



Vol. XLII

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# The Gospel In A Nutshell

Johnie Edwards

The apostle Paul put the gospel of Christ in a nutshell when he wrote, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:4). Paul affirmed to the Romans that their confession must include the fact, “. . . that God hath raised him from the dead” (Rom. 10:9).

### The Power Of God To Save

The gospel of Christ is the power of God to save sinners. Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation . . .” (Rom. 1:16). This gospel contains facts to be believed, commands to obey, and promises to enjoy. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Believing that Jesus is the Son of God and believing the gospel are the facts to be believed, repenting of past sins (Acts 2:38) and being baptized are commands to be obeyed. Salvation from past sins and eternal salvation, if faithful (Rev. 2:10), are the promises to be enjoyed. No wonder Paul could tell the Corinthians, “I declare unto you the gospel, by which also ye are saved” (1 Cor. 15:12).

### The Ascension Of Christ

The great thing about Christ, his life, his death, and his resurrection is his ascension back to his Father. In fact, the coming of Christ into the world would have meant nothing more than any other man coming into the world, had he not died on the cross. Yet, the death of Christ on the cross would have meant no more than the death of any other, had God not

*see “Gospel” on p. 504*

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# The Church Manifests God's Manifold Wisdom

Mike Willis

**To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:10-11).**

This wonderful Scripture expresses a thought that staggers the mind's ability to comprehend and appreciate. This Scripture states that the angels in heaven learn the manifold wisdom of God through seeing what God has accomplished in the church.

Paul previously expressed his deep feeling of indebtedness to divine grace that God had given to him and the other apostles and prophets the blessed privilege of revealing his previously concealed mystery, namely that the Gentiles could be fellow-heirs of the promises of Christ through the gospel. He was blessed with the grace of preaching to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, bringing to light to all men that mystery which God had kept secret since the world began. But now at the end of the ages, God revealed his mystery.

The "principalities and powers in heavenly places" are the various orders of angels in heaven. The angels see what God accomplished in the church and see through the church the manifold wisdom of God. The point is not that the church preaches the manifold wisdom of God when it preaches the gospel, although this is a true statement; rather, the church manifests the wisdom of God in the same manner as a beautiful painting manifests the skills of a painter, a bridge displays the skills of an architect, and a beautiful song displays the skills of its lyrist and musicians. When the angels see what God has accomplished in the church, they see the manifold wisdom of God that was concealed throughout the ages during which his divine plan was coming to fruition. Henry Alford quoted Stier as saying that to the angels, the church is "the fact of the great spiritual body, constituted in Christ, which they contemplate, and which is to them the *theatron tes doxas tou Theou*" (theater of the glory of God, mw) (*The Greek Testament: Ephesians III:106*). H.A.W. Meyer said, "To the angels, in accordance with their ministering interest in the work of redemption (Matt. xviii.10; Luke xv.7, 10; 1 Cor. xi.10; Heb. i.14; 1 Pet. i.12), the church of the redeemed is therefore, as it were, the

See "The Church" p. 504

# Editorial Left-overs

Connie W. Adams

## Preaching in the Dark

Twice within recent weeks I have had to preach in the dark when lightning struck transformers just before service time (Galena, Indiana) or just after the sermon began (Marshall's Branch near Virgie, Kentucky). At Galena, there were windows in the building and we had a sort of twilight. We sang from memory. There was not enough light to read and so an outline would have been useless, neither could I see the Bible to read it. At Marshall's Branch the lights flickered during the singing. When I arose to preach, I told the audience to just stay put if the lights went out and I would preach with or without lights. I soon had my chance. Just after beginning, off went the lights (stayed off for many hours over a wide area). Did you ever try to preach a sermon from a cloth chart in the dark? As I continued, one of the brethren brought in a huge flashlight. David Thacker sat on the front row and held the light on the chart. It was like having a spot light. The audience remained calm, even the children, and several said they would long remember the service. I am thankful for teachers many years ago who insisted on a great amount of memory work in the Scriptures.

A couple of thoughts to pass on: (1) You can't tell who goes to sleep; (2) I have been convinced for a long time that many preachers preach in the dark all the time for they are ignorant of the word of God.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Ps. 119:105).

## Attitudes in Controversy

In January 1968, 26 brethren met in Arlington, Texas to discuss issues related to institutionalism and the sponsoring church. Thirteen men from each side of the controversy participated and a book was published giving the speeches presented. That book has been a useful tool in studying basic differences which had been widening for nearly two decades before this discussion took place. James W. Adams made the following comments in his Introductory Statement:

Furthermore, we made the agreement that there would be no personal reflections of any kind upon anyone, that everyone would be treated with absolute fairness, and that we would recognize one another as brethren. Of course, we recognize that you think we are wrong, — and we believe you are wrong. We would not be here if this were not so. Yet, we recognize each other as brethren. Each one of us comes into this meeting with the understanding that all of us are sincere in that for which we are contending. Hence, we shall not only recognize one another as brethren,

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but as sincere brethren, each person honestly contending for what he believes to be the truth.

We believe that all of us are big enough men and that we have enough respect for the Lord to engage in a discussion of this kind in this spirit and attitude. With reference to the results, we have qualified hopes. Some people ask us, "What do you hope to come from this?" I answer, "I do not know actually." They ask, "How much good do you think will be accomplished?" I answer, "I do not know." But, neither do I know the answer to this question when I stand up to preach. I honestly do not know how much good will come from this meeting, but it is certainly never wrong for brethren who profess to serve a common Lord in a common cause to sit down and discuss their differences with one another in the spirit and attitude which we have suggested for this meeting. We hope this will be a pleasant time for all of us and it will be a discussion such as will glorify God and benefit His cause in the world (*The Arlington Meeting* 13).

We commend this spirit as worthy of emulation whenever brethren find themselves drifting apart.

### The Power of the Almighty

Man in all his vaunted wisdom and power cannot stop the fury of a hurricane or a tornado. He can devise warning systems and reasonably guess the path these may take. He cannot stop the rain, nor make it come. He cannot prevent the lightning. When man has to tangle with the forces of the natural world, you would think this would generate an awe and reverence for the Almighty. When God answered Job "out of the whirlwind" he included these challenging questions:

Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that an abundance of water may cover you? Can you send out lightnings, that they may go, and say to you, "Here we are"? (Job 38:34-35).

I never hear it thunder, nor see the lightning flash but what I am made to realize how frail I am. Such a consideration should produce within us a profound respect for the God of the Universe and should completely amaze us when we think of his grace and mercy offered through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Dennis Gulledge

## The Ingredients of a Fifteen-Minute Sermon

Did you hear about the Baptist preacher, recently, who decided to cut his religious services down to 22 minutes and issued it as a challenge to see if people would be bold enough to “receive their religion in small doses”? He wanted to do for his preaching what McDonald’s has done for food — make it fast! What this preacher proposes is nothing new, and he certainly is right up there with some of our brethren in his fascination for brevity.

The length of a sermon is purely a subjective matter. There is no right and wrong as to the time involved. The personal preferences of people get involved and everybody has his opinion about it. As far as opinions go, one is about as good as another.

It isn’t as though I haven’t given some thought to learning the art of the fifteen-minute sermon. I have given serious consideration to the ingredients of such, and here are my conclusions:

- Leave out a lot of Scripture. Keep to a minimum the quoting, reading, and preaching of the Word.
- Dispense with heartfelt appeals for lost souls.
- Don’t study.
- Eliminate applications from Bible passages that might fit our time and situations in life. It might take a few minutes.
- Quit calling them sermons and call them “nice little talks,” or better yet, “sermonettes.”
- Forget boldness in the pulpit — you might be prompted to linger.
- Never condemn sin! There is too much of that to have to deal with. For the sake of brevity you may just have to ignore it.
- Minimize any concern for the disobedient and wayward persons in your audience. You might spend too many tears privately and too many words publicly in trying to reach them. And besides, people will be too busy studying their watches to hear what is said anyway.

- Leave out any treatment of issues troubling the church. You might be perceived as being “negative,” and you might get bogged down in warning people.
- Just have something to say instead of something you have to say. Try to squelch any feelings of earnestness about your task. Just get the job done quickly!

This is what I would have to recommend to my preaching brethren if they are to learn the art of the fifteen-minute sermon. However, it appears that many of them caught on years ago, when you consider some of the ingredients above. All in all, it appears that more is left out of the sermon than is put in.

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## Walking In The Fear Of God (2)

In the first article we defined fear as involving two concepts that are inseparable (as the two sides of a coin): (1) Being afraid of displeasing God, and (2) Respect and awe for God. Let's consider now what that fear will cause us to do.

### What Fear Causes Us To Do

*1. Do what God says.* While we do not live under the OT law (Gal. 3:24-25; 2 Cor. 3), books like Deuteronomy, which emphasize obedience to the law, serve to demonstrate the relationship of the fear of God to obedience. Notice that connection in the following passages:

That you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you . . . (Deut. 6:2).

Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him (Deut. 8:6).

You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and shall keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him (Deut. 13:4).

And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes . . . (Deut. 17:19).

If you fear the Lord and serve Him and obey His voice and do not rebel against the commandment of the Lord. . . (1 Sam. 12:14).

The one who fears God will obey to the utmost as Abraham did in his attempt to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22:12). When God saw he was willing to go that far in obedience, he said, "Now I know that you fear God." This is obedience with no excuses, question, or doubt.

*2. Be dedicated.* The one who fears God is devoted and dedicated with all his heart. There is no place for half-hearted service among those who fear God. Again, consider some passages from Deuteronomy.

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul (Deut. 10:12).

You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him, and to him you shall hold fast . . . (Deut. 10:20).

This dedication means that one will be careful in his obedience (in contrast to a haphazard or careless approach to the Christian life) (Deut. 17:19). Consider some other passages from Deuteronomy:

. . . that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law (Deut. 31:12).

If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD (Deut. 28:58).

*3. Hate sin.* Because of the love and respect one has for God, he will develop a hatred for sin. He not only will hate sin, but will cease the practice of it. The Proverb writer said, "Fear the Lord and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:7). Again he wrote, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Prov. 8:13; cf. 16:6).

Moses told God's people at Sinai that God's presence on the mount (the display of thundering, lightening, sounding of the trumpet, and the smoke on the mountain) was to test them "that his fear may be before you, so that you may not sin" (Exod. 20:20). Thus, if one fears God, he will hate sin and cease the practice of it.

The Psalmist said, "Because they do not change, therefore they do not fear God" (Ps. 55:19). When people persist in sin and never change (whether an alien in the world or a supposed "Christian") the problem is they do not fear God.

*4. Honor God.* Nehemiah described himself as one of the people who "desire to fear Your Name" (Neh. 1:11). That desire caused him to view God with the highest respect. He described God as the "great and awesome God" (Neh.

1:5; 4:14).

Our view of God ought not be a casual one that thinks of God as our “buddy.” In attitude, words, and action we should praise him as the Almighty (Rev. 4:11), the creator of the world (Gen. 1:1), the one who holds the world in the palm of his hands (Isa. 40), the one who caused the sun and the moon to stand still (Josh. 10:12-14), the one who delivered his people from the hand of the Egyptians with wonders and signs (Exod. 7-14), and the one who raised his Son from the dead (John 20).

*5. Respect for the word of God.* If one honors God, he will have the utmost respect for his word. Remember that Nehemiah described those among whom he worked (as he did himself) as those “who desire to fear” Because of that fear they were attentive to Ezra as he read and explained the law (Neh. 8:2). They stood when Ezra opened the book in their presence (v. 5).

If we fear God, we too will hold the word in high esteem. We should view the Bible as the inspired word that came from the mouth of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 9:13). We should never forget that this is the book by which we will be judged in the last day (John 12:48). The way we refer to the word and the way we respond to it will reflect whether or not we respect it.

*6. Respect and treat others right.* Respect for God means that we will respect our fellowman. Moses thought that Abimelech would not treat him or Sarah right because he did not fear God. He said, “Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife” (Gen. 20:11).

Nehemiah rebuked some who were mistreating their brethren by exacting usury from them saying, “What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies?” (Neh. 5:9). Notice the contrast in the fear of God and the mistreatment of others. David said that those who rule over others should do so in the fear of God (2 Sam. 23:3).

Many of the laws given on Sinai that dealt with how Israel was to treat others put walking in the fear of God in contrast to mistreatment of others. For example, “You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the Lord” (Lev. 19:14; cf. Lev. 19:32; 25:17, 36, 43).

### **Conclusion**

Walking in the fear of God involves more than being baptized. It involves more than going to church. May this study challenge us to be more dedicated, more devoted and sacrifice more for the cause of the Lord.

## **Can You See God?**

**Wayne Wise**

*(Elders' Note: Wayne Wise is one of our fine young members here at Pruett & Lobit. He is 14 years old. His father serves as one of our deacons. We thought you might enjoy and profit from Wayne's first article. — Larry Hafley)*

In class yesterday, I overheard a conversation between a boy and a girl. The boy is a “gangster” looking guy, but he always seems to talk about God. He is one of these people who, in the seventh inning of a baseball game, holds up a sign with John 3:16 written on it. But, anyway, the boy told the girl that he had a card that had something on it which allowed one who saw it, and closed his eyes and thought about it, to see God.

I didn't say anything to the boy, but I thought to myself, “That is the stupidest thing I have ever heard! No one has ever seen God” (John 1:18)! I thought about it a little longer and came to the conclusion that I was wrong. Brother Larry Hafley is the preacher where I attend. He preached a series entitled, “Have You Ever Read Shakespeare?” He showed that the term was talking about his writings and not literally about Shakespeare himself. Also, in the same way, we see God. We don't see him like the boy said, but we see him when someone is standing up for the gospel and preaching. We see him when we look outside and see his creations (Gen. 1; Ps. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:18-21).

I see God the same way I see people from long ago. People that built the pyramids in Egypt have long since disappeared from sight. I do not see them, but I see the work they left behind. I have never seen Washington, Jefferson, or Franklin, but I see the U.S. government system they created and the constitution we live under. I see them through their works.

No, I have never seen God. I know that no one has. I don't need a card with something on it to see God. To look around and see his wonderful works is enough.

## “The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant”

A reader asks: How does Hebrews 13:20 relate to the discussion about “One Covenant” or “The Eternal Covenant”? Does this passage give credence to the idea that God has only had one covenant?

First, the book of Hebrews abounds in points of contrast. Indeed, contrasts are the fiber and fabric of the letter. If one doubts it, let him take them away and see what he has left!

Second, the thirteenth chapter, true to the nature of the book, is soaked and saturated with sure and certain contrasts. (1) There are two sources of strength (v. 9). (2) There are two altars, and, by implication, two tabernacles (v. 10; cf. 8:2; 9:2). (3) There are two bodies of sacrifice, the “bodies of those beasts (animals),” and the body of Christ (v. 11; cf. Col. 1:22). (4) There are two “end-results” of those sacrificed bodies. The “bodies of those beasts . . . are burned without the camp,” while the body of Jesus was “brought again from the dead” (vv. 11, 20). (5) There are two “bloods,” the blood of animals and “his own blood,” the blood of Christ (vv. 11, 12; cf. Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:18-23). (6) There are two high priests, the Old Testament high priest and, by implication, Jesus, our high priest — someone had to bring the offering into the sanctuary; in the Old Testament, it was the high priest; in the New Testament, it is Christ (vv. 11, 12; cf. 3:1; 5:1-6; 9:25, 10:10-14). (7) There are two cities. One is earthly Jerusalem; the other is “the heavenly Jerusalem” (v. 14; cf. 11:16; 12:22). (8) There are two covenants. One is “everlasting” (in contrast to that which is temporary) having been established “through the blood” of Christ (v. 20; cf. Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:18-10:14).

Third, the contrast between that which is temporary and that which is “everlasting” threads and weaves itself throughout the book of Hebrews. (Does this need to be proven to Christians?!)(1) There is the “changeable” versus the “unchangeable priesthood” (5:6; 7:24). (2) There is the provisional, temporary tabernacle and there is the eternal, “true tabernacle” (8:2; 9:2, 11, 12). In short, there is the shadow and there is the substance. (3) There is a kingdom which could be, and was, moved, and there is a “kingdom

which cannot be moved” (12:28; cf. Dan. 2:44; Luke 1:32, 33 — What is the difference between a kingdom which “shall never be destroyed,” and of one of which “there shall be no end,” and one “which cannot be moved”?). The “everlasting covenant of 13:20 is the same as the “new covenant.” The blood of the new covenant is the blood of Christ (Matt. 26:28). The blood of the “everlasting covenant” is also the blood of Christ; hence, the “everlasting covenant” is the “new covenant.” (4) There is a law which could be, and was, changed, and there is a new and living way, or law, which cannot be altered, shaken, or abolished (2:3; 7:11-14; 8:10; 10:20, 26-29; 12:25). (5) There was a temporary covenant and there is “the everlasting covenant” (13:20; cf. Gal. 3:6-4:7).

Fourth, study the contrasts made by use of the word, “better,” in Hebrews (7:19, 22; 8:6; 11:4; 12:24). (1) There is “a better hope” (7:19). Better than what? The contrast is with the “law.” The “better hope” of 7:19 is the “better testament” of 7:22. The “law,” the “first covenant” made nothing perfect, but the “better hope,” the “second” covenant did. This “better hope” is the means whereby “we draw nigh unto God.” By the law, we cannot draw nigh unto God. This is what the Holy Spirit signified (9:8). However, through the “new covenant,” the “better hope,” we draw nigh unto God.

(2) The “better covenant” of 8:6 is the same as the “better testament” of 7:22. Note this: Under the law, Christ could not serve, could not minister (8:4). But under the “new covenant” he has “obtained a more excellent ministry.” The law is the “first covenant.” Under it Christ could not minister. Under the “new covenant,” he ministers, serves. How, then, are they “one covenant”?

(3) Were Cain and Abel’s sacrifices “one sacrifice”? No, Abel’s was “better,” and it was *another* sacrifice, one other than Cain’s (Gen. 4:3-7). Likewise, when we read of a “better covenant,” we are reading of *another* (not the same) covenant.

(4) In 8:6, “he (Christ) is the mediator of a better covenant.” In 9:15, “he is the mediator of the new testament.” In 12:24, Jesus is “the mediator of the new covenant.” Christ

is not the mediator of two covenants. He is “the mediator of the *new*, and not the mediator of *two*.”

Utilizing the argument of the Hebrew writer in 7:11-14 (since the priesthood has been changed, “*there is made of necessity a change also of the law*”), we draw some parallel and corollary conclusions. Since the tabernacle system has been changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law (9:1-17). Since the sacrificial system has been changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the covenant (8:1-4; 9:12-14; 10:1-14; cf. Gal. 2:16-21).

It is by and through “the blood of the everlasting covenant,” *not* through that covenant which was temporary and provisional, that we have “obtained eternal redemption” (cf. “eternal redemption” with “everlasting covenant”; 9:12-14; 10:10-14). How could a covenant be “everlasting” when its systems and sacrifices, its provisions and pronouncements, are to be altered, set aside, annulled, superseded, and “pass away”?

The “everlasting covenant” is no more the same covenant as that of the Old than is the priesthood of Aaron the same as that of Christ (8:4). The “everlasting covenant” is no more the same covenant as that of the Old than is the sacrifice of animals the same as that of “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ” (10:10). The “everlasting covenant” is no more the same covenant as that of the Old than is David’s civil kingship the same as Christ’s spiritual reign and rule (1:5-9).

Finally, the “first,” or “old” testament was dedicated with the blood of animals (9:18, 19). It was identified as “the blood of the testament” (9:20). Get that; hear it. The blood of animals was “the blood of the (first, or old) testament.” In contrast, Jesus’ blood is the “blood of the new testament” (Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20). This blood, his blood, dedicated the new testament — “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (9:15). The new testament did not become of force before the death of Christ (9:16, 17).

Again, the word “better” plays a prominent part. It was “necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with *better* sacrifices than these” (9:23). Does any Christian not know what that “better sacrifice,” that better blood is?! His blood, his sacrifice, cleansed and purified that which the old typified (9:24-27). Hence, the blood of Christ dedicated the new covenant (10:9, 10, 19, 20). This is why, therefore, that the Hebrew writer said that we are come “to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (12:22, 24). His blood is the blood of the new covenant, “the blood of the everlasting covenant” (13:20). That covenant is as distinct from the first covenant as the blood of animals is separate and distinct from the blood of Christ.

## Conclusion

This know and believe. Whenever men pervert and pollute obvious truth, they have a hidden agenda, a doctrine, a practice, a form of worship, and a way of life they are seeking to justify. Since they cannot otherwise have their views and philosophies accepted by them that believe and know the truth, they must wrest the Scriptures in order to fit their system into the mold and pattern of truth. Do not be deceived. Despite their protestations to the contrary, this is the path of all those who are ensnared in this “one covenant” controversy. False teachings have their consequences, and this “one, eternal covenant” idea is no exception.

Some will sympathize with and apologize for the advocates of the “One Covenant” doctrine. Others will say that they cannot see where it makes a difference. “After all,” they will say, “those who believe the ‘one covenant’ theory are just like us in every other form of doctrine, work and worship; so, what’s the big deal?” The “big deal” is that those of the “one covenant” view, or any other false idea, are *not* “just like” those whose deeds and doctrine are after the New Testament order. One might not be able to identify all the consequences of their false position, and he may not immediately see the ungodly lifestyle that their view promotes, but he can know such things are there and that, sooner or later, they will surface. It is not a harmless diversion. It has moral and doctrinal tentacles that will drown men in destruction and perdition. At least, that is what Peter said (2 Pet. 2:1-3). While “they feast with you” and “promise (you) liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption” (2 Pet. 2:13, 19).

Of course, these things were not seen at first glance. These “false teachers” were not seen as wolves. They appeared in sheep’s clothing; that is, they came in privately and secretly introduced their poison. They spoke alluring, enticing words and were received as great and good men (2 Pet. 2:18; cf. Acts 8:9-11). So it is with this “One Covenant” idea. “Be not deceived.” You can make certain that something is “rotten up the creek.” “And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch” (Mark 13:37). (See material below for more complete information.)

Perhaps the most thorough, comprehensive answer to the question under discussion was given by Ashley S. Johnson. The article which follows is from a sermon he preached on February 20, 1899. It is found in his book, *The Two Covenants* 123-139. It is reproduced for your study and reflection.

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Ashley S. Johnson

## The New Covenant

Monday, February 20, 1899; 7:30 p.m.

**Text:** “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to which is glory for ever and ever. Amen (Heb. 13:20-21).”

I think I may say that we are now prepared for the discussion of the new covenant. I have read these introductory passages because I think they are the most appropriate ones on the subject. They emphasize particularly the thought of the blood of the everlasting covenant. What blood was that? Whose blood was it? When was that blood shed? Certainly it is not the blood that was shed when the mark of circumcision was placed upon Abraham and his children. What covenant is meant? Certainly it is not the covenant dedicated by the blood of goats and calves at Mount Sinai. Certainly it is not the covenant that was broken so many times by Israel in the days of Moses and Joshua and Samuel and David and Isaiah and Jeremiah and the other prophets. I think that we may get a better understanding of these passages by reflecting a little on some of the passages discussed already. But in order that I may impress on you the thought that the blood of the everlasting covenant is the blood of Jesus I submit His own words. Matthew testifies as follows: “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). Again, I call your attention to the testimony of Paul: “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:28, 29). Again, the testimony of the same writer: “And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused

him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven” (Heb. 12:24, 25). I call your attention to this fact: We are under a new covenant or testament — the blood of that covenant or testament is the blood of Jesus, that blood was shed on Calvary and the covenant wherewith it was dedicated is the everlasting covenant or the everlasting testament.

I shall have to trust to your memories largely to establish the connection between the argument now and the argument in the past, but I shall present two of the most important passages that have been discussed already by way of refreshing your minds: “In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13). Again: “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*” (Heb. 10:9, 10). I pause here long enough to re-emphasize two thoughts: The old covenant is taken away, the new covenant is established. In the second verse that I quote he uses another word, the word “will.” He might as well have said covenant or testament but he said “will,” declaring that we are sanctified by that will by the offering of the body of Jesus once for all. I think I could abundantly establish my proposition by the Scriptures of the New Testament but I want to show you that even the prophets of God under the first covenant or first testament looked forward to the establishment of the second testament or the new testament. I read from Jeremiah. His testimony came hundreds of years after the inauguration of the covenant at Sinai. It is therefore valuable not only as showing that the new covenant was to be established but in his estimation it was to take the place of the old: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it

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in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:31-34). Let us analyze this prophecy. It was uttered fully six hundred years before the birth of Christ and therefore nine hundred years after the inauguration of the covenant at Sinai. Understand me: This prophet was a competent witness. He was a member of the first covenant by virtue of birth, of blood, of life, of choice and I want to carefully study what he has to say. First, he declared that the day would come when God would make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; second, that it would not be like the covenant that He made with them when He took them by the hand and brought them out of Egypt; third, that the covenant that He would make with them after those days would be that His law should be put in their inward parts — hearts; fourth, that He would be their God and they should be His people; fifth, that they should no more exhort one another to know the Lord because all of them should know Him; and sixth, He would be merciful unto their unrighteousness and remember their sins no more. This prophet who understood fully the law of Moses, or the covenant at Sinai, was doubtless impressed with the differences. Back at Sinai the law was written on tables of stone, but looking forward to the time of Jesus he said that the new covenant should be written on the hearts or the inner parts of men. A vast difference, if you please. Cold and pulseless stone; living hearts, living minds! Stone engraven by the finger of God; hearts made warm and tender under the influences of His love! But I desire to pursue the idea of the prophet and therefore I turn to the New Testament Scriptures: “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor. 3:5, 6). Who said this? Paul. Who was he talking about? Jesus and His apostles. What was he talking about? The new covenant and its ministers. Jeremiah had said that God would make

a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Paul says here that he and his associates were ministers of a covenant. Yes of the new covenant, not of the letter, that is the law, but of the spirit which giveth life. How delightful it would be if we could call Paul back to earth and have him testify further on the subject. How I should like to sit down at his feet and take my Bible and read to him Jeremiah’s prophecy and ask him to tell us just what it means! But hold, that is not necessary. He told us that and he left it on record that we might find out for ourselves. I will turn to the record and read: “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord! I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:6-12). There are the words of Jeremiah quoted by Paul. Notice how he introduces them and how he closes them. In his introduction he says of Jesus that He had obtained a more excellent ministry, that is a more excellent ministry than that which existed under the old covenant, and that He is the Mediator of a better covenant or testament and that this better covenant or testament is established upon better promises; that is, better promises than the promises of the old covenant. He quoted the words of the prophet approvingly, declaring that God had found fault with them and that he no longer regarded Himself under obligation to them and finally reaches the climax in the oft-repeated words: “In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13). Again: “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanc-

tified. *Whereof* the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, *This is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; *And having* a high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised” (Heb. 10:9-23). Here is a perfect mine, not of precious stones, but of precious truths. Let us dig some of them out. First, Jesus came to do the will of God — He removed the old and established the new. Second, by His will, or testament, or covenant, we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus. Third, the priests and sacrifices of the old covenant can never take away sins — behold the contrast: the old “can never take away” sins; the new way sanctifies by one offering. Fourth, He who gave Himself is now at God’s right hand and bringing His foes into subjection to His authority. Fifth, He is perfecting and sanctifying forever. Sixth, the Holy Spirit is witness of these things. Seventh, again the apostle quotes and confirms the prophecy of Jeremiah relative to the new covenant, its laws and the permanent removal — forgiveness of sins. Eighth, no other offering is now needed for sin, in order to the forgiveness of sins. Ninth, we have the privilege to enter into the real Holy of Holies with boldness by the blood of Jesus. Tenth, the way into the presence of God is a new way, not an old way, or a way part old and part new. Eleventh, we have a high priest over the house of God — in the presence of God. Twelfth, we may have our hearts sprinkled — delivered from the consciousness of sin, and our bodies washed with pure water. Thirteenth, we can hold fast our profession without wavering under our faithful High Priest. Here are thirteen startling, searching, revolutionary truths, not one of which was true or could be true under Moses — under the first covenant! See: Un-

der the first, many priests, many offerings, no real remission of sins, no good conscience! See; Under the second, one Priest, one Offering, sin forever blotted out, good conscience, all by the new way! Question: Where is the man who in view of these things, would desire to re-establish the old covenant or go back and live under its provision even if it were possible? Where is the man who would prefer the law to the Gospel? Where is the man who would prefer Aaron to Christ? Where is the man who would prefer the sacrifice of bulls and calves and goats, to the sacrifice of Jesus once for all? Where is the man who would prefer annual remission of sins to permanent remission of sins? Where is the man who would prefer the tabernacle made by hands on earth to the tabernacle made without hands, eternal and in the heavens? Where is the man who would prefer to be represented before the mercy seat on the tenth day of the seventh month once a year, to having a high priest in the presence of God day and night, perpetually?

Now certainly these things do not and cannot mean that Christ has resuscitated or reconstructed the old — the first or that He has grafted His way on to the old way; but that He hath by His own life, by His own death, by His own blood, by His own resurrection, by His own ascension to God, consecrated for us a new way, a living way, and in view of this we are invited to draw nigh and partake of His principles and provisions with true and honest hearts.

In view of these Scriptures I raise this question: Is the new covenant a continuation of the old? Or is the new covenant an amplification of the old? Or is the new covenant a separate, a distinct institution? As a matter of fact I have proven to you repeatedly and overwhelmingly that there are two covenants or testaments. Indeed it does not take any proof but your own eyes. Here is your Bible. On the title page of the first part of it you know how it reads: “Holy Bible.” What does it embrace? The merest tyro in knowledge of the word of God would answer, the scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments. Turn to the title page of the New. Understand me, now, that these title pages were not put here by Divine authority but by somebody who did not know what he was doing, and yet the fact of the two covenants is made apparent. Here we read: “The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” It would be all right to say the testament of our Lord Jesus Christ or simply the New Testament, but to say the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ would imply that the Old Testament came by Him but it did not come that way. The Old Testament came by Moses not by Christ. So there are two testaments — there is no doubt about that. You may not know anything about the contents of them but they are there. You are bound to concede it, you are bound to admit it, you are bound to confess it, and you are bound to act upon it. What then? Either ye have two rival testaments, rival law-

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givers, rival ways, or one is the continuation of the other, or the first is entirely superseded by the second. But there are two and therefore they cannot be identical. Argument after argument has been adduced to show that the covenants are identical, that the testaments are identical. Any man who can look and read knows that this is not so. They are not identical. Two things cannot be identical in this world. Two things may be similar. They may be very much alike. There is a man in this world who looks so much like me that often people used to walk up to him on the streets and shake hands with him and call him "Brother Johnson" and my own friends used to meet me and call me by his own name. We are similar, in the estimation of our friends, but we are not identical. Suppose I admit for argument's sake that the testaments are somewhat similar, does that prove that they are one? Suppose I prove that one man is very much like another man, does that prove they are one man? Not by any means. I hold out before you two hands. They look very much alike. They are similar, they are not identical. They cannot be. They are two and you cannot make anything else but two out of them. Admitting that there are testaments and that they are identical, for argument's sake, then the weight of authority and the weight of modern ideas would be in favor of the new testament and we would discard the old testament. Admitting that both the old testament and the new came from God the very idea that one is the Old Testament and the other the New Testament would lead me to say that if I have to take one without the other, I will take the newest! Who would not? We are always anxious for the latest news, for the latest cablegram, for the latest telegram, for the latest information, and on that ground I say if the testaments are identical—but they are not—it stands to reason that we should take the second, that we should take the last, take the new. The first testament, the second testament, the old testament, the new testament; the first covenant, the second covenant, the old covenant, the new covenant, the everlasting covenant, the everlasting testament anybody—ought to be able to see the difference! Paul in the Galatian letter says that there are two covenants and instead of trying to argue that they are identical he undertakes to show that they are not and that one is not the continuation of the other, and that the new testament is the testament under which we must live and must find salvation if we find it at all. He proves that by introducing to us Abraham and Sarah and Isaac on the one side and Abraham and Hagar and Ishmael on the other. If Hagar and Sarah were identical, the covenants are identical. Why, according to my knowledge of the Scriptures, along about the time Ishmael was cast out they lacked a great deal of being identical. They were not even harmonious! If it can be proven that Ishmael and Isaac were identical then it can be proven that the covenants are identical, but from my knowledge of the word about the time Ishmael was cast out, they were far from identical or even from harmony.

If it can be proven that the flesh on which the old cov-

enant is based is in harmony with the Lord Jesus Christ, the spirit on which the new covenant is based, then I will admit that the two covenants are one. Hear the words of Paul: "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). Jeremiah said, and Paul endorses it, that the new covenant would be unlike the old. The law under the old covenant was written on stone; under the new covenant on the hearts of men. Under the old covenant there was a remembrance of sin once every year, under the new covenant God declares that He will remember our sins and our iniquities no more.

On this question of the identity of the two covenants I desire to call your attention to a startling fact. Many of the Jews who were converted to Christ had an idea that the new covenant was a continuation of the old. John the Baptist met just such an idea as that when he started his work. They gathered about him, and on the ground that they were Abraham's children, desired to be baptized and doubtless many of you remember what he said but I will turn and read it. They gathered about him desiring that they might claim the privilege of what he was doing by reason of the fact that they were Abraham's children; said he unto them: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. 3:9). Nicodemus had the very same idea when he came to Jesus by night. He could not rise above the idea of flesh, Abraham's flesh, Isaac's flesh, Jacob's flesh, pedigree, lineage, genealogy—and the covenant based on these things. When the Master told him that he must be born again, the best that he could get out of it was that he could not enter his mother's womb and be born the second time. How utterly material were the ideas—begotten by the old covenant! He was a member of the old covenant, had been born in it, had been circumcised when eight days old and therefore he thought to claim the privileges and precepts and blessings of the reign of the Lord by declaring that he was of Abraham's seed. This claim was all right so far as the old covenant was concerned. But the Lord swept it all from him and said unto him, touching the new covenant—His kingdom: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 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 3:3-7). The greatest controversy in apostolic times was on this very point. On one side were arrayed Stephen, Paul, Peter, James and the church at Jerusalem; on the other many Judaizing teachers who desired to bring the law of Moses into the church of Christ.

The identity of the covenants is argued from the standpoint that there is one God and one object in each covenant. I admit that, but it does not argue anything against my contention for the simple reason that God's object was served under the imperfections of the old covenant, and in the fulness of time He sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might be adopted into a new family.

Again: in order to establish the claim that the covenants are identical, that is to say that the New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament, that the Gospel is a continuation of the Law it is asserted that baptism comes in the room of circumcision, that circumcision is therefore taken away and that baptism taking its place in the new covenant the old covenant is perpetuated and therefore there is only one covenant and that the blood of Jesus is the blood of that everlasting covenant. But I do not think that the argument will stand the test of revelation and reason. Let us for a moment put it to the test. I will just admit for argument's sake that there are two covenants, that they are identical, and that in order that the new might continue the old, that circumcision was taken out and baptism put in, and I will submit the thing to the word of God and see if it will stand. First, circumcision was a mark in the flesh. Proof: "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin" (Gen. 17:23-25). Baptism is not a mark of the flesh. Therefore baptism did not come in the room of circumcision; therefore the new covenant is not identical with the old; therefore the new covenant stands out by itself and is not engrafted on to the old. Second, circumcision was a proof of membership in the covenant: "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed" (Gen. 17:10-12). Baptism is not an evidence that any man is a member of the church. While I would not say that he can be a member without it, I can say that there are thousands who have been baptized that are not fit to belong to the church. Therefore baptism did not come in the room of circumcision; therefore the new covenant is not identical with the old covenant; therefore the new covenant stands out by itself and is not engrafted

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on the old. Third, the law of circumcision affected only the male population. "Every man child among you shall be circumcised" (Gen. 17:10). Baptism does not come in the room of circumcision in that particular because the command was to baptize all believers, and I will give it to you in the exact words of our Lord Himself: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). Therefore baptism did not come in the room of circumcision; therefore the new covenant is not identical with the old; therefore the new covenant stands out by itself and is not engrafted on the old. Fourth, circumcision was administered when the child was eight days old. Proof: "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed" (Gen. 17:12). There is no time stated in the New Testament when a man shall be baptized. It is not a question of days, it is not a question of years; it is a question of faith in Christ. Said our Lord and Master: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). Therefore baptism did not come in the room of circumcision; therefore the new covenant is not identical with the old; therefore the new covenant stands out by itself and is not engrafted on the old. Fifth, the uncircumcised child was cast out of the covenant. Proof: "And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:14). Who among the advocates of the identity of the covenants will dare believe or go so far as to affirm that of the unbaptized child? Not one. They may stoutly insist on the identity of the covenants, that the child ought to be baptized, but not one of them has ever gone to the point of saying that the unbaptized infant is lost. They would not dare do it. Therefore baptism did not come in the room of circumcision; therefore the new covenant is not identical with the old; therefore the new covenant stands out by itself and is not engrafted on the old. Sixth, those who were circumcised were debtors to do the whole law of Moses. Let me give you the proof: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall

profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law” (Gal. 5:2, 3). Will the advocates of the identity of the covenants, the advocates of the theory that baptism comes in the room of circumcision affirm that those who are baptized are in debt to do the entire law of Moses? No sir, not one of them will so affirm. Therefore baptism did not come in the room of circumcision; therefore the new covenant is not identical with the old; therefore the new covenant stands out by itself and is not engrafted on the old. Circumcision was not even a type of baptism. It was a type of a circumcised heart and life. Proof: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision which is outward in the flesh; But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:28, 29). Again: “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:10-13). Therefore baptism does not come in the room of circumcision; therefore the new covenant is not identical with the old; therefore the new covenant stands out by itself and is not engrafted on the old; and therefore I conclude, by the very logic of the facts as they appear before us, that the argument is without foundation either in reason or revelation and that it is not endorsed by the wisdom of those who have read deepest into the word of God.

I hear somebody say: “Your argument seems forcible enough, your proof seems strong enough; but it occurs to me that if God made a covenant with Israel and Israel broke it and God made another covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah that He trifled with men. Not by any means. In making that covenant and discarding it he proceeded on the line on which He proceeds in all of His works and on the very line that you proceed upon in all of yours. Old things are constantly passing away. The vegetation of last year is moldering back to dust, the flowers that exhaled their delightful fragrance have long since gone forever and the songs of birds that awoke the echoes of last spring are heard no more and it is a physiological fact that every seven years, probably in less time than that, a man discards the body in which he lives and Nature blesses him with another and so God our Father discarded the old institution, found fault with it, found fault with Israel, found fault with the men who had broken it, and declared that He would make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. I wish to call your attention further to the idea of discarding the old and accepting the new. Progressive development in the kingdom of God! The

gradual unfolding of the law of love, of the purpose, of the power and of the glory of God! Hear the words of the Master Himself: “And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come” (Mark 4:26-29). We know that is so. First the germ, then the little shoot appears, then the stalk, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. So it was in the development of God’s purpose. First, the intimation, then the promise, then the covenant of circumcision, then the law, then the tabernacle, then the prophecies, then the Son of Man on earth, then the story of His death, burial and resurrection told to the children of men.

Again, I hear the objector say that if my conclusions are correct he would like very much to know why it was that Jesus and the apostles endorsed the law. I am quite sure I can answer that satisfactorily and very quickly, but I want to get the matter fully before you and therefore I turn and read to you from the Scriptures: “And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *There* is none good but one. *That is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 19:16-19). I hear a man say if the law is done away, if the old covenant is done away, if we are under Christ and not under Moses, if we are under the New Testament and not under the Old Testament, why did Jesus our Master tell this inquiring soul to keep the commandments? Paul did the same thing in a sense. Let us turn and see just what he said: “Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:8-10). This is apostolic testimony. Again: “If ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law” (Jas. 2:8-11). Again: “Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh

evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou are not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (Jas. 4:11, 12). I am sure you can see I have been fair. I have given the whole subject in the exact words of Scripture — Jesus endorsed the law, Paul endorsed the law, James endorsed the law. What then? Well, I hear you say that: "I do not see but one conclusion and that is that all that you have said on the subject is an abortion and that we are under the law and there is no way of getting out from under it." I am afraid you have only given these Scriptures a very superficial investigation. But suppose I admit that Jesus taught or appeared to teach that a man must keep the law, that Paul taught or appeared to teach that a man must keep the law, that James taught or appeared to teach that a man must keep the law, what then? Only this and nothing more; we ought in view of other Scriptures be careful about the conclusion toward which we push our investigations. I lay down a rule of interpretation for your benefit here and now: When a passage of Scripture is apparently susceptible to two or more interpretations give it that interpretation that will allow everything else plainly said on the subject to be true. Or in another manner, in taking a position in reference to any passage of the word of God take a position that will not contradict anything else said on the subject. Or to put it in another form still: take a position that will harmonize with everything else that is said on the subject because there is no doubt of one thing, and that is, if the Bible is true it is harmonious from beginning to end. If it is a fact that our Lord meant to teach, that Paul meant to teach, that James meant to teach that the law is still in force and that all men in the Church are under the law, then it follows as certainly as night follows the day that there are some things in the New Testament that cannot be true. It cannot be true that there are two covenants. It cannot be true that the law was nailed to the cross, yet Paul says it was. Here are his own words: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). It cannot be true that the Roman Christians were not under the law, yet Paul so affirms: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). It

cannot be true that the ministration of death written and engraven on stones is taken away: "But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance: which *glory* was to be done away" (2 Cor. 3:7). It cannot be true that the Lord took away the first that He might establish the second: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). It is a positive fact that the first covenant is taken away. But have you not made a mistake about what Jesus and the apostles meant in making there statements concerning the law? Suppose I turn back to the Scripture and read all Jesus said and see if we do not find another conclusion warranted. Taking up the reading where I left off: "The young man said unto him, All these things I have kept from my youth up, what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Matt. 19:20-22). But listen to me: The Lord Jesus was born under the law. He lived under the law, He was obedient to the law, He enforced the law during His natural life, and the reason that He told this young man to keep the commandments was that the law was still in force at that time. He held out a perfect life to the young man but it was not in keeping the law, but in forsaking all and following Him! How vast and far reaching the thoughts and issues involved in this command. After this Jesus went further than this. I will give you the exact words: "Then Jesus spake to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:1-3). Does this involve the matter in contradiction and absurdity? not by any means. What reason can be given for His teaching? I answer: The reason Jesus did this was that the law was in force all his natural life up to the very last moment of the agony on the cross. Therefore as an obedient Son of His Father, and as an obedient Son of Abraham He was bound to honor the law and to honor Moses and to honor the observance of the ordinances of Israel. This is absolutely and irresistibly conclusive. After

He arose from the dead He gave other commandments. After He arose from the dead He told the apostles to go and make disciples and never once mentioned a single ordinance of Moses or of the Law (Matt. 28:16-20). But what about Paul and James? Let us see: Paul was arguing this one thing, that all there ever was in the law of Moses from the beginning to the end might be summed up in one point, and that was that a man should love his neighbour as himself. Love does not work ill to anybody; therefore if I love my neighbour I work him no ill; therefore the conclusion of Paul that the

**There is no law in this world or in the history of this world so far as I know that can be justly designated the law of liberty the perfect law of liberty — save the Gospel of the Son of God.**

man who lives with love in his heart fulfills every obligation laid down by Moses because he will not and cannot do things that Moses said not to do, because he cannot do it with love in his heart. What about James? I will let him talk for himself. I think he makes it harder for the advocates of the law of Moses in the church of God than any one else who has argued on the subject. He puts it this way, that if a man violated one command of the law he was guilty of the whole and therefore it would be utterly impossible for him to be anything else than a sinner, the word law covering the whole ground. If a man should steal he had violated the law, if a man should kill he had violated the law, if a man should covet he had violated the law, if a man should do anything that the law prohibited he was a sinner. He also talks about the royal law. What is that? It is the same thing that Paul presents in the Roman letter, that a man shall love his neighbour as himself, and I will say this to you brethren without hesitation, that if love burns upon your heart, love of God and love of man, there is no necessity why you should be under any law because a man who loves will never harm, and the man who loves God will not intentionally disobey Him. Nor is that all. James had in his mind another law. Hear him in the very same connection: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" (Jas. 2:12). This is not the law of Moses. The law of Moses was the law of sin and death: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:1, 2). The ministration of death was written and engraven on stones. The law of Jesus is the law of liberty. Again, let James testify: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:25). Here is a remarkable fact, so remarkable that it never has had a parallel *in* the history of man: Perfect law and perfect liberty hand in hand! There is no law in this world or in the history of this world so far as I know that can be justly designated the law of liberty the perfect law of liberty — save the Gospel of the Son of God. So we are not living by the law of Moses, we are not to be judged by the law of Moses, we are not living in obedience to Moses, we are not to be judged by Moses in the last great day!

Again, I hear a man say that if I am not under the law — the law of Moses — then I am not in any danger of sinning for sin is the transgression of the law: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Hear me: All unrighteousness is sin. We are under the law of liberty but we are exhorted by Paul not to use or abuse that liberty. Therefore a man may be a sinner under the reign of Jesus Christ, under the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ.

Let me sum up the ground as I have passed over it tonight: We are sanctified by the blood of Jesus, His blood dedicated the new covenant, the new covenant is based on the heart, on the mind of man. In the new covenant God remembers our sins against us no more. In the new covenant we are not to exhort one another saying, "Know the Lord," for all of God's children are to know Him from the least unto the greatest. And while we are not under the law of Moses we are under the law of liberty, under the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. What does this mean? Hear me! Under the law of Moses a man was kept from sin by statute if kept from it at all; such a thing as liberty was not known, not recognized, not dreamed of. Under the Gospel, under Christ with His law written in the heart, and in the conscience — we have liberty! Sin is also the transgression of law, but it is more: "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 1:17). But it is more: "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22). The Christ — His covenant works on the character, on the purposes, on the desires, on the source of actions. It takes away the desire to sin and puts in the place of it a determination not to sin. Before the law was given, certain things were just and honest and right — they were not made more so by the law, for it only defined things. Now that the law is abolished these things are still right, still honest, still just. The gospel plants the truth in the heart, and the life takes care of itself. Only the Son of God can make and keep us free in Him only is life — in Him only is liberty. He is the way, the new way, the only way. He invites you to come, to come with all your heart, just as you are, to come today, this hour, now! May God help you to come in His own appointed way!

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# Political and Religious Liberals

## Two Peas In A Pod

If you have paid attention to the news lately you cannot help but to notice the latest and “greatest” coming from Washington —Volunteerism. The idea is being put out that Americans need to do more volunteering (giving), even though this nation leads all others in such. Now, if this is a genuine effort to encourage people to exercise their personal and individual duties in life rather than shifting their responsibilities to the Government, it can be a good thing. The Bible teaches the importance of neighbor helping neighbor, or citizen helping community (Matt. 22:37-40; Gal. 6:10; Tit. 3:1-2). But, if we have learned anything about most political leaders, when they propose anything, another government program with another impersonal bureaucracy is born — and we end up paying more taxes for it. Therefore, inasmuch as this push for volunteerism is coming from Washington, past experience teaches us to expect some type of new government program that will cost, not the government, but taxpayers. Hence, some will object to the ideas now being promoted by the political liberals.

However, when eyebrows are raised against these efforts, those who want to know if there will be a new government program costing more tax money must be prepared for ridicule. They are likely to hear statements like, “You do not believe in volunteering?”, or, “Anyone who does not get on board with this volunteerism campaign is anti-volunteerism.” Sound familiar?

Other efforts to encourage a review of existing government programs and bureaucracies in the interest of fiscal responsibility have been distorted and maligned in the past several years. We have witnessed heated controversies over school lunch subsidies, social security and Medicare benefits, and a whole range of other facets of the government’s budget. When economic conservatives began to voice their views about the need to balance the budget before the government goes broke, the liberal opposition would hurl wild accusations and distorted truths.

For instance, it would be said, “The conservatives do not care about old people.”

What does all of this have to do with religion? Well, the same things happen when conservative and liberal thinkers cross paths regarding Bible issues. Consider the fight in the last century over the Missionary Society. Those against it were labeled as “anti-evangelistic.” Moreover, think about the battle in the ’50s and ’60s over institutionalism. Some brethren began to advocate the church donating money from its treasury to orphan homes. Those who objected were branded as “anti-orphan.” They were said to be “orphan haters!” Likewise, some brethren decided it would be a good idea to send money to one church which would do “evangelizing” for other churches (what has been called the “sponsoring church” plan). Those who opposed this plan were stigmatized with such labels as “anti-evangelism.” It was said that these men had no desire to spread the gospel.

Were such charges true? Are such labels accurate? Absolutely not! Those who object to such programs and schemes do so out of respect for the authority of the Bible. It teaches that the only benevolence a church is to be involved in is for the needy saints (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 2 Cor. 8-9). The Scriptures also teach that support for preachers is to be direct, church-to-preacher and not churches-to-church (society)-to-preacher (Phil. 4:15).

Where does all of this lead us? It leads us to the present day and beyond. The church has its problems, not due to lack of divine instruction, but due to the selfishness, greed, egos, and other failings of men. Just as the political liberals have done, so have the religious liberals done and will continue to do. Names will be called, accusations made, inaccurate labels, and perverted truth passed along about men who go by the Book. I wonder if in the future we will hear . . .



# A Gift Is Still A Gift



Bryan Gibson

The New Testament clearly teaches that baptism is essential for salvation, that one must be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Those who do not believe this to be true will sometimes make this argument: “If one must be baptized to be saved, then salvation is no longer a gift” (Eph. 2:8). What we want to show in this article is that a gift is still a gift, even when conditions are given for receiving that gift.

The city of Jericho was a gift from God to the Israelites (Josh. 6:2, 16), but there were certain instructions they had to obey to receive this gift — marching around the city a certain number of times, blowing the horns, shouting, etc. (Josh. 6:3-5). Suppose the children of Israel had failed to obey God, would God have given them the city? Obviously, the answer is no.

In 2 Kings 5, a man named Naaman is healed of his leprosy. His healing was clearly a gift from God. But as we read through the chapter, we see that Naaman had to follow certain instructions to be healed. He had to dip seven times in the Jordan River before he could receive this gift from God.

The last two illustrations have come from the Old Testament, but the New Testament establishes the same principle. Notice the promise given in Acts 2:38: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” As you can see, a gift is promised,

the gift of the Holy Spirit, but only to those who would repent and be baptized. There were things they had to do to receive this gift from God.

Notice further the following verses from the Book of Revelation: “To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life” (2:7). “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (2:10). “To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna to eat” (2:17). “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations” (2:26). In all of these verses the Lord speaks of giving certain things to his people, but in each instance, there were things they had to do to receive these gifts.

So we should not be surprised at all when the Lord teaches us that there are certain things we must do to receive the gift of salvation. The New Testament teaches that we must believe in Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9-10), repent of our sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19); confess our faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37); and be baptized in water (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12-13, 37-39; 10:47-48; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21). We must obey each of these commandments in order to receive the gift of salvation. Will you obey the Lord today?

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- “Anti-marriage” of those opposing unscriptural marriages.
- “Anti-enthusiasm” of those opposing clapping in worship or at a baptism.
- “Anti-emotional” of those opposing humming in worship.
- “Anti-fun” of those opposing immodesty in clothing and dance.
- “Anti-social” of those opposing drinking.
- “Anti-preacher” of those opposing false teachers.
- “Anti-evangelism” of those opposing false teaching.
- “Anti-Christ” of those opposing false teaching about Christ’s deity/humanity.

- “Anti-congregationalism” or “anti-autonomy” of those opposing churches in error.
- “Anti-free thinking” of those insisting one must adhere to the new testament.
- “Anti-brotherly love” of those opposing open fellowship.

Think about it.

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Steve Wallace

# Paul's Security

## (1 Timothy 1:12)

Paul's preaching caused him much suffering. He estranged the Jews by refusing to give them a sign and preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. He offended the Gentiles by denouncing their idolatry and undermining some of their means for financial advancement. Eventually, his stand for truth resulted in his being put into prison. It was from his prison that he wrote to Timothy:

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (2 Tim. 1:8-12).

To be confined in prison as a common criminal with the possibility of being executed is certainly the height of disgrace. In spite of this, Paul was not ashamed. Along with Joseph, Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, and Peter, he had joined the ranks of those imprisoned for the highest cause. Paul's attitude in such a state is noteworthy and remarkable.

He speaks words which breathe the utmost confidence. Insecurity may be a problem for some today, but Paul had no such problem. Rather, his words here are a lesson on how to be secure no matter what happens.

### **"I Know Him Whom I Have Believed"**

1. *One needs to know God.* Isaiah decried the ritual-

ism of the people of his day (1:11-14). They were playing at religion. They did not know the God they worshiped. He wrote, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (1:3).

Paul was not just known for being religious, nor did he just believe in a God, rather he knew him. He knew God the way God wants people to know him (Heb. 11:6). This was a cause for his security.

2. *He had believed God.* Paul's faith was not in a system, but in the author of that system. True obedient faith establishes fellowship between God and man through Christ. This relationship exists as one walks in his truth (1 John 1:1-10). And what about those who claim to believe in Jesus, but refuse to conform to his teaching? Jesus answered this when he asked, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?" (Luke 6:46). As a servant of Christ, our allegiance is to him, not to the church, to a creed, or to brotherhood opinion. Believing God gave Paul confidence.

### **Paul Had Committed Things Unto God**

Committed is defined, "a deposit, a trust or thing consigned to one's faithful keeping" (*Thayer* 482). What had Paul committed to God?

1. *His soul's salvation.* "Life and immortality" of verse 10 is opposed to death, suffering, and hell. Paul was no doubt of one mind with Peter when Peter wrote, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Pet. 4:19). We must do this. The church, our parents, or other brethren cannot do it for us.

2. *His works.* Paul's works had no lasting significance in the earthly sense of the term. He called people away from

common earthly pursuits to other worldly pursuits (1 Cor. 15:19, 32; cf. 1 Tim. 6:17-19). To many people, it may seem that Paul had been cut off in the middle of his career and that his winding up in a Roman jail would result in the undoing of all his work. The truth is, Paul had sown the seed of God's word and this would bring results for Paul (1 Cor. 3:5-8; cf. Isa. 55:10-11). He had every reason to be secure because he had done work for God. Am I committing works to God?

3. *His reward.* Beyond salvation from sin and hell, he looked toward the positive reward of heaven and the joys thereof (2 Tim. 4:8). John wrote, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Rev. 14:13). "Blessed" means happy or blissful.

Whom do I commit things to? *We all have things to commit.* Paul committed things to God. This is why he felt secure when things looked dim for him from a worldly standpoint.

### What Persuaded Paul That God Could Keep What He Had Delivered?

We noted under our first point that Paul knew God. What did he know about God that would so persuade him?

1. *God is a keeper of promises.* Paul knew of the promise of God to Abraham (Gen. 15:1-6) and even wrote about it (Rom. 4:18-21). God told Noah of a flood years before it happened — and then did just as he said (Heb. 11:7). God performed the words of his promise to give his people the land of Canaan (Josh. 21:43-45). The Babylonian captivity and the return therefrom were foretold and fulfilled. On top of all this, a multitude of particulars concerning the Messiah were prophesied of and performed. Well could Paul describe God as he who "cannot lie" (Tit. 1:2).

2. *God's ability to keep.* He kept the Jews during the tumultuous times of the Babylonian captivity (Jer. 31:10) and even kept their land for them. He watched over the faithful while they were in captivity (Dan. 3, 6). He kept Job, not allowing the devil to take away his life, and blessed

him more greatly in his latter times than in his former ones (Job 1:12; 2:6; 42:12). God's keeping ability is such that Paul was fully persuaded that he could keep what he had committed to him.

3. *A rememberer of past deeds.* "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name . . ." (Heb. 6:10). In Revelation 20:12, "books" is an accommodative way of telling mankind that God keeps an account, a record, and will not forget man's deeds. All people may have turned away from Paul (2 Tim. 1:15; 4:16), but he knew that God would never forget him.

4. *An exalter of the humble.* "He that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12). This truth is often taught in Scripture (Prov. 29:23; 1 Pet. 5:6-7). Paul had certainly humbled himself. Hence, he had every reason to believe that God would help him.

5. *A power greater than death and hell.* Paul faced death — but he did so knowing that the "gates of hades" could not prevail against the purposes of God (Matt. 16:18) and that God would destroy death in the final resurrection (1 Cor. 15:25-26).

Well might Paul be persuaded to commit things to God's keeping.

### Conclusion

"Security — even in its most relative sense, is very difficult to maintain. For the most part it is an 'at ease' feeling, and feelings are so unreliable. We trust in the bank, and it fails; in a friend, and he deserts; in the strength of youth, and we grow old; in our wisdom, and discover we were foolish. Before it is too late, consider Paul's source of security" (Robert F. Turner, *Plain Talk*, 1, 2, 6; "2 Tim. 1:12").

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# “That Was A Long Time Ago”

Richard Boone

I knew of him and his good work in the kingdom. I had learned from his writings — always substantive and well written. I had even used some of his published sermons, or at least points in them. But until recently, I’d never met him.

He attended a meeting in which I preached. He listened carefully, and nodded in agreement with points in the lesson. I did not actually introduce myself until after the service was over since he arrived just as it began. When he introduced himself, I immediately recognized his name and thanked him for the good I gleaned from his work. He expressed appreciation, but then slowly lowered his head and said, “But that was a long time ago.” My heart broke.

This brother had allowed sin to destroy his good influence in the kingdom, a living example of the deceitfulness. “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through *the deceitfulness of sin* (Heb. 3:12-13, italics mine, rb).

*Sin is a monster*, and as the tool of its father, the devil, havoc and ruin are its results. It rarely appears that way, though. Instead it comes incognito and works stealthily. Great damage is often done before it is diagnosed (2 Tim. 2:17-18).

The *allurement to sin* is strong and terribly deceptive. Consider the appeal of social drinking — it is made to look glamorous, classy, the “in thing” to do, an action of the successful person. In the end “it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper” (cf. Prov. 23:29-35). Alcohol’s destruction is well-documented. Several similar examples could be cited.

The *destruction of sin* is equally deceptive. One may think that an action has little or no consequence. At first that may seem to be true. Different sins have different consequences — few or many, and at different times some immediate, others long-term. But be assured of this — *all* sins have consequences!

Brothers and sisters, we are frequently warned about the power of sin from the Scriptures. Let us do all we can to remove sin from our lives (Rom. 6:12-13). If we don’t, we may have to look back on a life of good work and influence in the kingdom that has been destroyed by sin, and regrettably have to say, “That was a long time ago.”

— 6011 Hunter Road Ooltewah, Tennessee 37363

## What Is Lust?

The word lust in the New Testament can translate more than one Greek word. However, the primary word translated lust is *epithumia*. W.E. Vine says of this word that it is “strong desire of any kind” (707). It can be used of strong desire that is good and strong desire that is evil. When it is used of evil desire the text will specify what is meant, and often the word lust will translate *epithumia*.

*Epithumia* can be seen in its good sense in a few passages. Jesus said to the apostles, “With *fervent desire* I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer . . .” (Luke 22:15, NKJV — here and elsewhere the NKJV will be cited unless otherwise indicated). Paul said, “For I am hard pressed between the two, having a *desire* to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Phil. 1:23). On another occasion Paul said, “But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with *great desire*” (1 Thess. 2:17). In each of these passages the word translated as fervent desire, desire, and great desire is the same word, *epithumia* which is elsewhere translated as lust. Yet, it is clear that the strong desires in each of these verses is positive, not negative. However, the word *epithumia* is used in an overwhelmingly negative way in the New Testament.

Christians are told to avoid worldly lusts which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11). In this text, the word *epithumia* is connected with the word “worldly.” This indicates the kind of strong desire under consideration. These worldly desires are not like the positive desires in the above verses. These are the kind of desires that “war against the soul.” Therefore, they must be vanquished and not satisfied. To satisfy them would be to sin.

Other verses of Scripture speak similarly of lust.

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its *lusts* (Rom. 6:12).

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to fulfill its *lusts* (Rom. 13:14).

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the *lusts* of the flesh. . . . Now the lusts of the flesh are evident,

which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:16, 19-21).

These and other clear verses of Scripture teach us that fulfillment of certain lusts is sinful. It is important to note that strong desire is not wrong in every case. What is wrong is the fulfillment of these desires contrary to God’s law. For instance, sexual desire is not wrong in and of itself. God created men and women with this appetite. However, the gratification of this desire is permissible only in the marriage relationship (1 Cor. 7:1-9; 6:18; Heb.13:4). When young people engage in sexual activity outside of marriage, they commit fornication and are guilty of sin. They have no right to fulfill their lust before marriage. Likewise, when homosexuals gratify their lust outside of marriage they are guilty of fornication. Paul said of them, “. . . God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves” (Rom. 1:24). When they fulfill their lust contrary to God’s law they give in to vile passions (1:26), do what is against nature (1:26), and commit what is shameful (1:27). In summation, lusts which are sinful are those that prompt us to violate the law of God.

### What Does Lust Have To Do With the Way We Dress?

The Bible’s teaching about lust has everything to do with how we dress. If certain lusts can be described as being at war with one’s soul, are foolish and hurtful, evil, ungodly (Jude 18), and of defilement (2 Pet. 2:10), then whatever naturally provokes and excites these sinful lusts must be vigorously avoided and opposed.

The fundamental assertion of this article is that the sight of bare flesh provokes strong desire. What kind of desire? Evil desire. The sight of a scantily clad female will not fill a young man with a strong desire to study the Bible. Instead, the sight of a girl’s partially nude body will create in the average male a desire to commit fornication with her. If

*continued top of next page*

a man will deny this statement he will probably lie about other things as well!

Faithful Christians will not dress in a way that causes others to lust, and they will not dress in a way that compromises their faith.

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*From The West Columbia Bulletin, West Columbia, Texas, January 25, 1998*

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### **“Gospel” continued from front page**

raised him from the dead; the resurrection would not been as it now is, had Jesus not ascended to heaven to occupy his throne. It takes it all!

1. *It was at his ascension that Christ was given a great position.* A careful reading of Ephesians 1:19-23 will teach us that when Christ ascended, he was set at his own right hand in the heavenly places, given a name above all names, and made the head of the church.

2. *At his ascension, Christ was made High Priest.* You know that Christ could not have been priest if he were on the earth (Heb. 8:4; 7:14). At his ascension, he became and is now High Priest (Heb. 4:15). Thus, Christ is our mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).

3. *Christ was made king of his kingdom at his ascension.* Daniel said that Christ would be given “a kingdom,” when he “. . . came to the Ancient of days” (Dan. 7:13-14). Christ went to God as he ascended in a cloud (Acts 1:9-10). At this time Christ was given a kingdom over which he was to reign as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 17:14).

4. *All things were made full at his ascension.* In writing the Ephesians, Paul penned, “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10). We can now be “complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10). As a result, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).

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4121 Woodyard Rd., Bloomington, Indiana 47404

*A candle does not lose its light by lighting another candle.*

From *The Instructor*, Albertville, Alabama 35950

### **“The Church” continued from page 2**

mirror, by means of which the wisdom of God exhibits itself to them” (*Meyer’s Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians* 416).

That the angels witness what occurs on earth is confirmed in other Scriptures (1 Pet. 1:12; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 12:22). This passage says that their own knowledge of God’s divine wisdom is enhanced by what they see in the church.

Here are some things that angels saw that impressed them with God’s divine wisdom.

1. *They saw how God saves men.* How could God save sinful men without losing his divine justice? The angels witnessed a truly remarkable scene when they saw God the Son leave heaven and take upon himself a physical body in the incarnation. They witnessed his sinless life, despite the most assiduous assaults of Satan (Heb. 4:15). At the end of his life, this sinless man was crucified on the cross of Calvary, shedding his blood in atonement for sin. The just debt of sin was paid by the blood of God the Son. W.A. Criswell observed, “At the same time He pays the penalty for our sin thus upholding the righteous judgments of God and yet showing mercy, dying in love for our fallen souls. How the angels, looking upon that, must have been astonished! What we lost in Eden in the sin of the first Adam, we have gained and more besides in the second Adam, Christ. . . . Satan is stung by his own venom. Goliath is slain by his own sword. Death is destroyed by its own captive. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. As by one man, Adam, sin came into this world, and death by sin, so by one man, the God-man Christ Jesus, is sin destroyed, and life and immortality brought to life” (*Ephesians: An Exposition* 120).

2. *They saw what God can do with sin defiled men.* Every one of us was marred by sin (Rom. 3:23) and worthy of eternal damnation (Rom. 6:23). If one asked any member of the church, he would confess that his sinful conduct made him unworthy of eternal life or unfit to be used in God’s service. H.C.G. Moule commented on what the angels see in us: “They see in us indeed all our weakness, and all our sin. But they see a nature which, wrecked by itself, was yet made in the image of their God and ours. And they see this God at work upon that wreck to produce results not only wonderful in themselves but doubly wonderful because of the conditions” (*Ephesian Studies* 118). Think of what change was wrought in sinful men. Angels saw fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards and revilers changed into saints (1 Cor. 6:9-11). They saw the “chiefest of sinners” turned into an apostle (1 Tim. 1:13-16).

3. *They saw Jew and Gentile reconciled to God in one*

body. Paul had declared that God “might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. 2:16). S.D.F. Salmond observed, “The Church, therefore, that is, as is evidently meant here, the whole body of believers in the unity in which Jew and Gentile are now made one, is the *means* by which the Divine wisdom is to be made known and Paul’s commission in that respect made good” (*The Expositor’s Greek Testament: Ephesians* 309). The wall of alienation that had separated Jew and Gentile was broken down so that God could redeem all men in one church.

4. *They saw the manifold wisdom of God in other facets of the church.* S.T. Bloomfield observes that God’s manifold wisdom being made known through the church includes “the founding, propagating, and governing of the Church” (*The Greek Testament* II:271).

The *founding* of the church is an event worthy of a complete study. The Old Testament prophets foretold when the church would be established (Dan. 2:44, in the days of the fourth world kingdom [the Roman]), where it would be established (Isa. 2:1-4, Jerusalem), and by whom it would be established (the Messiah). When the gospel of Mark opens, it announces that the “time is fulfilled and the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mark 1:16-17). Jesus announced that the kingdom is the church (Matt. 16:18-19) and that it would be established within the lifetime of those who heard him speak (Mark 9:1). The kingdom would come with power, which power would come when the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8). All of these things occurred on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and they spoke with new tongues (“as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance”). A sound like the rushing of a mighty wind drew together a massive crowd (Acts 2:1-4). Peter preached that these events were the fulfillment of divine prophecy (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21) and proceeded to tell the audience how they could be saved by “calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 2:21). Three thousand responded to the gospel that day and were added to the church (Acts 2:47). The angels in heaven, like mortal men on earth, must have been amazed at the manifold wisdom of God when the church was established.

The *propagating* of the faith was also a display of the manifold wisdom of God. Jesus chose twelve men to take the gospel into all of the world. These men were without the formal training that rabbis generally received (Acts 4:13). Yet, Christ sent them into all the world to preach the gospel, working with them through signs and wonders (Mark 16:15-20). The number of the disciples began with 3000 on Pentecost, grew to 5000 in a short time (Acts 4:4), and was soon so large it was only described as “multitudes” (Acts 5:14). A persecution broke out against the disciples at the death of Stephen that drove out of Jerusalem all of the

disciples except the apostles (Acts 8:4). In the providence of God, this persecution contributed to the spread of the gospel throughout the world, for they “went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). The angels in heaven, like mortal men on earth, must have been amazed at the manifold wisdom of God when they saw how the gospel was spread to all nations of the world within one short lifetime.

The *governing* of the church was also a display of the manifold wisdom of God. Each local church was organized independently of all others (Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). Local churches were overseen by a plurality of elders (Phil. 1:1) whose qualifications were revealed by the Holy Spirit (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). Special servants of the church, known as deacons, were appointed to do special works (Acts 6:1-7; Phil. 1:1) and their qualifications were also revealed by God (1 Tim. 3:8-13). The simplicity of the divine government of the church prevented wholesale apostasy. The apostasy of one local church does not destroy other local churches by necessity, as would be the case if there were inter-congregational government. The angels in heaven, like mortal men on earth, must have been amazed at the manifold wisdom of God in how he governed the local churches.

I suggest that the manifold wisdom of God is also seen in others aspects of the church, including its worship, its moral purity, its universality, its consummation, etc. Like a diamond that is turned in the light so that each facet can glisten, the various things about the church reflect the multi-faceted wisdom of God. If the angels praise divine wisdom and glorify him when they see the church, how much more such mortal man!

### Conclusion

How sad is the circumstance that some gospel preachers have reached the conclusion that preaching the church is somehow “preaching ourselves” and emphasizing the identifying marks of the divinely revealed church is preaching “sectarianism” and somehow denigrating to Christ! Paul said that when the angels behold what God has done through the church they see the manifold wisdom of God, but some among us say that preaching what God has done in the church somehow detracts from the glory of God. How can one explain this significant difference of opinion about the church?

When men outgrow preaching about the divinely revealed church, they have moved away from preaching the whole counsel of God simply because the church is a part of the divine purpose in Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:11). May we ever appreciate the importance of the church which was planned in the mind of God as a part of his eternal purpose, built by the Lord Jesus Christ, established on Pentecost, and will be delivered up to the Father at the Lord Jesus’

second coming (1 Cor. 15:24). It is a glorious church, having been sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water by the word so that it might be without a spot or wrinkle, but that it might be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:26-27). Who can refrain from telling others about what God has done in and for his church, which is “the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:23).

6567 Kings Ct., Danville, Indiana 46122

## Obituary

### Death of Ruth Bradford Tucker

Sister Ruth Bradford Tucker, a Christian, who was highly esteemed and greatly loved by all who knew her, ceased her fellowship of this earth at her home on June 14, 1998 at the age of 94 years. She was born and lived her 94 years in Cullman County, Alabama. At the time of her death she was a member of the Baldwin church of Christ, located about three miles west of the city of Cullman. The memorial service was conducted at the Terry-Moss Funeral Chapter and her body was buried beside her beloved husband, Ervin Tucker, who died September 24, 1978. Their bodies lie in the dust of the earth on a beautiful hillside in the Cullman City Cemetery, among the tombs of many of their friends and loved ones, awaiting the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. The funeral was conducted by Quentin McCay and Marshall E. Patton, who spoke of her deeds and faithful life.

Sister Tucker loved the cause of Christ and used her godly influence in spreading the good news of salvation. This salvation is promised by him whose promises are always fulfilled, and given by the marvelous grace of God to every obedient believer. She loved preachers who stood for the truth, and thought that if they could visit the Bible Lands and see where Christ was born, where he walked and taught, where he wrought many of his confirming miracles, where he was crucified, buried, raised and ascended into Heaven, that they could better tell the greatest story ever told. So several preachers were able to visit those lands by her generosity. She sent money often to preachers in different parts of the country whom she thought needed encouragement as they labored in difficult places. Several preachers owe her a great debt of gratitude. All who really knew her, knew her as one who loved her family, and was a very kind, jolly, caring, forgiving, loving and lovable mother in Israel. Her grandson told me, “Just say that she was a good ‘un.” And she was that. I have all confidence that we can say, “Well done, Mamma Ruth” (as she was affectionately called by many young people) rest in peace, reap the rewards of

the righteous and the blessings of immortality. **Quentin McCay, 17751 Jeffery St., Athens, AL 35611.**

## Preachers Needed

**Peru, Indiana:** The church which meets in Peru, Indiana is looking for a full-time preacher. Partial support is available and a three-bedroom house. Some outside support will be necessary. The congregation would prefer an older man. The present preacher, L. Parvin DeBerry is planning to retire from full-time work about May 1, 1999. If interested in this work, please call Bill Vigar (765-472-2228) or Howard Barr (765-472-4279).

**Olmstead, Kentucky:** The Millertown congregation is looking for a preacher. They are located about 15 miles from Russellville, Kentucky near the Kentucky/Tennessee border in a well populated area. They can provide partial support. If interested, contact Lewis R. Jenkins (502-539-8847) or Dan Hallman (502-539-6581) for more information.



### Wayne Sullivan

Wayne Sullivan is retiring from full-time local preaching after 45 years. His family is putting together a scrapbook of his preaching career. If you would like to be a part of that please send a card, letter, or picture to reminisce and to congratulate. Send your contribution to: Cindi Smith at 166 Nun Dr., Crestview, FL 32536. Wayne will be available for gospel meetings and fill-ins after September 1, 1998. Contact him at 944 Scandia Lane, Orlando, FL 32825.

### Religious Debate

Agreement for a debate between Hoyt Chastain, Missionary Baptist preacher and David D. Bonner, preacher of the church of Christ.

#### Propositions:

**Proposition #1** — Resolved, the church of which I am a member, the Missionary Baptist Church, is scriptural in origin, name, doctrine, and practice.

Affirms: Hoyt Chastain

Denies: David D. Bonner

**Proposition #2** — Resolved, the church of which I am a member, the church of Christ, is scriptural in origin, name,

doctrine, and practice.

Affirms: David D. Bonner

Denies: Hoyt Chastain

**Where:** Civic Center (601 North 2nd), Lufkin, Texas

**When:** October 5, 6, 8, 9, 1998, 7:30 P.M.

**Gambling Polls Show Problems for Adults, Kids**

“About 6 percent of Hoosier adults have problem or pathological gambling disorders, according to a preliminary study commissioned by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration.

“That’s higher than the North American average, according to estimates compiled by the Harvard Medical School, but it’s still within the expected range. Indiana residents are less likely to have severe gambling disorders than participants in the Harvard study of Americans and Canadians.

“The Indiana study also suggests that large percentages of minors might be gambling on the lottery and on state-regulated bingo and charitable games.

“. . . The survey of 3,282 middle school and high school students — Grades 6-12 — showed higher rates of problem gambling behaviors and much higher rates of pathological gambling disorders.

“. . . Although the student survey might not be statistically sound, it did show that, at least among those questioned, several hundred minors had played the lottery, bingo, or a charitable game. And both the Harvard study and a survey of Louisiana students also conducted by LSU found large numbers of minors were playing the lottery” (Doug Sword, *The Indianapolis Star* [June 30, 1998], A1).

**California Still Tops Nation in Abortions**

“Atlanta — California continued to have the highest abortion rate and Wyoming the lowest in the federal government’s 1995 state-by-state figures.

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Thursday that California recorded 289,987 abortions, or 40 abortions for every 1,000 women. In Wyoming, the total was 182 abortions, or two per 1,000 women. The states also had the highest and lowest actual numbers of abortions preformed.

“. . . All but 12 states recorded a decline in the number of abortions performed from 1994 to 1995.

“. . . ‘Since 1990, we’ve seen declines in abortions in almost all states,’ said CDC researcher Lisa Koonin. ‘This continues a trend we’ve been watching for quite a while’” (*The Indianapolis Star* [July 3, 1998], A14).

**Richard Eyre**

“Our parents cast long shadows over our lives. When we grow up, we imagine that we can walk in the sun, free of them. We don’t realize, until it’s too late, that we have no choice in the matter; they’re always ahead of us.

“We carry them within us all our lives — in the shape of our face, the way we walk, the sound of our voice, our skin, our hair, our hands, our heart. We try all our lives to separate ourselves from them, and only when they are gone do we find we are indivisible” (*The Reader’s Digest* [May 1996], 153).

**Harold S. Kushner**

“Every adult, no matter how unfortunate a childhood he had or how habit-ridden he may be, is free to make choices about his life. To say of Hitler, to say of the criminal, that he did not choose to be bad but was a victim of his upbringing is to make all morality, all discussion right and wrong, impossible. It leaves unanswered the question of why people in similar circumstances did not all become Hitlers. But worse, to say ‘It is not his fault; he was not free to choose’ is to rob a person of his humanity, and reduce him to the level of an animal who is bound by instinct” (*The Reader’s Digest* [May 1996], 153).

**Where Love Began**

The place that men have tried to seek  
Leaves all the minds of science weak.  
To find where life and all began  
Has been the lifelong goal of man.  
When all these paths of man are trod,  
In the end we will find the heart of God.  
For the word is God and God is love,  
Though we search through every star above.  
“Let there be light”  
And love did speak  
From the place that man has tried to seek.

Barbara Kaye Johns

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Gen. 1:3).

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8).