dragged in to fight for Our Friends The Saudis, it's worth posting Mohammad's e-mail:" read the full [thing here](#)

Jan. 9th ["Happy Birthday H-Bombs Marshall Kim!"](#)

by Eric Margolis

"North Koreans may be happy, but the rest of the world certainly is not. Predictably, the US, Japan, China, Australia and South Korea seethed with fury at the explosive North Koreans. China scowled and muttered.

This hypocrisy and hysteria made world equity markets, already reeling from new Chinese financial blundering, crazy as uninformed investors ran for the lifeboats. The UN shook its tiny fist at North Korea, ignoring that the US, Britain, France, Russia

and China are all in violation of the 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

There was not a peep about nuclear scofflaws, Israel, Pakistan and India. Nor mention that today's outraged South Korea and Taiwan had been caught by CIA red-handed trying to make their own nuclear weapons.

Is North Korea's claim of a hydrogen weapon true? The 6-7 kiloton underground nuclear blast – close to China's northern border was not indicative of a true thermonuclear weapon. It may, however, have been a test of the atomic trigger used to detonate a full hydrogen weapon." Read Margolis' [full article here](#)



Jan. 16th ["US, Iran Step Back From the Brink"](#)

by Patrick J. Buchanan

"To awaken Thursday to front-page photos of U.S. sailors kneeling on the deck of their patrol

boat, hands on their heads in postures of surrender, on Iran's Farsi Island, brought back old and bad memories.

In January 1968, LBJ's last year, 82 sailors of the Pueblo were captured by North Korea and held hostage with Captain Lloyd "Pete" Bucher, and abused and tortured for a year before release.

In the final 444 days of the Carter presidency, 52 Americans were held hostage in Tehran, and released only when Ronald Reagan raised his hand to take the oath.

In 2001, under George W. Bush, an EP-3 with 24 crew members was crashed by a Chinese fighter and forced to land on Hainan Island, where they were held for 11 days until we expressed "sorrow."

Compared to these hostage-takings, the Farsi Island incident does not seem serious. Its resolution within hours by Secretary of State John Kerry and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif suggests that Iran wants nothing to halt implementation, just days away, of the nuclear deal that will release \$100 billion in frozen assets.

Facilitating the sailors' release was a taped admission by one, identified as the "commander," who called Iran's treatment of the sailors "fantastic," and said the intrusion into Iranian waters "was a mistake. That was our fault. And we apologize for our mistake."

Still, what the reactions to this incident reveal is that not only is the United States dealing with a divided regime and nation in Iran, the U.S. is itself divided on what course to pursue with Iran." Read the complete [article here](#)

Jan. 23rd [“Camerawoman who filmed Calais migrants mugging her colleague before they turned on her relives her horrifying ordeal”](#)

While there have been headlines mocking the pair of journalists working in “the Jungle” camera woman Maaïke Engels has taken to detailing the events, defending her and her co-workers documentary and pointing out elements often left out on reports of crime among the refugee camps. Published in the Daily Mail Engels writes “At the time, the attack seemed to go on for ages. But when I played back the video, it took only 45 seconds. We posted the footage on YouTube and within hours it went viral, attracting more than 600,000 viewers and being picked up by TV news channels. The film evoked a wild array of responses from both sides of the immigration debate. We were accused of being Right-wing, ‘pro-Muslim Lefties’, rank incompetents and even hoaxers. But we are far from naive amateurs. Teun has spent 25 years working in conflict zones and we had been filming in Calais for months. Since September, when we began our project, we have both noticed a huge deterioration in the camp, with increased disease, drug-taking, overcrowding and violence.”

Furthermore, she says “As the deputy mayor of Calais, Philippe Mignonet, told us: ‘They are obsessed with increasing tensions and setting the migrants up against the authorities.’ Earlier this month, the French authorities attempted to give some order to the Jungle’s chaos by building a container camp offering shelter to 1,000 migrants.

We went down with our cameras, only to find the No Borders Network stirring up dissent. Their leaflets warned of a hidden agenda, claiming: ‘They [the French authorities] veil their threats of eviction with the sweetness of compassion, they begin by offering limited sleeping space in a camp designed to trap people and rob them of their freedom.’

Hardly helpful to homeless migrants seeking shelter from the bitter January cold.

After an attempt to close down part of the Jungle, their website read: ‘The next time they come to take a piece of the Jungle, they can only expect one thing, a fight!’ And last week, parts of the camp did indeed erupt in flames ahead of the planned demolition.” You may read her full article, accompanied by photos and video footage by [clicking here](#).

Jan. 25th [“Iran-Saudi Conflict: Do We Have a Dog in this Fight?”](#)

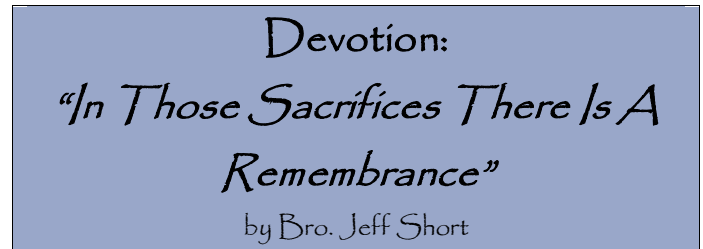
by José Azel Panam Post

“Following the execution by Saudi Arabia of a prominent Shiite cleric, and the subsequent demonstrations and burning of the Saudi embassy in Iran, tensions between the two countries have escalated. The region is now facing a multinational sectarian-cultural conflict. For most of us, only tangentially familiar with Middle Eastern politics, the root causes of the conflict are nearly impenetrable.

The US administration also appears clueless. [WikiLeaks documents quoted](#) then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

reporting that “donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide.”

Her successor, Secretary of State John Kerry, explained US-accelerated arms delivery to Saudi Arabia in the Yemen conflict by stating that “we’re not going to step away from our alliances and our friendships.” Huh?” Read the [article here](#)



But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. ~ [Hebrews 10:3](#)

The Law enforced that a blood sacrifice was required for sins. The Jews would observe the Day of Atonement as well as the daily ministrations, when they would bring the various sin and trespass offerings for their offenses. However, these sacrifices did not ultimately remove their guilt before God. We see that these offerings were made over and over again. Our text tells us that this repetition meant that there was a remembrance of sins made continually with those sacrifices. No matter how perfect their sacrifice was, it could not take away sins. It was not possible.

The Law was “**weak through the flesh.**” It was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could satisfy the exacting justice of God. It seems that the Law was a failure, but it fulfilled the Divine plan for which it was intended. The Law was not given to save from sin, “**for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**” [Romans 5:20](#) states: “**Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.**” So, the Law gives a knowledge of sin. The Law shows man his exceeding sinfulness before God. Paul refers to the Law as the ministration of death. He said, “**The letter killeth.**” The Law brought the curse it did not bring the remedy. But, it did point to the remedy.

The Law had a “**shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things.**” It was just a shadow. It did not have the substance. It was pointing to and leading to Christ. Its glory was to fade and the glory of Christ would remain. These continual offerings showed how inferior the Law was to the work of Christ. The Law sacrifices were made over and over, but the sacrifice of Christ was “**once for all.**” It is written of Christ, “**For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified**” ([He 10:14](#)). The sacrifice of Christ has freed us from the dread curse. We sing with the hymn writer:

Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,

Grace hath redeemed us once for all.
Once for all, O sinner, receive it;
Once for all, O brother, believe it;
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.

In Christ, our sins are swallowed up and remembered no more. Hear the testimony. **“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”** (Is 43:25). **“Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile”** (Ps 32:2). Whereas the Law had a remembrance of sins, in Christ our sins are removed as far as the east is from the west. In Him we are not dealt with after our sins. This is a precious and plain truth from our text. But, there is more to be gleaned if we look further.

We know that the Law foreshadowed Christ and that the repeated offerings showed that only by His sacrifice are we saved and our sins forgiven. What other reason could there be for the repeated offerings? When we consider [Leviticus 4:1-6:7](#) we can see a very practical reason for the repetition. In these verses a particular sin is in view. Therefore, the offerer was guilty of some sin or trespass and he would bring his offering, but before long he would sin again and have to repeat the process. The law of the sin and trespass offerings enumerates several different kinds of sins and sinners so that, with the offering a particular object is in view. The offerings were not made in a vague general way, but rather to expiate certain sins. We can also consider [Ezekiel 18:4-9](#) to get the same sort of enumeration of sins.

This is a wonderful picture to show us how complete the substitution of Christ was. As foreshadowed in the offerings, Christ actually died for actual sins. His death was not in general for sins, but rather in particular for the sins of His people. I believe that He bore all of my **“sins in His own body on the tree.”** If I had one sin that Christ did not die for, I would be eternally lost. **“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all”** (Ja 2:10). He suffered the punishment for all those actual and particular sins.

The exact justice of God demanded that **“every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward”** (He 2:2). Oh, what a Savior! He became a curse for us. We exult with Paul, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** (Ro 8:1). There is no remembrance of our sins God-ward, because Christ has taken them out of the way. If Christ has not paid for your sins, you will have to pay for them. Put your trust in that Lamb that was slain and you will find forgiveness of sins. Oh, praise His name! He has provided Himself a sacrifice and will remember those sins no more.



“Substitution”

by Bro. Todd Bryant

“Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son” - Genesis 22:13

The passage before us today contains one of the more popular Old Testament (true) stories. God had instructed Abraham to take the son that he had waited so long for and offer him as a burnt offering. Without hesitation, Abraham faithfully followed the Lord’s instruction. Though, Abraham knew that God had promised to bless him through Isaac. Even before leaving his companions to journey to the place of sacrifice, Abraham said, *“Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you”* (Genesis 22:5). We, Abraham? God had told you to offer your son as a burnt offering. There would be no “we” returning. But, Abraham knew better than we often do. Don’t misunderstand friends; Abraham fully trusted God and His promise to bless his seed through Isaac. Abraham was confident that even if Isaac was slain, God could raise him from the dead. This is one of the greatest expressions of faith in the entire Bible. The New Testament references this time by saying, *“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense”* (Hebrews 11:17-19).

Do not miss the point that this entire episode is a display of the confidence Abraham had in the Lord. What a wonderful example Abraham is for us! But, there is more...there is much more! The most glorious part of this story is not the display of Abraham’s faith. Without doubt, it is important. But, the typology here is much greater! Isaac was freed because God provided a ram to be offered “instead” of Isaac. The ram became his substitute. The ram satisfied God. What a picture! Though the sentence of death had been passed on Isaac, God supplied a way of escape through the ram! What a display of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Man is guilty before God. The sentence of death has been passed “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) – eternal death; eternal punishment! But, God has supplied a Way of escape from the penalty of our sins just as He supplied a way of escape for Isaac! “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus is the believer’s Substitute. He took what we deserved and paid the penalty for it. Because He paid our penalty, we cannot be condemned! Praise the Lord! Do you trust Christ alone today?

"The Effect Of Christ's Sacrifice"

by Bro. Curtis Pugh

The popular view regarding Christ's sacrifice is that He paid the price for the sins of all mankind. The sacrifice of Christ, they say, does not actually secure the salvation of anyone. The usual idea is that the salvation of a sinner is left up to him: he must actually decide for Christ or otherwise exercise what some call his free will in order to really be saved. In other words, according to the popular theory, Christ died equally for all men. In this way He made all men somehow saveable. They are not actually saved by the sacrifice of Christ. It is the sinner's responsibility to take hold of his own bootstraps and lift himself up out of unbelief and place his feet upon the step of faith. In this way his faith is in his faith – not in Christ alone at all! He is assured by the average Baptist preacher that if he was sincere and really meant his little magical prayer, he is saved. After all, they say, it is up to the sinner to initiate his own salvation by doing this or that or the other thing. Sometimes it is said that if the sinner will take the first step toward God, God will then do for the sinner all he needs done: God will reciprocate by taking all the other necessary steps. We are reminded of Spurgeon's story about the Catholic crusader. Having journeyed to the Holy Land and there in battle having been beheaded, the crusader picked his head up, tucked it under his arm and walked all the way back to Rome. Spurgeon declared that he would believe that legend on one condition: if that crusader could have taken the first step, he could have walked all the way back to Rome. That is, if he could have taken that first step.

We submit that if a spiritually dead sinner whose mind, emotions and will have all been ruined by the fall can initiate his own salvation, why indeed can he not complete what he initiated? We do not wish to engage here and now upon a consideration of the inabilities of fallen sinners. Our subject is rather, the sacrifice of Christ and its effects. We will see a grand and glorious salvation if we reject the theories of men and just let the Bible say what it says. That is always the best course: the course that leads to blessing and understanding. Our spirits are made in this way to feast upon the heavenly truths of God's eternal purpose and its outworking. Just what is the effect of Christ's sacrifice? What is or what are the results of His death on the tree? Did He merely make salvation within reach of all who will do this or that or the other? Or did Christ, by His bloody sacrifice, actually secure the salvation of sinners?

Observation forces us to conclude that Christ's sacrifice did not secure the salvation of all men unless we somehow can believe that salvation does not bring about holiness in those who are saved. If murderers, thieves, and all sorts of wicked men are saved only to continue in their wicked works, we ask, just what is it from which they are saved? The Bible is clear that though men were once evil workers, after they experience God's grace they are no longer such men as they were. Paul penned these words: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom

of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Again we notice in Paul's letter to the congregations in Galatia: "**Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,**" (Galatians 5:19-24). The absence of a changed life indicates the absence of salvation. The absence of the fruit of the Spirit indicates the absence of the Spirit.

As our text we want to consider this brief verse concerning the sacrifice of Christ and its effects: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," (Hebrews 10:14). In just over a dozen English words in our King James Bibles we have stated for us in the finest of terms the accomplishment of Christ for His people. First of all we notice that His people are identified as "them that are sanctified." Sanctified means set apart for a special purpose. People used to have sanctified clothing: our best garments were reserved for going to meeting on the Lord's Day. In fact they were often referred to as our "Sunday best." Those clothes were set apart for a special purpose. So it is that there are individuals who are "sanctified." Of these people we read that they were "...chosen... in him before the foundation of the world," (Ephesians 1:4). They did not set themselves apart: He set them apart when He chose them way yonder before this world's foundations on nothingness were laid.

Next we notice that what Christ accomplished He did so by His sacrifice or "offering." Hebrews 9:26 says in part, "...now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Christ saved no one by His birth. He saved no one by His miracles. He saved no one by His preaching and teaching. He saved no one by His perfect example of sinless living. We do not downplay these things: they are important. But salvation was obtained for "them that are sanctified" by Christ's sacrifice. He was nailed to a tree to die. He shed forth His blood in fulfillment of God's Old Testament requirement, "...almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission," (Hebrews 9:22). "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many..." (Hebrews 9:28).

So we have shown for whom it is that Christ accomplished what He accomplished: those that were set apart for this purpose. We have shown how He accomplished it: by His bloody sacrifice. Now we come to this matter: just what was it that Christ accomplished? Did He only make salvation possible as most professing Christians claim? Is there something lacking so that

unbelievers must somehow change themselves into believers in order to have his sins put away? Is that the gospel? No! No! A thousand times no! Our text says that Christ has “perfected for ever” those who were set apart! Now there is no addition to perfection or completeness. There cannot be! Language and logic forbid such an idea! God’s statement demands that we understand that nothing can be added to Christ’s work. Nothing needs to be added. The lost sinner has no ability to add anything to Christ’s finished work. Jewish priests stood daily often performing the same sacrifices over and over. Their work was never done. Their sacrifices could not take away sin. “But this man [Christ], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.” (Hebrews 10:12, brackets added).

No wonder then that Jude would address his letter in its first verse “...to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” Man-made religious teaching cannot stomach this verse just as they must twist our text. Jude’s order confounds them. Nevertheless, God says His people are first set apart for salvation by God the Father. They are preserved in Jesus Christ so that neither Satan nor his comrades can destroy them. And in due time they are called with a call which is effective: a call which makes them a child of God. And so we ask, just what did Christ accomplish by His sacrifice? What is the effect of Christ’s sacrifice? It is this: Christ by His bloody death accomplished a perfect salvation for God’s elect individuals. Men do not need to add, indeed, cannot add one particle to what Christ did perfectly. Will you believe that? Or must you put your faith in your faith, in your decision, in your praying, or will you believe what Christ did?

Devotion: *Leviticus 1:8-9*

by Bro. Jeff Short

And the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. ~ [Leviticus 1:8-9](#)

The burnt offering was a sweet savor offering. It was not an offering for sin to appease just wrath. It was rather an offering of worship to please God. God also had offerings that were for sin. We see from this that man has a two-fold problem. He owes divine justice for his transgression of the holy law. He also owes the holiness of God to fulfill all righteousness. There is a negative and a positive side. Now the offerings prefigure Christ, the one that was to come. We read in [Ephesians 5:2](#), “**And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.**” Christ did satisfy divine justice, suffering for sin. He also pleased the Father, walking in righteousness.

In particular now, the burnt offering is the object of our attention. And in this offering, certain aspects of the service of Jehovah’s servant can be seen. Let us now note how some of the particulars

here are related to service. We are considering the highest grade of the offering, which was a bullock. The ox was a laboring beast and very strong. The picture is of Christ as an untiring servant always working the works of the Father that sent Him. Peter spoke of Christ, saying He “**went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.**” He was always busy doing the work. Oftentimes He was so involved in service that He had “**no leisure so much as to eat.**”

God gave directions for every part of the animal to be used. He mentions the head, the fat, the legs, and the inwards. We see from this that our whole man is to be involved in this service. The head speaks of the intelligence. We must learn and grow if we are to serve God acceptably. The fat speaks of strength, vigor, and vitality. We must put forth an effort and expend our energy. How often was Christ weary and when involved in the work, virtue would go out of Him? The legs speak of our physical body and our walk. Christ went about doing good works. The inwards speak of our heart and soul. Nothing is to be kept back. We must employ all our faculties in God’s service. We read that the entire animal was to be burnt. We are to be consumed in God’s service. It was said of Christ in [Psalms 69:9](#), “**The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.**” Oh, to spend and be spent should be our aim.

The bullock was also the highest grade of the offering. The ox was much more valuable than a lamb or turtledoves. The ox was a very valuable animal indeed to the owner. Solomon said, “**Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox**” ([Pr 14:4](#)). To own such an animal was very profitable. In making this offering to God, it wasn’t just a bullock that was required, but the male without blemish. It was the best of the herd. We ought to serve God with the very best that we have. We should spare ourselves no expense in His blessed employment. We should be as the woman that came bearing an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard. It was very precious and she poured it out upon the Savior. Christian, what are you keeping back? What is just too precious to let go? Pour it out upon the Lord. Solomon said, “**There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt**” ([Ec 5:13](#)). Take the best that you have and offer it to God. He deserves no less, and a great deal more.

Lastly, we see that the offering was burnt with fire. The fire is the holiness of God. The service meets with God’s holiness and finds His approval. Our text says, “**it is a sweet savour unto the LORD.**” Note that it pleases the “**Lord.**” If you serve the Lord in this manner, giving your all, don’t expect your service to be accepted of men. Sometimes even our brethren will question, “**To what purpose is this waste?**” The Lord’s own family thought that He was beside himself and tried to take Him home. You may be a fanatic to some. But, never mind that, just keep endeavoring to “**do always those things that please him.**” He is the righteous judge and is able to keep that which we have committed to Him against that day. Great blessings await those that serve in this manner. “**To obey is better than sacrifice.**” As the hymn writer said,

But we never can prove, The delights of His love,
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favor He shows, And the joy He bestows,
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Labor In Love: Leap Of Faith

We've talked with quite a few people about multiple kinds of careers here in the past. This time we're going to focus a little less on someone's specific labor and look at an example of following God's leadership even when it doesn't make sense from human reasoning, when God calls someone to leave their job and make big changes. I'm sure we're all familiar with the Bible story of Abraham being called away from his family and home to a place he didn't know for a purpose he wasn't yet made aware of. How many of us have actually found ourselves in such a situation? Do you know someone who has left a good job and their home to move somewhere without a job already lined up and uncertain how they would make do? Someone other than a preacher or missionary?

In this issue Kara Catt is sharing her story and I believe it is an amazing example of living by faith and following God's leadership by a lay church member. May it be a blessing to you as she shares her story in her own words.

Her Testimony:

I was saved when I was ten years old, but had been under conviction since I was seven. Being raised a preacher's kid, I'd heard the gospel many times growing up, had talked to both my parents about wanting to be saved on several occasions, and had prayed countless times for God to save me. One conversation with my mom particularly stuck in my memory. I had asked my mom how I would know when I became saved, and she simply replied that I would just know. It didn't make sense to me at that point, but later it would. After I turned ten, the Lord was bringing me more and more under conviction. During invitations at church I would have an inner debate. I felt a pull to go upfront and talk to my dad, but I would always talk myself out of it, saying I'd go next time. One Sunday morning, after repeating the above debate, a friend asked if we could walk over to the parsonage (which was located beside our church) and talk for a bit. I agreed. She witnessed to me, we prayed together, but then she had to leave with her family. After my family arrived home, my mother could tell that something was bothering me, and asked what was wrong. I broke down and told her, "I just wanted to be saved". My dad then took me into his study and shared scripture with me. I can't remember any specific verses that he read, but I know that at that time the Holy Spirit opened up my heart, and God's Word came alive to me! The burden that I'd been carrying around was lifted and was replaced with a peace I'd never known before. I then understood what my mom had been referring to a few years

before. I KNEW that Christ had died for me personally, and that He was now my Lord and Savior.

On God's Call For Change In Her Life:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Prov. 3:5, 6

These are two of my favorite verses, and they've recently become even dearer. As many of you know, God lead me to take a huge leap of faith this year in leaving an area that has been home to me most of my life, moving 7+ hours away from my parents instead of a comfortable 10 minutes, selling a home that had been my little "oasis" for 7 years, leaving friends, co-workers, students, and a church family I loved, and also in quitting a good paying job that I enjoyed. It didn't make "sense". All of the above things said "Stay!", but the only thing I could have peace about was that He was saying "Go!"

I didn't (and still don't fully) understand God's plan in this, but it has been a blessing to see Him working things out each step of this journey. Here are only a few examples of the MANY ways God has taken care of me thru all of this:

- Employment - Even though I haven't known much of His plan in this move, I did feel a strong pull toward working in some of the local Christian schools. God has opened some doors, and I have been able to sub at two of them. It's been a huge blessing to have even a small part in these schools and in these students lives! Also, tomorrow I start my first day at the Middlefield Public Library as a Bookmobile Aide (with the hope of becoming a Driver in the near future). With all of my library experience, I never thought it'd take me this long to get a part-time job at one, but looking back, I can even see His hand in this "delay". One being that my new supervisor voluntarily said she wants to work with my schedule to still allow me to do as much subbing as I can. How many bosses would be that kind and generous? (She has subbed in the past and understands.) I have no doubt that all the other interviews I had (and there were many...and several that ended up between me and one other person) didn't work out because God wants me there.

- Selling my house - The realtor told me that the housing market always takes a steep dive in late fall/early winter. One day after my house went on the market, I received a decent offer and accepted it. There were no major delays, all inspections went smoothly, and two weeks ago, my house sale was finalized. - Finances - I had some money stuck back which has helped, but it was getting to the point where I knew that if God didn't open some doors soon, then I'd need to start looking elsewhere for a job. He brought about the house sale and the library job at just the right time.

- Church family - Even though I miss my former church family very much, I'm thankful for my new one. They have made me feel more at home in just a few months than what I thought possible. They're some of the kindest, loving people I've ever met, and I'm grateful to be a part of them.

I guess I wrote all of this to say "Thank you, Lord" for all of your blessings, but I also wanted to encourage each of you...just as the above verses say...trust Him, lean on Him, seek His guidance, and He will direct you...even if what He's telling you to do doesn't make sense. He is faithful! He will provide! Trust Him!

**"A Call To Fasting
And Prayer"**
by Bro. Wm. Doyal Thomas

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"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed ..." (Acts 13:1- 4a)

Fasting and prayer are doctrinal twins, and are to be a part of the preparation that the Lord's people engage themselves in as they make ready to serve Him, and to be used of Him in what ever calling He calls them to. This is a Bible doctrine, and it is applicable in this present age, as evidenced by the instance recorded in the New Testament in Acts as we have cited. It is required that the Lord's people be taught and led to practice these truths, both as individual believers and as members of one of the Lord's true New Testament churches. This doctrine does apply to disciples today.

Any great or small undertaking must be considered as an assignment that has originated with God, and has been given to His people to perform. **"Lord, what would YOU have ME to do?"** ought to be on the heart, mind, and lips of every child of God with each waking moment. Immediately on awakening, children of God should, in deep and humble gratitude thank Him for life and breath and for opportunity to serve Him. THEN, the question, **"What would you have me to do?"**

Not only as each day begins, but throughout each day we should seek His will. As many things as come to our minds and hearts to consider, each action should be prefaced with proper preparation. No one can properly perform who is improperly prepared, or ill prepared, or unprepared to do what is required. One cannot serve God acceptably who is not prepared to serve Him well and faithfully.

Why do I fail so often? Why do you fail so often? Could it be that we undertake without adequate preparation? Could it be that we are ill- equipped to do His service? Does He use dull implements to prepare His fields for sowing? Does He bless the workman who disregards the provision that He has made available for the workman's use? Does God give victory over enemies when His own soldiers march to battle in their own strength and do not avail of His arsenal of weapons.?

The texts that were cited as we began relate to one of the Lord's churches as she received of the Lord explicit command to prepare certain men whom He had called to a certain duty. It was not left to the option or discretion of the church at Antioch, nor to the pastor of that church, nor to the membership of that church, nor to the missionary inductees themselves as to whether, or how they were to undertake this duty and march under these orders. **"... the Holy Ghost said ..."** is the final authority behind the specified duty, and that authority is beyond any debate or question. That stated mission assignment was specific, for it was spoken to a specific church, about specific men, for a specific duty.

So are all other assignments that come to the Lord's churches and to His servants. The directions are not always verbalized, or otherwise articulated as clearly and as unmistakably as this, but specific none the less. And it behooves us as servants and as churches to seek to ascertain exactly and precisely what the Lord intends concerning our actions, or our waitings upon Him as we serve Him acceptably.

Thus, fasting and prayer are means that God has ordained so that we can better discern His will for our lives. As was evidenced by the church at Antioch, recorded for our teaching and example, we read again: **"And as they ministered to the Lord, and FASTED, the Holy Ghost said, ... (Vs. 2). "And when they had FASTED AND PRAYED ... (Vs. 3).**

Would the church at Antioch have been likely to discern the leadership of the Holy Spirit in this announcement had they not been in a fasting and prayerful mode? Speculation on this issue will not help us to understand. What we have before us in the fact that the church WAS in that mode, and that the Holy Spirit DID speak to them so that they clearly and distinctly knew what He wanted them to do. To ask, "What if ..." is foolish, for "what if", is not relevant to the Scriptures. The Scriptures speak, and leave nothing to "what if", as verified in this case, and as is true in all other cases.

It is my belief and conviction that the Lord's children are, generally, in such state of unbelief and / or backsliding until they are much more feeble and weak then they could or should be. It is my conviction that weak and feeble workmen seldom perform well, and seldom receive the blessing of **"good and faithful"** servants. In effect, when we do not perform our duties faithfully and well, we have done two great wrongs. First, we have dishonored our God who has called us to His field, and secondly, in doing so, we have forfeited the blessings that we could have received, had we been obedient and faithful.

I stand amazed at the number of times that I have witnessed, or

heard others confess the many empty days, weeks, months, and years that have gone by when their lives did not seem joyous and happy. But even more amazing to me is the fact that so often these same individuals ask anyone with whom they are in contact, "Why do problems continue in my life? Why do these things happen to me? I am a Christian, and yet my life is so unfulfilled. I am so empty and confused. Does God not love me anymore? If He does, why does He let these awful things to happen in my life?"

Oh, dear professing Christian, do you not read in God's Bible His directions for your life? Do you not hear His messengers tell you that you are to submit to His ways and conduct your life according to His precepts and principles? Do you not have enough interest in God's ways to lead you to study, fast, and pray? Do you not hear God?

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah 40:28-31).

Our weakness is compensated by His supply. And it is not a matter of "me and God". Rather, it is a matter of His children drawing on His strength, as we are enabled to realize that He alone is the source of all good things. He alone supplies our need as we lean hard on Him and drink at His spring, and feast at His table. **"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."** (Philippians 4:13) **"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."** (Philippians 2:13)

Please consider now what James says as he writes to the scattered saints of God among Israel's race whom God had scattered abroad at the dispersion. God had sent them abroad, that is, to far places, to spread His word and to teach them that even in their goings, they must rely upon, and trust Him for their needed strength and enablement.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." (James 1:5,6)

And then, he brings this charge against them:

"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James 4:2-3)

Jesus Himself, said to His disciples, **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** (John 15:7) Clearly, Jesus is instructing His disciples in faithful abiding. He is assuring them that if they abide in Him, and His words abide in them, THEN, they may ask what they will, and they shall receive accordingly. The

implication is also crystal clear that where there is no abiding, there is no assurance of receiving. Disciples are responsible to abide (continue) and to keep the teaching of His words, if they are to expect any blessing. **"And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"** (Luke 6:46)

Is there success when God's people obey Him? Is there connection between proper preparation, which clearly includes fasting and prayer, to the successful discharge of the duty and obligation that God assigns? Let's remember the attitude and the action of the church at Antioch that attention was called to as we began this treatise, and then let's look to the record of that church and her God called and sent missionaries.

Paul and his companions were used of the Lord in mighty ways for a number of years in the spreading of the gospel of the grace of God to the regions of the world heretofore left untouched. Multitudes of God's elect were called by the gospel unto salvation. Many churches were established, strengthened, and caused to function faithfully for many years. In fact, the entire Gentile world, as well as Israel still bear the glorious effects of this church at Antioch and the faithful disciples continuance in fasting and prayer as they labored those many years. And always, the missionaries returned at the conclusion of their separate journeys to rehearse with their church the mighty ways in which the Holy Spirit had sustained them and blessed their work.

I now call upon the Christian people of America and the world to come back to God's way, and prepare for service the Lord's way, by fasting and prayer.

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 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 shall 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." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (II Chronicles 7:14)

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