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# FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME



**WHO SOEVER**  
*Will*

# Whosoever Will



## FEATURES

**6 Grace from Eternity to Time**  
*Fred Moritz*  
“God has only one provision for the salvation of mankind, unchanged through all dispensations.”

**8 A Gospel Worthy of Global Proclamation**  
*David Saxon*  
If one shares the gospel only with those who are giving signs of being elect, how often will one do so?

**11 The Water That Divides**  
*Larry R. Oats*  
In the current culture, baptism is frequently denigrated—the mode is unimportant, the recipient can be almost anyone, and the meaning is uncertain.

**14 Sacrifice for the Sake of the Gospel**  
*Steve Love*  
Is the gospel possible to effect without sacrifice?

**16 Paul’s Gospel Apologetic in Athens**  
*Bryan W. Brock*  
Almost without exception, when a believer evangelizes, he will answer potential objections and defend Christian theism over and above any other competing view of salvation.

**19 Whosoever Won’t**  
*Andrew Hudson*  
Several New Testament passages are used to claim that Jesus prevented the Jews from believing.

## DEPARTMENTS

**5 Mail Bag & News from All Over**

**20 On the Home Front**

**23 Wit & Wisdom**  
*David Atkinson*

**26 Regional Fellowships**

**28 The Jehoshaphat Principles**  
*David Innes*

**29 Newsworthy**  
*Robert Condict*

**31 On Language & Scripture**  
*Mark L. Ward Jr.*

**32 At a Glance**  
The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament, Part 2  
*Layton Talbert*

**35 Death Notifications**  
*Joe Willis*

**38 The Ministry of Interceding for Others**  
*Jerry Sivnksty*

Our sincere thanks to Dr. Larry Oats for coordinating this issue of *FrontLine* magazine.

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**Larry Oats**

As the apostle John concludes the Book of Revelation, he gives God's last great invitation to the lost. "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). God gave His Son for the salvation of mankind. The articles from Maranatha Baptist University in this issue focus on the proclamation of the gospel.

Dr. Fred Moritz begins our series with an overview of grace and focuses on the relationship between faith and regeneration. A historical study by Dr. Dave Saxon on Andrew Fuller follows. While probably best known for his modification of Calvinism to a less extreme and more evangelistic form, we cannot leave out the impact of Fuller's "new" theology on William Carey, the first Baptist missionary.

The result of salvation should be obedience, the first step of which is baptism. Baptism in other denominations, however,

frequently precedes salvation. Dr. Larry Oats demonstrates why Baptists baptize their converts rather than their infants. Dr. Steve Love follows this with an appropriate article on sacrifice. Having grown up on a mission field, he understands the concept of sacrifice for the sake of the gospel. Dr. Bryan Brock views Paul's evangelistic efforts in Athens as a helpful model for apologetic evangelism today. And finally, "whosoever will" implies that some will not. Dr. Andy Hudson concludes our series with an explanation of why some will not be saved.

Those of us who know Jesus Christ as Savior have an obligation to tell the world the good news of salvation. After God's invitation to salvation in Revelation 22:17, Jesus declares in verse 20, "Surely I come quickly." We are compelled to take the gospel to the lost in whatever time we have left, for *Maranatha*—Christ is coming soon.



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**O**n occasion in the past I have written to gain permission to use specific articles in *Wellsprings*, the quarterly publication we send free of charge to 150 pastors in Australia. Please find attached a permission request form for two articles. My intent is to use one in the April issue and one in the July issue of our publication.

These articles recently appeared in the Sept./Oct. 2016 issue of *FrontLine*. . . . Both articles were very timely. We are beginning to face similar issues here and I felt the articles would helpful.

*Tracy Minnick  
Australia*

**I** appreciate Dr. Ward's zeal for clear communication in his Jan/Feb column of "On Language & Scripture," but I disagree with his call to eliminate the capitalizing of deity pronouns and select nouns. I can think of two ancient conventions intended to convey reverence that lend support to continuing our tradition of capitalization. In the OT there is the *qere perpetuum* practice of substituting "Adonai" for YHWH. The Jewish reader would say "Lord" when the text read God's personal name. In the NT there was the scribal practice of substituting divine nouns with the special abbreviations called *nomina sacra*. It was a unique practice that people outside of the Christian community would not have readily understood. Similarly, our typographical tradition of capitalization has become standardized among the Christian community. No rational reader would see a capitalized pronoun referring to Jesus in the reported speech of Pharisees as an indication that the Pharisees respected Him. It simply indicates that we're making a small effort in our written documents to show Him reverence.

*Brent J. Niedergall, Youth Pastor  
Catawba Springs Christian Church  
Apex, NC*

**A** couple of months ago, I was given a copy of your magazine dated September/October ("Convergence"). I found it to be quite helpful. I had to return the copy I borrowed. I am wondering if it would be possible that there are issues left that I could buy. . . . I am enclosing a donation to your ministry. . . . Keep up the good work.

*Wendy Edwards  
Pfafftown, NC*

Dr. Vaughn,

I have just finished reading your book [*Courage and Compassion*] about the ministry of chaplaincy to law enforcement officers. Though I have known you for many years through your ministry at Faith

**Matt Galvan** recently launched his full-time traveling evangelistic ministry. He and his wife, Hannah, are based out of Central Baptist Church in Dothan, Alabama, and are available for meetings. Their desire is to come alongside likeminded ministries, including churches, camps, and Christian schools, to help them see souls saved and saints walk with God for the glory of God.



**Brent and Christy Niedergall**, with their four children, minister at Catawba Springs Christian Church in Apex, North Carolina ([catawba.org](http://catawba.org)). Brent was called to be the youth pastor in 2016, although he and his wife have been members there since 2014 after transitioning from active duty to the Army Reserves.

Brent's preaching places a strong emphasis on the original languages, discourse analysis, and textual criticism. A background in tree work also provides relationship-building opportunities with young men.

Continued from left

Baptist Church and my membership in FBFI, I had no knowledge of your diverse ministry to police several other law enforcement groups. It was a book I could not put down. I was so blessed by your priority for leading men to Christ in a variety of situations.

Thanks for your devotion of sharing your amazing story of COMPASSION and encouragement. It took a lot of concentrated effort to publish that great work. Hearing you preach recently to our Men's Retreat in PA reminded me again of the blessing I have enjoyed from your communication of the Word. Thank you again for your dedication to faithful ministry outreach through the many opportunities the Lord allowed in your life.

*Lionel Raught  
Tunkhannock, PA*

**I** greatly appreciate each issue of *FrontLine* magazine, with its timely selection of themes and topics. Sometimes I have to snatch the moments to read them, whether it's slipping an issue into

Continued on page 36

# Grace from Eternity to Time

*Who hath saved us, and called us with an 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 Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:9–10).*

Scripture teaches that God planned and provided salvation in Christ out of the riches of His grace (2 Tim. 1:9). This passage also states that He planned salvation before Creation. It further declares that in the course of human history, He provided salvation by sending Christ to earth and calling men and women to salvation.

As we examine the biblical teaching on the various doctrines of salvation, Scripture describes a sequence in which they take place. Theologians identify this “order of salvation” by the Latin term *ordo salutis*. Some of these events occur before salvation; some happen at the time of salvation; and some will take place in the future.



God accomplished His work of election in eternity past, before the Creation—"he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

Further, Paul outlines a sequence of salvation events with his statement in Romans 8:29–30:

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

First, predestination (v. 29) was God's determination in eternity past, apparently, simultaneous with election (Eph. 1:4–5). Second, calling happens at a point in history, at the time the gospel is preached and the Holy Spirit convicts the sinner: "whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Rom. 8:30). Third, justification follows calling at the time a person trusts in Christ: "whom he called, them he also justified" (Rom. 8:30). Finally, glorification is a future event for the believer: "and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30).

The Bible teaches that the events which occur when a sinner trusts Christ occur simultaneously. Our minds grasp them in a logical order, but it is a mistake to separate them into a temporal order.

### The Substance of the *Ordo Salutis*

Warren Vanhetloo, a Baptist and dispensationalist, states, "God has only one provision for the salvation of mankind, unchanged through all dispensations. No one was ever saved except by the love-instigated grace of God, as provided by the shed blood of the perfect Lamb of God, as received by personal faith enlivened by the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to say,

- Aspects and accompaniments of salvation are greater for the church dispensation and some appear to be exclusive to the church age.<sup>2</sup>
- The convicting work of the Holy Spirit is more clear following Calvary (John 16:7–11).
- The Holy Spirit permanently indwells all and only believers.
- Scripture gives no hint of Spirit baptism in the millennium.<sup>3</sup>
- Dispensational accompaniments (Spirit baptism, permanent indwelling, and union in Christ) are also simultaneous in salvation, not logical or chronological.<sup>4</sup>

### Problems with the *Ordo Salutis*

Robert Reymond, a thoroughgoing Reformed theologian, lists an order of salvation that we may assume is a fair representation of Reformed thinking. He lists, in order, "effectual calling, regeneration, repentance unto life and faith in Jesus Christ, justification, definitive sanctification, adoption, glorification."<sup>5</sup>

*Does regeneration precede faith?* Most Reformed theologians teach that regeneration precedes faith. This discussion might be lightly dismissed as inconsequential since we

are discussing events that occur simultaneously. However, many Reformed theologians view regeneration and faith as *chronologically* sequential. This produces a serious problem.

*The Reformation Study Bible* states, "Infants can be born again, although the faith that they exercise cannot be as visible as that of adults."<sup>6</sup> A questioner "received a written response from [R. C.] Sproul's assistant, V. A. Voorhis (dated 1/6/2000) in which he made the following statement: 'When the NGSB' speaks in the notes of John 3 of 'infants being born again,' it is speaking of the work of quickening God does in them which inclines their will to Him. In Protestantism, regeneration always precedes faith and if God quickens them, the person will surely come. . . . Often, regeneration and our subsequent faith happen apparently simultaneously but logically, regeneration must precede faith. An infant's faith may not come until years after God has worked by His Holy Spirit to regenerate him or her."<sup>8</sup> [Emphasis mine.] Zeller goes on to say, "According to this teaching a child can be born again or regenerated as an infant and not come to faith in Christ until years later! This may or may not have been the teaching of the Reformers, but it certainly is not the teaching of the Word of God."<sup>9</sup>

Lange also articulates this position: "Regeneration is an act of God, and may take place in infancy (think of John the Baptist leaping in the mother's womb); conversion or change of mind (*metanoia*) is the act of man, by which, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he turns, in conscious repentance and faith, from sin and Satan to God."<sup>10</sup>

Kevin DeYoung affirms the same position. He says, "The water does not wash away original sin or save the child. We do not presume that this child is regenerate (*though he may be*), nor do we believe that every child who gets baptized will automatically go to heaven. We baptize infants not out of superstition or tradition or because we like cute babies. We baptize infants because they are covenant children and should receive the sign of the covenant."<sup>11</sup> [Emphasis mine.]

Reformed theology faces two problems at this point. First, it posits infant regeneration. We know that children can be saved (Matt. 18:6). However, the salvation of those who die in infancy is a different matter than regeneration preceding faith, which Sproul holds. Second, it seems that the Reformed theologians' biggest mistake is to separate regeneration and faith in a time sequence.

Beyond this, we contend, on the basis of John 1:11–13 and 1 John 5:1, that faith *logically precedes* regeneration. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12–13). It seems clear that those who believe are, as a result of that belief, "born of God" or regenerated. On the basis of John 3:1–21, especially verses 8, 13–16, we contend that regeneration happens at the time of faith. We receive eternal life (regeneration) when we believe on Christ.

*Does repentance precede faith?*<sup>12</sup> John Calvin taught that faith precedes repentance, while Beza and his followers reversed the order. The importance of this is that for Calvin, the

Continued on page 24

# A Gospel Worthy of Global

Baptist history includes several unfortunate examples of well-meaning Baptists allowing theological systems to mitigate or even annul clear biblical teachings. Two of these examples come from the eighteenth century and are diametrically opposite. At that time, Baptists in England were divided into two groups: the General Baptists, who espoused Arminian theology, and the Particular Baptists, who were Calvinists. Both groups allowed theological systems to lead them astray between 1700 and about 1770.

Many General Baptists, perhaps influenced by an “Enlightenment” belief in autonomous human reasoning, allowed their Arminian emphasis on human freedom to gradually erode belief in a divine Christ. After all, if man is capable of doing that which merits favor with God, he would not need a God-man to die for him. A sterling example of morality would be sufficient. Socinianism—an early form of Unitarianism—swept through the General Baptist ranks, killing evangelistic impulse and frankly leaving the churches with very little gospel to proclaim.

A contemporary development was occurring among the Calvinistic, or Particular, Baptists. A rationalistic emphasis on the logical inner workings of the Calvinistic system led some of them seriously to debate what became known as “the modern question”: should the gospel be freely offered to unregenerate people without respect to whether or not they may be elect? After all, so the logic went, it is worse than useless to offer the gospel to those whom God has predestined to damnation; it is blasphemously working at cross-purposes to God. Though remaining basically orthodox, these Particular Baptists had their evangelistic impulse largely stifled by this “Hyper-Calvinism.” If one shares the gospel only with those who are giving signs of being elect, how often will one do so?

Fortunately, God sent revival into both groups of Baptists in the latter half of the eighteenth century as part of the larger Evangelical Awakening that had burst forth in Britain through the preaching of George Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley. This revival first impacted the General Baptists. A Wesleyan convert, Daniel Taylor, converted from Methodist to General Baptist views and discovered that he was one of the few General Baptists who believed in the full deity of Jesus Christ. Through his determined efforts and the Lord’s blessing, a New Connection of General Baptists arose in Great Britain in 1770, and the killing effects of Socinianism were reversed. The revival also entered the ranks of the Particular Baptists. The story of this revival—and its enormous worldwide implications—

is one of the great stories in Baptist history. The central figure in this story was Andrew Fuller.

## Fuller and the “Modern Question”

Fuller grew up in the Baptist church in Soham, Cambridgeshire, about seventy miles north and slightly east of London. His pastor, John Eve, taught him many excellent truths from the Scriptures. These truths, however, were embedded in Hyper-Calvinism so that Fuller reported later that his pastor never encouraged him to share the gospel with anyone. The Lord saved Fuller when he was fifteen, but for Fuller it was a great struggle. He wrote later,

I was not then aware that *any* poor sinner had a warrant to believe in Christ for the salvation of his soul, but supposed there must be some kind of qualification to entitle him to do it; yet I was aware that I had no qualifications. On a review of my resolution at that time, it seems to resemble that of Esther, who went into the king’s presence, *contrary to law*, and at the hazard of her life. Like her, I seemed reduced to extremities, impelled, by dire necessity to run all hazards, even though I should perish in the attempt. Yet it was not altogether from a dread of wrath that I fled to this refuge; for I well remember that I felt something attracting in the Savior. I must—I will—yes, I will trust my soul—my sinful, lost soul in his hands. If I perish, I perish! However it was, I determined to cast myself upon Christ, thinking, peradventure, he would save my soul.<sup>1</sup>

Through unusual circumstances, Fuller found himself the pastor of the Soham Baptist Church before he turned twenty, and he began to pour himself into analyzing the “Modern Question.” He also connected with some other young pastors who were struggling with the same issues: John Sutcliff in Olney, about fifty miles west of Soham; and John Ryland Jr. of Northampton, twelve miles northwest of Olney. Together they scrutinized the Scriptures, read the biographies of John Eliot and David Brainerd, and, through the instrumentality of friends in Scotland, came across some of the writings of American theologian Jonathan Edwards.

Especially significant to Fuller was Edwards’ work *Freedom of the Will*, in which the American theologian argued that the inability to obey that plagues all sinners is moral, not natural. That is, sinners do not fail to please God because, as creatures, they cannot, but because, as sinners, they will not. This moral inability has several implications. First, man is culpable for this inability; he has chosen to be unable to please God and is, therefore, by no means excused from obeying. God *can* command all men to repent, even though natural man is unable to do so (accord-



# Proclamation

ing to Edwards), because all men have the native capacity to repent. Their inevitable refusal to repent—unless grace intervenes—simply aggravates their guilt. Second, therefore, believers are authorized to proclaim to all men the necessity of their repenting and believing.

Fuller thoroughly imbibed this more evangelical form of Calvinism. When he moved from Soham to Kettering in 1782, he announced to his new church the theological basis for his pastoral ministry:

I believe it is the duty of every minister of Christ plainly and faithfully to preach the gospel to all who will hear it. And, as I believe the inability of men to spiritual things to be wholly of the moral, and therefore of the criminal kind—and that it is their duty to love the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in him for salvation, though they do or no—I, therefore, believe free and solemn addresses, invitations, calls, and warnings to them, to be not only consistent, but directly adapted, as means in the hands of the Spirit of God to bring them to Christ. I consider it as a part of my duty, which I could not omit without being guilty of the blood of souls.<sup>2</sup>

## Fuller's Argument

Three years later he produced a seminal work in Baptist thinking, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation, or The Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ*. It would be difficult to overstate the impact of this book on the British Particular Baptists. Fuller's devastating critique of the major arguments of Hyper-Calvinism turned the tide and spurred Baptist evangelism and missions. Consider some of the highlights of Fuller's argument.

First, Fuller argued that the Hyper-Calvinists had inadvertently embraced the same philosophical stance as their Arminian opponents. Both groups claimed that responsibility is limited by ability. The Arminian said a person is responsible to repent and believe, and, therefore, he must be *able* to do so. Hyper-Calvinists said a nonelect person is unable to repent and believe, and, therefore, he is not *responsible* to do so. Fuller responded, "Thus, as in so many other cases, opposite extremes are known to meet. Where no grace is given, they are united in supposing that no duty can be required; which, if true, 'grace is no more grace.'"<sup>3</sup> Instead, Fuller argues that sinners are responsible to repent and believe although they are unable to do so. But how can this be?

Here Fuller depends on Edwards' distinction between natural and moral inability. Hyper-Calvinists seem to think that sinners have a natural inability to repent and believe. But, Fuller argues, natural inability "conveys the idea, that if all aversion of heart were removed, there would still be a natural and insurmountable bar in the way. . . . If sinners were naturally and absolutely unable to believe in Christ, they would be equally unable to disbelieve; for it requires the same powers to reject as to embrace."<sup>4</sup> The obstacle to sinners believing does not lie in their natural capacities. God has endowed them with everything required to embrace the gospel, if only they will. Their "aversion of will" is the sole cause of their rejecting the truth.

Fuller's argument has several ramifications. First, if sinners are lost because they *will not* come to God (rather than *cannot*), then believers are fully justified in preaching the gospel to them and inviting them to come to Christ. "Peradventure, [God] will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Tim. 2:25). In fact, believers *must* proclaim the gospel to lost men because the gospel is the trumpet blast that the Spirit uses to awaken the spiritually dead.

Second, all sinners are under obligation to repent and believe. As long as they *will not* respond, they cannot rightly complain that they *cannot* respond. This is why, Fuller says, the Scriptures are replete with admonitions to sinners to turn from their wicked ways and embrace Christ. When sinners do turn to Christ, they invariably give God all the glory for enabling them to do so.

In the second edition of Fuller's work, published in 1801, he explores the role of the atonement in this dynamic. Fuller rejects the view, taught by some Calvinists, that Christ's payment for sins was an exact commercial transaction equal to the sins of the elect for whom Christ died. Instead, Christ paid a price more than sufficient for the sins of all men, if only they believe, or, as Fuller puts it, Christ's sacrifice is "in itself equal to the salvation of the whole world, were the whole world to embrace it."<sup>5</sup> This allows Fuller to claim that Christ's death, so understood, "opened a door of hope to sinners of the human race as *sinners*; affording a ground for their being invited, without distinction, to believe and be saved."<sup>6</sup>

Fuller did not believe he was teaching an unlimited, universal atonement like that of Dan Taylor, his General Baptist contemporary. On the contrary, Fuller would say, God intended by the atonement to save only the elect, and it is only

**. . . believers must proclaim the gospel to lost men because the gospel is the trumpet blast that the Spirit uses to awaken the spiritually dead.**

they who will ultimately receive the benefits of Christ's sacrifice. But he nevertheless thought his view an advance on the Hyper-Calvinist version of limited atonement. Here is his important conclusion to the matter:

There is no contradiction between this peculiarity of *design* in the death of Christ, and a universal obligation on those who hear the gospel to believe in him, or a universal invitation being addressed to them. If God, through the death of his Son, have promised salvation to all who comply with the gospel; and if there be no *natural* impossibility as to a compliance, nor any obstruction but that which arises from aversion of heart; exhortations and invitations to believe and be saved are consistent; and our duty, as preachers of the gospel, is to administer them, without any more regard to particular redemption than to election; both being secret things, which belong to the Lord our God, and which, however they be a rule to him, are none to us.<sup>7</sup>

For those with little interest in the intricacies of Calvinist theology and little patience for any attempt to limit the atonement, these distinctions may seem unimportant. At the time, however, they powerfully reversed Hyper-Calvinist attitudes that had deadened evangelism among Particular Baptists (who, after all, were the majority of Baptists in Great Britain at the time). The results over the next few decades were stunning.

### Fuller's Influence

Fuller, Sutcliff, and Ryland were pastors of country churches in the Northamptonshire Baptist Association. They united their voices in urging this more evangelical Calvinism. The large London churches did not readily welcome their theological "innovations," and the Northamptonshire Baptists remained a relatively small, unimpressive body of Christians in the English midlands. What difference could they make? In 1784 Sutcliff, heeding a call issued by Jonathan Edwards back in 1747, challenged the Association to gather for prayer for world missions once a month. These prayers now issued from hearts fully committed to the Great Commission and eagerly desiring to see revival.

Into this dynamic came a young shoe cobbler and school-teacher, William Carey, baptized by Sutcliff and mentored by Fuller. Early in 1792 Carey published his short but powerful missions manifesto, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. He was fully convinced by Fuller's evangelical Calvinism and simply worked out the implications of such a theology for world missions. If all sinners must repent and believe, and if all believers must share the gospel with everyone they can, and if God's will is that the gospel be preached to all nations, then what are we waiting for? He preached his epic sermon, "Expect great things; attempt great things," a few months later, and the Northamptonshire Baptists responded by establishing the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen on October 2, 1792. Fuller was the first General Secretary of the Society, a role he filled earnestly and capably for the next

twenty-two years. Carey and Dr. John Thomas sailed for India seven months later, and the modern missions movement was born. Carey, Thomas, and the many Baptists who followed them to India and eventually to other sites around the world carried with them a gospel worthy to be accepted by all.

### Suggested Reading

Haykin, Michael A. G. *Ardent Love for Jesus: Learning from the Eighteenth-Century Baptist Revival*. Bryntirion, Bridgend, Wales: Bryntirion Press, 2013.

Nettles, Thomas. "Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)" in Michael A.G. Haykin, *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910, Volume 2* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2000).

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Nettles, Thomas. *By His Grace and for His Glory*. Lake Charles, LA: Cor Meum Tibi, 2002.

Priest, Gerald L. "Andrew Fuller's Response to the 'Modern Question'—A Reappraisal of *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*," *DBSJ* 6 (Fall 2001): 45–73.



Dr. David Saxon is a professor at Maranatha Baptist University. His PhD in Church History is from Bob Jones University.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Nettles, "Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)" in Michael A.G. Haykin, *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910, Volume 2* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2000), 99–100.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, in *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, ed. Andrew Gunton Fuller (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1845), 151. Italics in the original.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Italics in the original.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Italics in the original.

## Join the conversation online

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# The Water That Divides

In an article called “We Believe In: Water Baptism,” Arthur Farstad identifies a problem in the broad evangelical world:

If one were writing an article on baptism for a Baptist publication—or a Church of Christ, Presbyterian, or Roman Catholic one—the task would not be too difficult. Each group has well-defined positions on all aspects of this doctrine. . . . Our readership holds differing views not only on the *mode* but also the *meaning* of baptism, and perhaps most important of all, the proper *candidates* for water baptism. Difficult as it may be, in this article we propose to examine the consensus of nearly all Christians on water baptism.<sup>1</sup>

His article concludes that most evangelicals agree on only three elements: water baptism confers no saving grace, baptism in some way identifies believers with Christ, and baptism is important for obedience and as a testimony to the world of the believer’s identification with Christ.<sup>2</sup>

J. I. Packer goes further:

One of the church’s unhappy divisions concerns the subject of baptism. Nobody defends baptizing all infants as such, but most denominations baptize the children of the baptized. Baptists, however, see this as either non-baptism (because infants cannot make the required confession of faith) or as irregular baptism (because, they say, it is not clearly apostolic, nor pastorally wise). Some hold that by not actually commanding infant baptism, God in Scripture forbids it; all urge that to postpone baptism till faith is conscious is always in practice best. (Note that when I speak of “Baptists” here, I am referring to a whole range of

Christians—members of Baptist and baptistic denominations, along with some charismatics, independents, and other evangelicals—for whom believer-baptism is the standard practice.)

On the other side, some have deduced from covenant theology that God commands the baptism of believers’ babies after all. Many more maintain that this practice, though fixed by the church, has better theological, historical, and pastoral warrant than the alternative has, and so should be thought of as “most agreeable with the institution of Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

Baptism divides Baptists from almost all other denominations. In the current culture, baptism is frequently denigrated—the mode is unimportant, the recipient can be almost anyone, and the meaning is uncertain. The purpose of this article is to look briefly at various views on baptism and compare these views with the significance of baptism for Baptists.

Historically baptism has suffered in numerous ways. The mode was changed from immersion to pouring and then to sprinkling. With the invention of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and the high rate of infant mortality, baptism came to include infants. Since baptism was believed to save, it was logical to baptize infants to ensure their salvation during the years prior to their being able to exercise personal faith. There also developed in the rising Roman Catholic Church a system of instruction before non-Christian adults could be baptized. This fostered the idea that people could be educated into salvation. Conversion by means of the work of the Holy Spirit was no longer necessary. Therefore, in addition to the baptism of unregenerate infants came the baptism of unregenerate adults. This was the dominant position until the Reformation.

In the Reformation the Reformers developed numerous theological distinctions from Catholicism. Baptism was *not* one of them. In spite of the preaching of the gospel and the destruction of the framework of Medieval Christianity, the Reformers failed to replace Catholic baptism with a biblical model.

Luther believed that what justifies the recipient is not the baptism but faith in the promises which God makes in association with baptism. Infants, incapable of believing, are assisted by the faith of those who bring them to baptism and by the prayers of the witnesses. He based this on his belief that faith is a gift of God and has no relationship to the act of believing by the individual. "Right faith is a thing wrought by the Holy Ghost in us, which changeth us and turneth us into a new nature. How then can we insist that we know exactly when faith is granted? . . . We hopefully assume the child to be a believer and thus regenerate. The baptism then strengthens the seed of faith."<sup>4</sup> He believed that the helplessness of the child symbolized how the grace of God alone saves a man. Since he maintained the state-church relationship earlier developed by the Catholic Church, infant baptism was important not only for its relationship to the church but also to the state. It brought a person into the church and the state both.

John Calvin rejected Luther's view of an assisted infant faith, but he also rejected adult baptism. His emphasis on God's sovereignty in salvation meant that the faith of the elect is the result of regeneration, not its cause. He argued that the old and new covenants are alike in foundation, meaning and purpose, differing only in the external ordinances. Since circumcision was administered to infants, so baptism can and should also be administered in the same way. When a child was born to Jewish parents, he was born a Jew; circumcision was a sign that he was already in the covenant. Likewise, when a child is born to Christian parents, he is already a Christian, born into the covenant. Thus, baptism, like circumcision, is a sign and seal of the covenant and appropriate for the children of the elect. Restricting baptism only to believers, therefore, displaced grace from its essential position.<sup>5</sup>

The arguments today are little changed. One covenant theologian argues that the silence of the New Testament on the baptism of infants is a "thunderous affirmation that infant baptism was so taken for granted that no explicit mention of it was necessary."<sup>6</sup> This is a dangerous hermeneutic, for based on this all kinds of activity could be argued.

Another acknowledges the extrabiblical rationale for infant baptism: "There is no explicit command in Scripture to baptize children; nor is there a single instance in which we are plainly told that children were baptized. But this does not necessarily make infant baptism un-Biblical."<sup>7</sup>

## Historically, baptism was the way believers announced their conversion to Christianity in a variety of denominations.

Theology trumps the Bible when he argues, "The exclusion of New Testament children [from baptism] would require an equivocal statement to that effect."<sup>8</sup> Good theology always develops from Scripture; to argue that an act should be done unless the Scripture explicitly rejects it is just bad theology.

Another covenant theologian explains that the reason only male infants were circumcised in the Old Testament but both male and female infants are baptized in the New Testament is that God

recognized and adapted Himself to the patriarchal culture of the Old Testament.<sup>9</sup> This is a dangerous rationale, since it implies that God capitulates to the culture. The creation of the nation of Israel would seem to indicate that instead of bowing to the heathen culture of the day, God instead was creating a unique culture for His people.

This writer agrees with Wayne Ward when he concludes that the attempt to tie baptism to circumcision and thus defend infant baptism "is a frantic effort to preserve a baptismal practice that arose later in church history by reading into it a meaning nowhere found in the New Testament."<sup>10</sup>

Under Catholicism, pedobaptism stood for "truth" and adult baptism for anabaptist "heresy." Under Lutheranism, pedobaptism symbolized state Christianity, while adult baptism symbolized voluntary Christianity. With Calvin, pedobaptism came to represent a predestinarian view of salvation, while adult baptism accompanied an emphasis on human responsibility.

Standing in opposition to both Catholicism and the Reformers during the Reformation were the Anabaptists, the "re-baptizers." They condemned Catholicism as anti-scriptural and the Reformation as an incomplete return to the truth of Scripture. They rejected pedobaptism and baptized only adults upon a confession of their faith in Christ; the Catholics and Reformers viewed this as "rebaptism," but the Anabaptists protested that this was the only true baptism.<sup>11</sup> Theologically, the Anabaptists viewed baptism as an act of obedience by an adult believer. For them, it became an eloquent way of rejecting Christian sacramentalism and all it stood for. For the next three hundred years, little changed with respect to baptism in Catholicism and Protestantism. When the modern Baptists began,<sup>12</sup> the truth of believers' baptism became more prevalent.

### Significance of Baptism

What makes Baptists Baptists is less their position on baptism than their view of the priesthood of the believer and the direct and immediate call of God to the individual.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the called are gathered into communities of believers—local churches—and to be part of the gathered church, the believer must be baptized. Baptists hold numerous beliefs which are related to these basic concepts.

First, the authority of baptism is Christ. In the Great Commission, our Lord commanded His disciples to *baptize* (immerse); no one has a right to alter His commandment. He did not tell believers to be baptized in the Jordan or to be baptized in a river or to be baptized inside a church building, but He did say, be baptized.<sup>14</sup>

Second, Baptists have historically insisted on immersion, primarily because the *form* is tied to the *meaning*. Much of Christendom has changed the form of baptism to pouring or sprinkling, even though most scholars agree that baptism in the New Testament was by immersion. A change in the form causes the loss of its power as a witness to the death and resurrection of Christ, however. Romans 6:3–4 and Colossians 2:12 use immersion to picture the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and of the believer. Sprinkling and pouring do not illustrate this truth in any sense. It is not merely a change in the *mode* of baptism to which we object. Sprinkling is not a change in the mode of baptism. Sprinkling simply is not baptism; pouring is not baptism. Immersion, and immersion alone, is baptism. Without immersion, the symbolism is not merely defective; the symbolism is nonexistent.

Third, Baptists insist on the baptism of believers. Baptists reject infant baptism. There is no direct evidence of infant baptism in the New Testament. There is significant evidence that only believers were baptized. Every one baptized in the New Testament was able to express his faith in Christ and willfully choose his own baptism.

Fourth, any discussions about baptism must focus on meaning. Baptism is a public declaration of the believer's connection to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament baptism followed salvation almost immediately (see Acts 2:38–41; 8:12; 9:17–18; 16:30–33). Some see it as the "confession with the mouth" which, when preceded by "belief in the heart," announces salvation (Rom. 10:9).<sup>15</sup> Baptism "into" the name of Jesus Christ is best described as a declaration of identification with the Savior.

Historically, baptism was the way believers announced their conversion to Christianity in a variety of denominations. It was during the growth of the revivalist movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century that the public declaration by means of baptism was replaced with the altar call. Under this new approach, a person would proclaim his salvation by walking the aisle and having the pastor or evangelist announce that the person had become a believer. Baptism was optional for some of these evangelists, and the end effect upon some elements of evangelicalism was a loss of importance for the ordinance.

Fifth, Baptists argue that baptism is the means of entry into a New Testament church; therefore, Baptists demand it as a precondition for membership. Every baptism in the New Testament, with the exception of the Ethiopian eunuch, was tied to an existing church or to a new church being started in the community. Converts are accepted for membership only upon a confession of faith and baptism by immersion after salvation. Anything else imperils the very testimony that Baptist churches have historically held.

Baptism was designed and instituted as an *initial* rite. It is the first duty required of believers after repentance

and faith, and is Christ's own appointed mode of professing required to be administered and received before admission to the church. The very first record of the progress of the gospel under the labors of the apostles, shows the order of church building in those days.<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion

Baptism is truly the "water that divides." Baptists historically have held to the immersion of believers, upon their confession of faith, as the initiatory rite of obedience to Christ and, with rare exception, entrance into the membership of the local church. This is not merely a denominational difference. Baptists hold to their belief because it is based upon the authority of Christ and Scripture, because of the significance of the act, because of the biblical necessity of baptism only for believers, because it symbolically connects the believer to Christ, and because of its relationship to the local church. Some believe baptism creates an "unhappy division" in Christendom. Baptists argue, instead, that it creates a joyful obedience to Christ and to His commandments. This is why Baptists baptize their converts but not their infants.



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<sup>1</sup> Arthur L. Farstad, "We Believe In: Water Baptism," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 3 (Spring 1990): 3.

<sup>2</sup> Farstad, 7–9.

<sup>3</sup> J. I. Packer, *Growing in Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1996), 131.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther, "The Holy Sacrament of Baptism," *Works of Martin Luther*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960), 30:448.

<sup>5</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869), 4.16.

<sup>6</sup> Feenstra, 374.

<sup>7</sup> Berkhof, 319.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Wayne E. Ward, "The Conflict over Baptism," *Christianity Today* 11 (April 1967): 11.

<sup>11</sup> Bridge and Phipers, 77.

<sup>12</sup> While there were those who held to baptistic beliefs since the first church, the modern Baptist movement began after the Reformation, when churches began to use the name "Baptist."

<sup>13</sup> Ward, 12.

<sup>14</sup> John A. Broadus, *Immersion Essential to Christian Baptism* (Watertown, WI: Roger Williams Heritage Archives, 1880; 2003), 5–6. This writer understands that "baptize" in the Great Commission is a participle, but it is used in an imperatival construction.

<sup>15</sup> Bridge and Phipers, 153.

<sup>16</sup> H. L. Gear, *The Relation of Baptism to the Lord's Supper* (Watertown: Roger Williams Heritage Archives, 1880; 2003), 23.

# Sacrifice for the Sake of the Gospel

1 Corinthians 9:19–23

What should a believer be willing to do or be for the sake of the gospel?

Consider the question from a more pointed angle: What should a believer be willing to sacrifice for the cause of the gospel, for ministry opportunities?

Two key words within these questions are intrinsically connected—“sacrifice” and “gospel.” This leads to yet another question: Is the gospel possible without sacrifice?

The apostle Paul claims, “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all. . . . And unto the Jews I became as a Jew . . . to them that are under the law, as under the law . . . To them that are without law, as without the law. . . . To the weak became I as weak . . . I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel’s sake” (1 Cor. 19:19–23). Now trace the sequence of thoughts in the context: “But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock. . . . Lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. . . . And this I do for the gospel’s sake” (1 Cor. 8:9; 9:12b, 23a). In these verses Paul addresses matters of personal choice, individual liberties, and the effect the exercise of these actions might have in the broader scope, the gospel.

A growing tension has developed concerning this passage, and sacrifice is at the center of the debate. At issue seems to be how much of the gospel message can be sacrificed for the sake of contextualization, rather than contemplating how much of our cultural context we are willing to sacrifice for the sake of gospel integrity.

## Adaptation or Accuracy?

While growing up in northern Brazil, I viewed reptiles as routine home invaders. One in particular stands out in my memory. He made his stealthy entrance after my mother had painted our kitchen a popular vibrant shade of salmon. As we moved items back into place, we noticed what appeared to be a long bit of rope that had obviously fallen into the wet paint, for it was identical in color to the wall. On closer inspection, however, we discovered it to be a snake, a snake of chameleon qualities, causing it to blend into its context perfectly. Those who would contextualize the gospel to make it more *relevant* and culturally acceptable are like the snake, trying in chameleon-like ways to amalgamate with current worldly philosophies.

It would be a misinterpretation of this passage and a misapplication of the biblical historical record if this passage should become the impetus for contextualizing the gospel rather than allowing the power of the gospel, in its own effectuality, to impact all contexts and cultures. When Paul speaks of becoming all things to all men, he is not promoting gospel *adaptation* to the various cultures, but rather of gospel *accuracy* in all cultures.

As author Bob Deffinbaugh explains, “It is vitally important for [us] to understand that in verses 19–23 Paul is not teaching: ‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do.’ Paul is not speaking about the sins of others with which he is willing to participate.”<sup>1</sup> Terry L. Wilder states even more specifically, “[Paul] never meant something like, ‘To

the adulterer, I became as an adulterer. To the embezzler I became as an embezzler. To the cannibal, I became as a cannibal.' He would not say such things."<sup>2</sup> And in spite of his moral failings, Tullian Tchividjian speaks truth when he says, "Becoming 'all things to all people' does not mean fitting in with the fallen patterns of this world so that there is no distinguishing difference between Christians and non-Christians. . . . When Christians try to eliminate the counter-cultural, unfashionable features of the biblical message because those features are unpopular in the wider culture . . . we've moved from contextualization to compromise."<sup>3</sup>

On the contrary, Deffinbaugh goes on to say, "Paul is talking about accommodating himself to the weaknesses of the lost, by surrendering any liberties which might prove offensive to them and thus hinder his preaching of the gospel."<sup>4</sup>

Within the history of our faith, sacrifice has a rich heritage and should be deemed one of the graces by which we genuinely worship God. In Paul we see a person who is not only willing but is also committed to impose sacrifice on himself for the sake of the gospel. At the core is not compromise of the gospel for the sake of appealing to others but rather commitment to the gospel by means of sacrifice as a tool in reaching others. When we incorporate such sacrifice, we no longer view it as sacrifice but as an opportunity to reveal Christlikeness. Who, more than Christ, exhibited self-sacrifice?

### Contextualization and Commitment

Our discussion must move beyond contextualizing the gospel to commitment to personal sacrifice for the sake of the gospel, so that it might be understood in all contexts. This requires a clearer understanding of biblical sacrifice. Sacrifice is a theme integrally woven throughout Scripture, reaching its pinnacle at the cross. Sacrifice is central to the gospel. From the outset, it has been at the forefront in any interaction between God and mankind, not from a perspective of martyrdom, but from an orientation of joy. The writer of Hebrews testifies of this in Christ, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2).

Paul willingly relinquishes personal liberties, rights, and comforts as presented in 1 Corinthians. It is a logical response. The entire package of the gospel is a sacrifice on the part of One for the sake of blessings on the part of the other. There would be no gospel apart from sacrifice, and should it not be expected that the gospel would not penetrate other cultures and contexts without personal sacrifices? Is the servant greater than his Master?

Consider Timothy, who submitted to Old Testament ceremonial circumcision, not for the sake of meeting the standards of the Law, but for the sake of mollifying Jews he would encounter, Jews who still saw themselves as being under the Law. He personally sacrificed for the sake of the gospel, but in no way was the gospel compromised for the sake of the culture.

In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul addresses the financial sacrifices he was experiencing as a result of ministering to his audience, despite the fact that they that sow "spiritual things" should reap "carnal things" (v. 11) and they that preach

the gospel "should live of the gospel" (v. 14). Nevertheless, he and his fellow laborers "[suffered] all things" lest they "hinder the gospel" (v. 12), and they did it willingly, that they might gain a far greater remuneration, a "reward" (v. 17). As he listed various intersections with culture—to the Jews, to the Gentiles, to the weak—Paul gives a motive: "That I might gain the more. . . . That I might gain the Jews . . . that I might gain them that are under the law . . . that I might gain them that are without law [Gentiles]. . . . that I might gain the weak." They sought a reward of eternal fruit, the souls of men and women in all cultures. Paul declares, "And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you" (v. 23).

To dwell unduly on the idea of sacrifice, however, is to overlook a pivotal component. This self-sacrifice is not merely a stoic surrender or a noble conciliation to avoid offending those we seek to engage spiritually. It must emanate from love. Notice that Paul's discussion extends back to 1 Corinthians 8. Verse 3 presents an introspective supposition: "if any man love God." Is not love the great equalizer in how sacrifice is viewed? Most parents would agree that raising a family involves layers of sacrifice. However, that experience is rarely classified in the column labeled "sacrifice" but rather in the column labeled "love," and while they also acknowledge that having children is an expensive proposition, it is not forefront in their thoughts.

Someone has aptly observed, "The highest proof of love is the sacrifice of that which is most precious."<sup>5</sup> Abraham evidenced his love for God in his willingness to sacrifice his long-awaited precious heir, Isaac. Isaac exhibited his love for his father by willingly giving himself as a sacrifice for his father to offer. Then there is the matchless sacrifice of God giving His only Son for the redemption of His enemies. We, as His followers, are urged to the same extremity of self-sacrifice (1 John 3:16). "As our being is orb'd in His, so whatever was His spirit will be ours: even His unparalleled act of self-sacrifice must be reproduced in us."<sup>6</sup>

If we have been "bought with a price" as Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 6:20, sanctified, separated for God's use, can we truly say that anything we relinquish is a sacrifice? Can we ever truly claim, as some cynically allege concerning ministry, that we are suffering for Jesus?

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<sup>1</sup> Bob Deffinbaugh, "When a Right May Be a Wrong (1 Cor 9:1-23)," at <https://bible.org/seriespage/16-when-right-may-be-wrong-1-cor-91-23>, accessed 2/12/17.

<sup>2</sup> Terry L. Wilder, "A Biblical Theology of Missions and Contextualization," *Southwest Journal of Theology* 55.1 (Fall 2012): 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Deffinbaugh, "When a Right May Be a Wrong."

<sup>5</sup> Charles John Ellicott, ed., *The Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 222.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

# Paul's Gospel Apologetic

Outside of Jesus Christ, there has never been a greater example of Christian apologetics and evangelism than the apostle Paul—indeed we would do well to follow his example as he followed Christ's (1 Cor. 11:1). Apologetics can be succinctly defined as the *defense of the faith* and evangelism as the *propagation of the faith*. Both of these are gospel-advancing disciplines, and both should happen at the point of every gospel encounter. Almost without exception, when a believer evangelizes he will answer potential objections and defend Christian theism over and above any other competing view of salvation. Likewise, any time a believer defends the faith, the goal should never be simply academic acceptance or inclusion at the table of possible worldviews but primarily the persuasion of individual souls of their need for saving grace (see Agrippa's recognition of this in Acts 26:28). Paul was an apologist-evangelist *par excellence*, and among all his words and works, there is not a more prominent exemplar of these commitments than his encounter with the Athenians in Acts 17:16–34.

Paul finds himself alone in Athens through a seemingly unfortunate chain of events. Only a few days or maybe weeks earlier, he and his ministry team of Silas, Timothy, et al., were preaching the gospel in Thessalonica when they

were chased out of town by the Jews. Moving on to Berea, they were welcomed in a more noble way by those eager to compare the message of Christ with the Old Testament Scriptures. Soon, however, their Jewish opponents from Thessalonica arrived and instigated enough of a protest that Paul was forced to leave. The rest of Paul's ministry team remained in Berea, and Paul alone was carried by ship to Athens. By divine providence and grace, what unfolds can inform and encourage us as we seek to always be ready with the gospel!

## More than Just a Sightseer

Paul, now an abandoned sightseer, takes in this most eminent Greek city through his thoroughly God-centered worldview. Docking at the harbor of Piraeus and entering through the nearly six-mile-round city wall, near the temple of Athena Nike, he heads toward the city center. He walks the Sacred Way past the majestic Parthenon, a temple dedicated to Athena Polias, and enters first the Greek Agora (i.e., marketplace) and then the Roman Agora. Paul stands in the shadow of the Horologion, the forty-foot tall octagonal "Tower of the Winds" with the eight wind gods carved on each out-facing wall.<sup>1</sup> These prominent structures were merely a few among a sea of temples, shrines, and monuments to the various members of the Greek pantheon: Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Poseidon, Pan,



# in Athens

Ares, Hermes, etc. Luke attests, Paul “saw the city wholly given to idolatry” and “his spirit was stirred in him” (v. 16).

## A Listening Christ-Proclaimer

His eyes look right through the cultural splendor and exquisite artistry, seeing a city co-opting glory that rightly belongs to God alone and offering it instead to carved idols.<sup>2</sup> Deeply moved, he heads to the synagogue where he finds Jews and Greek near-converts to Judaism; from there he moves to the marketplace and *disputes* with those he finds there as well (v. 17). The word “dispute” (*dialogomai*) does not indicate that Paul engages in an even exchange of ideology but rather in an authentic conversation where he both listens and sets forth life-giving truth. It is through these exchanges that Paul grasps the culture—that the Athenians “spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing” (v. 21); that one of their poets, Epimenides (600 BC) had said of the divine, “in him we live, and move, and have our being” (v. 28a); and that another poet, Aratus had written of Zeus, “We are also his offspring” (v. 28b).<sup>3</sup>

On Paul’s side, his message is singular and consistent: “he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection” (v. 18). The word used for preach, *euangelizō*, from which we get our word “evangelize,” means to “bring good news” or to “proclaim the gospel.”<sup>4</sup> Some of his Athenian hearers

thought that he was setting forth foreign or “strange gods” (v. 18); no doubt Paul included an explanation of the deity of Christ, whom his hearers mistakenly took for another god along with the Father. The dialogue was a real conversation with real people—Jews, Greek God-fearers, average marketgoers, and even some philosophers. In these various conversations, Paul listens to their particular views of novel ideas and gods, but never wavers from his commitment to preach the gospel of Christ.

## A Message That Wins Consideration

This gospel-conversation is his daily pattern until “certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him” (v. 18). These two groups were the elite thinkers of the Greek world. The Epicureans followed the teachings of Epicurus (342–270 BC) and believed that happiness is the ultimate goal and that death is the end of human existence. The Stoics were followers of Zeno (332–260 BC) and believed that by living controlled, ethical lives in submission to the will of the gods, they could reach a state of happiness.<sup>5</sup> The wording used for their “encounter” indicates that Paul and the philosophers spent a good amount of time in a discussion that could take on the characteristics of a vigorous debate.<sup>6</sup> As a result, there were two decidedly different opinions on Paul. Some said, “What



will this babbler say?" This was a dismissive remark, using a word that literally means "seed-speaker," which evoked a bird mindlessly pecking at seeds scattered on the ground. It referred to someone who dabbled in thinking, "who picked up scraps of ideas here and there and passed them off as profundity with no depth of understanding whatever."<sup>7</sup> Others, however, were genuinely intrigued. Their interest was piqued by Jesus as a potentially new god and by the resurrection as a radically unique religious teaching.

Luke narrates that the philosophers "took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean" (vv. 19–20). The Areopagus means "Ares' hill," named for the Greek god of war.<sup>8</sup> This rocky hill situated between the acropolis and agora was also the name of a judicial counsel which convened at the outcropping.<sup>9</sup> This was the counsel that tried Plato almost three hundred years earlier and sentenced him to death. While some see this as a potentially ominous backdrop, it is probably best to understand this as an invitation of the genuinely curious to a place ideal for public exposition.

### An Evangelistic Defense

What unfolds next is Paul's famous *apologia*: his opportunity to defend and promote the good news of Jesus to religious and philosophically minded unbelievers. Standing on the elevated hill of address he begins, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." This word can simply mean "devout" or "religious" and is intended by Paul to shine the spotlight on the belief system of the Athenians. Some had already judged Paul's beliefs as strange, but had they ever seriously evaluated their own religious views in the courtroom of truth? They were about to.

Paul had discovered in his daily trips into the city that there was a particular altar with the inscription, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD" (*agnōstos theos*). Through his conversations with them, he recognized that they were ignorant of the true God, so he gently points out that they had already admitted—on an idol plaque—what he is accusing them of. Understanding that there are two kinds of *agnostics*, those open to the truth and those zealously ignorant, Paul brings them to a spiritual fork in the road by proclaiming, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (v. 23). They will soon know the alternative to their ignorance. The question is, will they welcome this truth?

In order to contrast the one true God with their false polytheism, Paul identifies the true *Theos* through a scripturally rich description of His attributes and works. He is the God of creation, sovereign over all, and omnipresent; He transcends false human worship and gives life to people—not the other way around.<sup>10</sup> He has specially formed humans, placed them in national communities, and orchestrated their lives for a singular purpose: "That they should seek the Lord" (vv. 24–27).<sup>11</sup> Paul declares that the true God is present and knowable by reminding them of what their own poets have said: "In him we live, and move, and have our being," and, "We are also his offspring" (v. 28). Up to this point, Paul has been giving them truth

to inform their admitted ignorance and reasoning with the presupposition that God made them to know Him. Now, however, he presses them to a logical and spiritual point of decision. Since all are "the offspring of God," it is logically inconsistent to "think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (v. 29). God cannot be our Creator, and we, His creator. These great thinkers are violating the laws of logic, and these religious base-coverers are ignorant of the omnipresent One who is near enough to find.

Their worldview is not simply misaligned—it is wrong; it is rebellious. Paul now speaks on behalf of God when he declares, "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (v. 30). God's merciful forbearance has allowed ignorant and hardened God-deniers to continue to live and breathe, but His patience is not indefinite. God has "appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (v. 31). As Paul appeals to Jesus' authority-confirming resurrection, his audience hits the proverbial fork in the road. Some mock, others are politely noncommittal, and a small number believe, including Dionysius an Areopagite council member, a woman named Damaris, and a few others.

As we seek to follow the example of Paul the Apologist, we must be more than just a sightseer. We must engage in dialogue as a listening Christ-proclaimer; trust God that our message will win consideration; and as opportunities come, engage as an evangelistic defender of the faith—an apologist-evangelist.

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<sup>1</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, 1st ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 384–85.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 42:8.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold, *Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 392–93.

<sup>4</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 402.

<sup>5</sup> Simon J. Kistemaker and William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, New Testament Commentary 17 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1953–2001), 626.

<sup>6</sup> Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 956.

<sup>7</sup> John B. Polhill, Vol. 26, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 367.

<sup>8</sup> The counterpart Roman god of war was Mars, which accounts for the translation "Mars' hill" (v. 22).

<sup>9</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, 367–69.

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 42:5; Jeremiah 10:12, 16; 1 Kings 8:27; 1 Chronicles 29:14; Psalm 50:10–15.

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 32:8; Psalms 14:2; 74:17; 145:18; Isaiah 55:6; 65:1; Jeremiah 23:23–24.

# Whosoever Won't

Andrew Hudson



## Most Jews refused to repent and trust Jesus

during His first coming. Did Jesus produce or cause this refusal to repent? This might seem like a strange question, given the fact that Jesus left heaven and took on human form to offer the kingdom to the Jews. Why would Jesus work against one of the purposes for which He came? But there are several New Testament passages that are used to claim that Jesus prevented the Jews from believing. All of these passages refer to Isaiah 6:9–10.

### Summary of Isaiah 6:9–10

In Isaiah 1 the prophet sternly rebukes the nation of Israel. Verses 2–15 identify the Jews' behavior as rebellious. The rebellion is so bad that it reminded God of the debauchery of Sodom and resulted in God "hiding His eyes" from the nation. Verses 16–20 record Isaiah's call for the Jews to repent. He alludes to the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience that were part of the Mosaic Law (cf. Deut. 28–30). Verses 21–31 describe a situation in Israel where no repentance and obedience are forthcoming. Therefore, God will purge the nation by means of the curses promised. Eventually there would be national repentance and the restoration of the nation of Israel, but Isaiah would minister during a time of rebellion and curses.

Isaiah preached a message of repentance. "Instead of bringing conviction, humility, and confession of sins, Isaiah's divine messages will have the primary effect of hardening people or confirming their hardened unwillingness to respond positively to God."<sup>1</sup> God does not produce or cause the hardness of the Jewish people through Isaiah's preaching. The people were already hardhearted and rebellious. As a result God pronounced six "woes" (i.e., judgments) upon Israel in Isaiah 5:8–30 for her rebellion.

It is important to note that the prophecy in Isaiah 6:9–10 is based on a similar statement in Deuteronomy 29:2–4. Israel had seen the miraculous signs of God through her deliverance from Egypt. And yet Israel failed to trust

God and was sentenced to wander in the wilderness for forty years. During the forty years God did not give Israel "a heart to perceive" or "eyes to see" or "ears to hear." The lack of perception was God's judgment on Israel for rebellion. That judgment was not reversible once it was declared (see Numbers 14). The judgment for Israel after the establishment of the Mosaic covenant would include the curses of the covenant.

There would be no national repentance until God purged the nation through the curses. There would, however, be a remnant of believers. There would also be a future restoration of the nation after the purging. As part of this restoration Isaiah prophesied of a suffering servant who would heal through His stripes (Isa. 53). It is this collection of concepts that forms the basis for the appeal to Isaiah 6:9–10 in the New Testament. This passage becomes the exemplar in the New Testament for Jewish rebellion, judgment, and Mosaic curses.

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### Survey of NT Passages

*Matthew 13:14–15.* After it became obvious that the rebellious Jews would reject their Messiah, Jesus begins to teach about the kingdom in parables. His disciples ask Him why He taught in parables. Jesus states that those who reject Him were not given the right to know the mysteries of the kingdom (Matt. 13:11) because they did not see or hear or understand (Matt. 13:13—an allusion to Isa. 6). Jesus continued to explain that the prophecy in Isaiah 6:9–10 is "fulfilled" by those Jews who reject Him (Matt. 13:14–15). "The word 'fulfill' here . . . probably means *the prophecy of Isaiah applies to them*—i.e., the pattern of behavior in Isaiah's time is repeating itself and being completed in Jesus' day among those who reject him"<sup>2</sup> Just as the Jews in Isaiah's day faced the curses of the Mosaic covenant for their rebellion, the Jews in Jesus' day face the curses of the Mosaic covenant for their rebellion.

Suggestions that Jesus caused the blindness of the Jews so they would not repent are misguided. The Jewish

Continued on page 25

## 2017

### July 31–August 2, 2017

Alaska Regional Fellowship  
Immanuel Baptist Church  
7540 E. Cottrell-Campus Dr.  
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907.745.0610  
akbeb.com/akfbf.html

### September 12, 2017

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798 Hempstead Turnpike  
Franklin Square, NY 11010  
212.947.5316

### September 16, 2017

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(Meeting with the New England  
Foundations Conference)  
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186 Dover Point Road  
Dover, NH 03820

### September 18–19, 2017

Northern California Regional  
Fellowship  
Faith Baptist Church of Folsom  
335 E. Bidwell Street  
Folsom, CA. 95630  
http://folsom.church/

### September 18–19, 2017

New Mexico Regional Fellowship  
Charity Baptist Church  
5501 Obregon Road NE  
Rio Rancho, NM 87144  
Keith Skaggs, Host Pastor

### October 16–17, 2017

Central Regional Fellowship  
Faith Baptist Church  
1001 S. Scenic Drive  
Manhattan, KS 66503

### October 23–27, 2017

Caribbean Regional Fellowship  
Calvary Baptist Tabernacle  
PO Box 3390  
Carolina, PR 00984

## 2018

### January 29–30, 2018

Rocky Mountain Regional Fellowship  
Westside Baptist Church  
6260 West 4th Street  
Greeley, CO 80634  
970.346.8610  
rockymtnfbfi@hotmail.com

### April 9–11, 2018

South Regional Fellowship  
Swan Creek Baptist Church  
2501 Swan Creek  
Jonesville, NC 28642

### June 11–13, 2018

98th Annual Fellowship  
Tri-City Baptist Church  
2211 W. Germann Road  
Chandler, AZ 85286

### July 30–August 1, 2018

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# SOUND WORDS

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2 TIMOTHY 1:13

## First Partaker

### In His Law Doth He Meditate (Psalm 1:2–3)

This year marks the five-hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The year 1517 marks its commencement because it was then that Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five Rome-challenging theses to the door of Germany's Wittenberg church. They were the result of Luther's studying the Scripture. Shortly his studies, and those of other reformers, eventuated in the five nonnegotiables of the Reformation, the five famous *solas*, the most foundational of which was *sola scriptura*: Scripture alone is infallible for faith and practice.

Five hundred years later, now, we have an immense amount of profit from biblical studies for which to thank our God (and the reformers and their successors). We also have a distressing amount of profitlessness about which to be concerned. Despite the vast biblical resources bequeathed to us since the Reformation, there is far too much disconnect between the amount of Bible we know and the amount contemporary Christians are actually living. Somehow the dots between the two must be more closely connected.

Between the Bible and behavior is a scriptural connector. You can see it clearly in a pivotal verse located at a strategic point in the history of God's people. Joshua and all Israel stand at a literal threshold. When they cross it, the long-dreamed-of land will at last begin to be

theirs; theirs to conquer and theirs to keep. Provided, that is, that their behavior connects with their Bibles (the Lord's *torah*). Joshua is given the indispensable way to connect the dots (Josh. 1:8). Let's omit it momentarily:

*"The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits"*  
(2 Tim. 2:6)

This book of the law [Bible] . . . that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein [behavior].

What we've omitted is undoubtedly a frequently missing component in our response to Scripture. Its absence helps explain why so much teaching and preaching and family worship and Christian education and conferences and seminars seem to amount to so little. Charles Haddon Spurgeon identified the omission:

My brethren, there is nothing more wanting to make Christians grow in grace, nowadays, than meditation. Most of you are painfully negligent in this matter. You remind me of a sermon that one of my quaint old friends in the country once preached from the text, "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting." He told us that too many people, who would hunt for a sermon, were too lazy to roast it by meditation. . . . So it is with many of you; after you have caught the sermon, you allow it to run away. How often do you, through lack of meditation, miss the entire purpose for which the discourse was designed.\*

Meditation is the missing connection.

This book of the law *shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night*, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

A second verse positioned strategically in our Bibles states the same connection. Unarguably, the most devotional book in Scripture is the Psalter. And how does it begin? With a clarion call for every believer's right

### Inside

Bring . . . the Books—Key books for the pastor's study . . . . . 5  
 Straight Cuts—An exegetical study . . . . . 6  
 Windows—Themed sermon illustrations . . . . . 7

responses to his Bible. He is to delight in it, and he is to meditate on it. The difference between the ungodly and the blessed isn't merely that the latter possess a Bible, hears it preached, or even that he reads it. The connection between possessing a Bible and his prospering due to it (like a tree planted by streams of water) is that he delights to the point of meditating.

**What we've omitted is undoubtedly a frequently missing component in our response to Scripture. Its absence helps explain why so much teaching and preaching and family worship and Christian education and conferences and seminars seem to amount to so little.**

### What Is Meditation?

There are four Hebrew words translated "meditate" or "meditation," but only two are used of meditating on God's words. Both Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2 use one of them. What is most interesting about the Old Testament's usages of this particular word is that over half of them refer to making sounds of some kind; doves *cooing*, lions *growling*, wizards *muttering*, people *moaning*, David *speaking* God's righteousness (Ps. 35:28), or Wisdom *speaking* truth (Prov. 8:7).

When we attempt to factor these oral usages into our conception of meditation, we do well to remember that Joshua didn't own a pocket testament for ready reference. Neither did David or any other Old Testament character. What Scripture they carried with them throughout the day was what they were able to store up in their memories. Often they would have learned it not from a written document but from having it read to them by a priest.

What does a person do when he's concentrating on a sequence of exact words (a message to relay to the boss) or numbers (a telephone number) or other facts (an e-mail address) in an effort to memorize them? You and I have often done what they undoubtedly did as well. We've mouthed to ourselves what we were straining to remember.

In his recent work on the Psalms, Alan Ross says, "The 'meditation' is fixed in the mind more by speaking or uttering the words, which is what the Heb. term actually indicates." John Goldingay translates the word in Psalm 1:2, "talks about," and BibleWorks includes "ponder by talking to oneself" as a translation. So it wouldn't be a misconception to say that meditation is a kind of intense, mental mouthing of God's words, if not an actual oral recitation of them to oneself. Joshua 1:8 includes this literal mouthing when it directs, *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth.*

Confirming this conception of meditation is the fact that the second term for it is also used of oral communication, *complaining*, *singing*, and *speaking*, as well as for pondering or reflecting. In Proverbs 6:22 Solomon says to his son that if he will bind his commandment upon his heart, it will *talk* to him when he awakes. This is the term that is used throughout Psalm 119 (the verb in verses 15, 23, 27, 48, 78, and the noun in verses 97, 99, and 148).

Later on in this study we'll return to this concept, but now let's factor in the analogy offered to us in Psalm 1:3. The believer who goes through life talking to himself (mentally mouthing) about God's words is like a *tree planted by the rivers of water . . . whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

In order to understand this analogy, it's important to identify the parallel between meditating and whatever it is about the tree that explains its prosperity. The believer is the tree. What is his meditating?

It's the *rivers of water.*

Trees make use of water by a process called *transpiration*. Transpiration includes the entire phenomenon of a tree's pulling water up out of the soil and moving it from roots up to limbs and eventually out to every one of its leaves (where the moisture evaporates, though that's not included in the psalmist's analogy).

A meditating believer is evidently like a transpiring tree; and like such a tree, *his leaf also shall not wither.* And whatever he does prospers.

The Puritans used a variety of other analogies to illustrate meditation. It is like a sheep or a goat ruminating, chewing its cud. It is like churning cream until it turns to butter. It is like a hen sitting on her eggs until they're hatched. Spurgeon likened it to treading grapes in a winepress: "By reading and research and study we gather the grapes; but it is by meditation that we press out the juices of those grapes and obtain the wine."

All or any of these analogies were called by the Puritans a kind of spiritual chemistry. "There is a chemistry, a holy art that a Christian has to turn water into wine, brass into gold, to make earthly occasions and objects minister spiritual and heavenly thoughts" (Thomas Manton, *Sermons upon Genesis 24:63*). According to George Swinnock, "He that hath learned this mystery is the true spiritual chemist. . . . He has better than Midas's wish; he turns all he touches to better than gold" (*Christ, Man's Calling*, 2:414-15).

So what is the objective of this chemistry? What is the butter, the chicks, the wine? Joshua 1:8 says that we meditate that we may *observe to do*. The doing is the objective. That is, the application is the end result, so that meditation is a specific kind of thinking: it is thought for application. As D. L. Moody said, "Every Bible should be bound shoe leather, and it is meditation that results in our knowing where and how to walk."

### Meditation's Components

The chemistry of meditation has components. Grasping these makes meditation doable and practical.

The first component is my *soil*. Psalm 1 speaks of all believers being planted by rivers of water. So the water is the same for all of us; it is God's Word. What differs is our soil.

### **Our Soil**

To help us understand this factor, let's look for a moment at David, the author of so many of our psalms, including, perhaps, Psalm 1. What was David's soil? Where had God planted him?

David was planted in the Middle East in the tenth century before Christ, as a shepherd in the hills around Bethlehem. Later on he was transplanted to Saul's court. Shortly after this, he was again uprooted, and *planted* as a fugitive in many places, including the barren Judean wilderness. Then he was planted as a king in Hebron and, still later, in Jerusalem. David's lifespan over those various places was better than sixty years. But through all these changes, and differing *soils*, David was always by *rivers of water*.

Let's jump ahead nearly three thousand years to a watchmaker's shop in Holland. Business is transacted on the first floor, while the family of four lives upstairs. The watchmaker's daughters, Betsie and Corrie, work alongside their father. In 1922, at the age of thirty, Corrie is the first female watchmaker in Holland. In 1944 (now fifty-two) she's enslaved with her sister in the infamous Nazi death camp at Ravensbruck. There the two Christian women hold worship services in their barracks, using a precious Bible that someone had managed to sneak into the camp.

A little quiet singing, the crowd around us would swell. At last either Betsie or I would open the Bible. Because only the Hollanders could understand the Dutch text, we would translate aloud in German. And then we would hear the life-giving words passed back along the aisles in French, Polish, Russian, Czech, and back into Dutch. They were little previews of heaven, these evenings beneath the light bulb.

Corrie's soil was much, much different than David's. But she too was planted by rivers of water, even during the torturous months in Ravensbruck.

This factor, the individualities of believers' lives, just simply cannot be dismissed from the chemistry of spiritual prosperity. Because meditation is a particular kind of thinking—thinking for application—the circumstances of life to which we're applying God's words is an undeniable and, in fact, unique factor in every believer's meditative interaction with Scripture. I don't know of anything else to call the sum total of these factors than to refer to it as our *soil*; soil that is one thing for a David, and quite another for a Corrie ten Boom.

So what is my soil? What is yours? It consists of all the factors assigned me by God's providence; my century, place of birth, parentage, siblings, schooling, occupation, marriage, children, health, etc. Combined, these factors compose my unique soil in which God has

planted me. He promises to use them all, like beneficial nutrients, for my good and for His glory. It will happen by the *torah* of the Lord, as I sink my roots down into the soil God has allotted to me. And that brings us to the second component of meditation's chemistry.

### **God's Words**

This is the water that every believer, no matter where he's planted, has available. In the soil where we are rooted are the various things God intends to use for our good. No matter how unpromising, even the hardest things in my circumstances contain something which God will turn to His glory. But it takes water. Water is what dissolves the solids and enables a tree, through even its tiniest hairlike root fibers, to absorb the minerals and nutrients and suck them up by transpiration into its branches and out to its smallest leaves.

I don't think this is pressing the image too far. Though the Scripture writers didn't have the detailed botanical knowledge that we do, Psalm 1:2–3 invites us to draw (by meditation, certainly) the parallels between ourselves and flourishing trees. We are the trees. What are the rivers of water? The *law of the Lord*. What are we to do with the law of the Lord, this *water*? We're to delight in it and meditate upon it. What's the parallel to that in the life of a tree? It would have to be whatever a tree does to take water up, through the soil, into itself. As it does that, the soil itself yields what grows the tree.

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***Joshua 1:8 says that we meditate that we may observe to do. The doing is the objective. That is, the application is the end result, so that meditation is a specific kind of thinking: it is thought for application.***

No matter how unpromising it may appear, the soil of my life circumstances contains all the nutrients I need to grow into the image of His Son. No soil, no matter how poor it may appear, is without these. This is true of the soil of a hospital room, a stressful work environment, a broken home, an isolated mission field, a painful therapy after surgery, or a graveside of the nearest and best on earth to me. The world will have its own counsel about how to deal with every one of these tough, gnarly factors in my life (Ps. 1:1). But the thing that will turn all I do into prosperity will be my meditation upon God's counsels, His statutes, His testimonies, His precepts, commandments, and promises (Ps. 119). These show me how to deal with each of these circumstances; how to absorb them and draw from them the very things that will make me like His beloved Son. It's the *water*, the law of the Lord, that is the necessity, and it's the meditation for application that draws it up into my life for growth.

### God's Spirit

There's a conscious dependence upon the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit that is critical to fruitful meditation (1 Cor. 2:12; Ps. 119:18, *Open thou mine eyes*). Although it's true that God, in His grace, often gives a portion of understanding even when we have not prayed for it, we undoubtedly are often without spiritual grasp of the significance of many passages because we have failed to ask the Spirit's help in our meditation.

It isn't, of course, that the Bible is incomprehensible. In fact, a perfection of Scripture for which the Reformers argued was what theologians call its *perspicuity*—its inherent clarity and basic understandability. Calvin went so far as to say (without denying that some things are hard to understand) that the Bible is the mouth of God and that by it He speaks baby talk to us.

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***No matter how unpromising it may appear, the soil of my life circumstances contains all the nutriments I need to grow into the image of His Son. No soil, no matter how poor it may appear, is without these. This is true of the soil of a hospital room, a stressful work environment, a broken home, an isolated mission field, a painful therapy after surgery, or a graveside of the nearest and best on earth to me. . . . But the thing that will turn all I do into prosperity will be my meditation upon God's counsels, His statutes, His testimonies, His precepts, commandments, and promises (Ps. 119).***

All we are required to do, said Calvin, is to lean our ear up against God's mouth. The apostle Paul confirms this understandability when he writes to the Corinthians, *For we are not writing anything to you other than what you are reading and are understanding fully* (2 Cor. 1:13, author's translation).

But on the other hand, Spiritual (capital S) illumination is something for which even the authors of Scripture prayed. The psalmist requests this for himself (Ps. 119:27, 34, 73, 125, 144, 169). He is committed, hungry, striving, memorizing, and meditating, and yet he realizes that these are not enough. He prays for

understanding. He wants to *walk in the law of the LORD* blamelessly (119:1), but he senses that he lacks *understanding* (discernment) into the way of God's precepts (119:27). Only when the Spirit supplies that will the chemistry take place.

Paul prays this for his readers (Eph. 1:17–19). He has taught them in the past when he was with them. He has written to them now as clearly as he can, but the Lord must open the eyes of their understanding to be able to comprehend. Paul also assures Timothy that the Lord will give this understanding if he will meditate on what is written (2 Tim. 2:7).

In his classic treatment of this matter of Spiritual understanding (*Sunesis Pneumatikh, The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding the Mind of God as Revealed in His Word*), John Owen says,

The first thing required as a spiritual means is prayer. I intend fervent and earnest prayer for the assistance of the Spirit of God revealing the mind of God . . . in particular books and passages of it. . . . The practical neglect of this duty is the true reason why so many that are skillful enough in the disciplinary means of knowledge are yet such strangers to the true knowledge of the mind of God.

What Owen is referring to as the Spirit's revealing God's mind is much more than simply comprehending a verse's meaning. He explains further.

This is the first end of all divine revelations, of all heavenly truths, namely, to beget the image and likeness of themselves in the minds of men (Rom. vi. 17, II Cor. iii. 18), and we miss our aim if this be not the first thing we intend in the study of the Scripture. It is not to learn the form of the doctrine of godliness, but to get the power of it implanted in our souls.

Clara H. Scott expressed it rightly and beautifully:

Open my eyes, that I may see  
Glimpses of truth thou hast for me. . . .  
Silently now I wait for Thee,  
Ready my God *thy will to see* [emphasis mine].

What we're praying for, which is the ultimate end of meditation, is to come under such divinely powerful enlightening influences that we comprehend God's will for our ways. Not merely to comprehend it intellectually. (How much of that there is that simply goes to waste day after day in the lives of Bible-reading Christians.) But to comprehend it with the sudden rush of a stimulating light going on in our being that fills us with exhilarating discernment of the possibilities of actually *living* in the way that the passage is talking about. Jonathan Edwards called this a *spiritualized* mind. And it most certainly will result in fruit, green leaves in drought time, and universal prosperity (Ps. 1:3). ☞

\* *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, XLVI, 413.



# Bring . . . the Books

*The Believer's Secret of Obedience*  
by Andrew Murray

Andrew Murray is well known for his profound thoroughness and deep contemplations on any subject he addresses. This book drew my interest because the title contains a word that is offensive in our religious culture today. Words such as “command” or any form of the word “obey” cause such a reaction that some leaders recoil from their use. With curiosity I opened this book and was not disappointed with the truths discovered here.

The premise of Murray’s work is that obedience is the essence of God’s relationship with man. In chapter one the author traces obedience through the Scriptures. Genesis 2:16–17 states that “the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it.” We know that Adam did indeed eat of that forbidden tree. When God visited him again in the garden, the Lord said, “Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” (3:11). This is not the only time obedience to God is mentioned in the Bible. Murray notes that obedience is a major theme throughout the entirety of the Bible. Revelation ends with a mention of obedience in 22:14, “Blessed are they that do his commandments.”

Murray declares that the heart of the Scriptures is the obedience of Christ to the Father. Philippians 2:8 states, “He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Christ not only set the perfect example of obedience, He also made it possible that fallen man could once again live in obedience to the Creator. “The beauty of His salvation consists of . . . bring[ing] us back to the life of obedience, through which alone the creature can give the Creator the glory due to Him” (p. 14). The author revels in the joy of obedience by concluding the first chapter with the exclamation, “When shall we learn how unspeakably pleasing obedience is in God’s sight!” (p. 15).

Chapter two begins by expressing how much we owe to Christ. “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19). Once a person is a believer, God takes that individual to the school of obedience. Chapter three outlines the simple process of God using as His textbook His Holy Word, opened to the student by the Holy Spirit. This schooling often involves suffering: “Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

Chapter four exhorts the reader to go to God early each morning to seek help for the obedience God seeks from His own. “There the vow of obedience can every morning be renewed in power and confirmed from above. There the presence and fellowship can be secured which make obedience possible” (p. 50).

Chapter five speaks of an obedience to God unto

death. There will likely come a time of crisis in a believer’s life where choosing to obey what God said appears to result in death. It is at that time that you choose a path of blessing or a path of disappointment. Though the author does not express this idea in these words, the reader will catch that truth from this chapter. One of the greatest examples of the obedience Murray is talking about is demonstrated by the Old Testament character Abraham. The New Testament uses him as a picture of obeying God when he did not understand all the details that obedience would entail. Chapter six takes the example of Abraham and breaks down how believers today can follow his example.

In chapter seven the author addresses various issues that relate to obedience. He talks about the will of God for an individual. Though there is God’s “general will” learned from the Bible, “there is a special individual application of these commands—God’s will concerning each of us personally—which only the Holy Spirit can teach” (p. 72). He concludes that the Spirit will teach only those who take obedience seriously. The chapter also speaks about the role of the conscience (pp. 75–76), the need for God’s grace to enable (pp. 76–77), and how love for God keeps obedience from becoming a legalistic endeavor. These issues themselves are major topics in the Christian life. The author succinctly touches each subject in a way that leaves the reader moved by the simplicity of truth.

Chapter eight calls to attention the final command our Lord left for the church through His disciples. He implores the reader to put himself into the command to give the gospel to every creature. The book itself concludes by exhorting the reader to place himself at the disposal of God and to begin at once to do all that God asks.

The value of this book is in the admonition to obey unto death. The reader will be challenged by the simple truth that God wants His own to be doing what He asks. Jesus even said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). When others are comfortable ignoring, changing, or disregarding God’s stated instruction for His own, the believer will be encouraged by this book to continue seeking out and doing what God directs.

This book was originally titled *The School of Obedience*. It has been reprinted by Bethany House Publishers and is readily available in new or used copies on multiple online sites. May God use this book to encourage you as it has encouraged me. ☞

Dale Heffernan pastors Midland Baptist Church in Wichita, Kansas.

“. . . when  
thou comest,  
bring with thee  
. . . the books”  
(2 Tim. 4:13)

The majority of commentators throughout history have understood Galatians 3:27 to refer to water baptism. But this results in a serious difficulty. The text says “for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Yet it is obvious under anyone’s theology that not all who are water-baptized are united to Christ.

The Medieval theologian Peter Lombard suggested it may be that the passage refers not to those who receive the sacrament alone but also the thing which it symbolizes (*Sentences*, bk. 4, dist. 4, ch. 3). Thus it is not water baptism alone that the passage has in view. This view endured through the Reformation. More recently some have argued that baptism is one part of “the complex of initiation events describing conversion.”<sup>1</sup> Some who take this view make water baptism an essential part of receiving the benefit. Beasley-Murray claims, “If Paul were pressed to define the relationship of the two statements in v. 26–27, I cannot see how he could preserve the force of both sentences apart from affirming that baptism is the moment of faith in which the adoption is realized . . . which is the same as saying that in baptism faith receives Christ in whom the adoption is effected.”<sup>2</sup> F. F. Bruce notes the problem with this approach: “The question arises here: if Paul makes baptism the gateway to ‘being-in-Christ,’ is he not attaching soteriological efficacy to a rite which in itself is as external or ‘material’ as circumcision?”<sup>3</sup> Commentators who take the “complex of initiation events” view and who wish to avoid this suggestion of baptismal regeneration issue qualifications: “Faith . . . is the only means of coming into relationship with Jesus Christ. However, baptism is more than simply a symbol of that new relationship; it is the capstone of the process by which one is converted and initiated into the church. As such, Paul can appeal to baptism as ‘shorthand’ for the entire conversion experience.”<sup>4</sup> In which case, we have come full circle to the distinction between the symbol and the thing.

Yet these qualifications seem to evade what is communicated by the actual words of the verse: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” That wording (“for as many . . . as”) doesn’t lend itself to these qualifications. We are left with the conundrum of a verse that seems to say that all who are baptized are united with Christ and the reality that this is not so.

But what if Paul is not referring to water baptism here? Bruce says, “It is difficult to suppose that readers would not have understood it as a statement about their initiatory baptism in water.”<sup>5</sup> But is it so difficult? Both

the Gospels and Acts anticipate and describe Spirit baptism.<sup>6</sup> The distinction between these two kinds of baptism is present in apostolic teaching. Thus it seems more likely for Paul’s original readers to have distinguished between water baptism and Spirit baptism than between the sacrament and the thing.

What is more, Spirit baptism makes good sense in this context, where baptism is the proof that Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female are one in Christ through faith (3:28). Water baptism cannot serve as such a proof because it would present only a human assessment rather than a divine one.<sup>7</sup> Spirit baptism, on the other hand, does provide such a proof. Indeed, this is Peter’s argument for accepting the Gentiles into the church: the Spirit baptized them just as He had baptized the Jews (Acts 11:15–17). Further contextual support for identifying the baptism as Spirit baptism comes from the parallel argumentation of Galatians 3:23–29 and 4:3–7. In 3:23–24 and 4:1–3 the saints are said to be under the guardianship of the law. In 3:25–26 and 4:4–5 Paul observes a redemptive historical change has occurred which moves saints into the category of sons. In 3:27–28 the proof of sonship is baptism into Christ; in 4:6 the proof of sonship is the reception of the Spirit. This parallel points to Spirit baptism in 3:27.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, 1 Corinthians 12:13 forms a close parallel to Galatians 3:27. In both passages there is baptism into Christ. In both there is the indication that this is the case whether the person is Jew or Gentile, slave or free. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 the baptism is clearly Spirit baptism: “For [in] one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Here the preposition *en* indicates that the Spirit is the “element” in which Christians are baptized (making “in one Spirit” or “with one Spirit” rather than “by one Spirit” the correct translation). This reading is supported by parallel passages: “In each of the other six passage which speak of Spirit-baptism (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16) the Spirit is the element used in the Messiah’s baptism in contrast to the water used in John’s baptism.”<sup>9</sup> In this passage Paul teaches that baptism in the Spirit has a goal. It moves those baptized “into one body.” In other words, Spirit-baptism brings about union with Christ. This confirms that when Galatians 3:27 teaches that baptism results in union with Christ, Spirit baptism is the baptism in view. ☞

“Rightly  
dividing  
the Word  
of Truth”  
(2 Tim. 2:15)

<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ZECNT (Zondervan, 2010), 257, n. 8.

# Windows

“Come . . . Apart into a Desert Place, and Rest a While” (Mark 6:31).

One of the young men from our church was preparing to leave for the Marine Corps boot camp in San Diego. Just before he left, he came for dinner. We asked him about what was allowed regarding Sunday worship and personal time for prayer and Bible reading. He shared with us what he had learned from his older brother and the other marines in our church: “At boot camp we get some brief downtime each day, and I can use that to write letters or read my Bible. I’m just not allowed to sleep. No naps. You don’t want to get caught napping!” Boot camp is intended to push recruits to their limits. Perhaps you have been in “boot camp mode.” Maybe you are distinctly aware of a need for rest in your personal life or refreshment in your ministry.

## Refreshment and Rest

In Genesis 2:2 we read that after the Lord had finished His work of creation in six days, that on the seventh day, He rested. We understand that God was not tired but that this statement is given as an example to God’s people in the generations to come. The last words from the Lord to Moses before he descended from Mt. Sinai with the two tablets of the Law expand on God’s resting on the seventh day. We read in Exodus 31:17 that “in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, *and was refreshed.*”

Our God is omnipotent. His store of strength was not diminished by His work of creation; therefore He did not need rest but chose to rest. He did not need to be refreshed but chose to be refreshed. He established a standard for how His people should structure their lives.

“Refresh” in Exodus 31 translates the Hebrew word *naphash*. Strong’s Hebrew dictionary defines *naphash* as “a primitive root; to breathe; passively, to be breathed upon, i.e. (figuratively) refreshed (as if by a current of air).” Taking a deep breath is what we do to calm ourselves when we have been jolted by adrenalin, and we welcome a breeze when we are hot.

Writing to his friend regarding a runaway slave, Paul commends Philemon by saying, “We have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels [we would say “hearts”] of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother” (v. 7). Paul then requests that he also might enjoy refreshing through the kindnesses of Philemon (v. 20). Paul does not indicate exactly what form the refreshment of Philemon took. I believe it was Philemon’s bent to refresh God’s people and that the form took whatever the need of the individual required.

In Philemon 7 and 20, the term “refresh” translates *anapauo*, which carries the idea “to stop or cease” with a preposition expressing repetition. Think of pulling into rest areas on the interstate, or exiting to eat, get gas,

or just stretch the legs on a long trip. The longer the trip, the more numerous the stops.

Another word frequently used to translate *anapauo* is “rest.” A familiar verse to most believers is Jesus’ statement in Matthew 11:28: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest [*anapauo*].” The promise of the Lord can be understood as “I will refresh you,” and the Lord would know perfectly the form of refreshment needed by each one who would come. In Mark’s Gospel the Lord said to His disciples, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat” (6:31).

Writing to Timothy near the end of his life, Paul chose a different word to express refreshment: “The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain” (2 Tim. 1:16). Here the word translated “refresh” has a literal meaning of “to make cold again.” We are refreshed by a cold, wet cloth to wipe our face and neck after laboring in the sun, or by jumping into a swimming pool on a hot summer day.

Refreshment can take different forms. Sometimes God’s people sought for a physical rest or a tangible refreshment of food or drink. At other times they longed for refreshment of a more spiritual quality. Still others rejoiced in the rest and refreshment found only in the believer’s eternal reward.

## Physical Refreshment

Hudson Taylor fell gravely ill on one of his trips to China. He returned to his wife, Jennie, in such desperate condition that there was concern that just moving him from ship to shore might prove fatal. With the help of many hands, Jennie slowly nursed Hudson back to health at the home of fellow missionaries. Later Jennie Taylor wrote to fellow missionary, Miss Degraz: “Mr. Taylor bore the moving better than I expected though in his weak state, of course, he felt it. When, however, we had been a little while here, the sense of rest among kind people in such a pleasant spot seemed to refresh him, and every hour since has done him good. It is so quiet about here. . . . Mr. Taylor can sit on the veranda and drink in the sea air—looking on the hills round the bay, and on the junks and steamers. The seaweed smells so refreshing! Has not God been so good to us?”

John Wesley wrote an essay titled “The More Excellent Way.” Over the length of the discourse

*“To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, ‘A window shalt thou make in the ark.’”*

*Charles Spurgeon*

Wesley addressed several aspects of life, including various pursuits such as entertainment, the use of money, and the proper place of food in the life of a believer. He wrote, "The time of taking of our food is usually a time of conversation also: as it is natural to refresh our minds while we refresh our bodies." Applying the phrase from Ephesians 4:29 ("that it may minister grace unto the hearers") Wesley added, "Let us consider a little, in what manner the generality of Christians usually converse together."

At the Diet of Worms Martin Luther was being tried for heresy. Having been asked if he would recant, Luther uttered his famous rebuttal: "Here I stand, I can do no other." In Gustav Pfizer's biography of Luther, published in 1840, we read that after his famous stand Luther went back to his quarters. That evening Duke Eric of Brunswick sent him a silver cup filled with a beverage and "desired him to refresh himself with it." After receiving assurance that the beverage was safe to drink, Luther drank and said, "As Duke Eric has remembered me this day so may the Lord remember him in his dying hour." Pfizer continued, "It is recorded that the said Duke thought on these words when he was dying, and desired a page who stood by 'to refresh him with gospel comfort.'" As Duke Eric sought refreshment in his dying hour, there is spiritual refreshment to be enjoyed throughout life.

### Spiritual Refreshment

In Bunyan's allegory of the Christian life, *Pilgrim's Progress*, we read of Christian coming to the Hill Difficulty. Formalist and Hypocrisy had been accompanying him, until they came to the foot of the hill, and then both refused the narrow way, which was straight up the hill. Christian, however, "went to the spring, and drank thereof to refresh himself. And then began to go up the hill." Christian's pace slowed as he ascended "because of the steepness of the place. Now about the mid-way to the top of the Hill was a pleasant Arbor, made by the Lord of the Hill for the refreshing of weary travelers."

Slave-trader turned pastor, John Newton teamed with British poet William Cowper to publish a large body of hymns for use in Newton's rural parish of Olney. They took many Bible stories and made them into rhymes, such as the story of Mary and Martha from Luke 10. In part the hymn reads:

Martha her love and joy expressed  
By care to entertain her guest;  
While Mary sat to hear her Lord,  
And could not bear to lose a word.

The principle in both the same,  
Produced in each a different aim;  
The one to feast the Lord was led,

The other waited to be fed.

But Mary chose the better part,  
Her Savior's words refreshed her heart;  
While busy Martha angry grew,  
And lost her time and temper too.

Daniel Roberts, a priest in the American Episcopal Church in Brandon, Vermont, wanted to write a hymn to commemorate the centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The result was the patriotic favorite "God of Our Fathers." After moving stanzas heralding God's creative power, sovereignty, and goodness, the final stanza makes this petition:

Refresh Thy people on their toilsome way,  
Lead us from night to never-ending day;  
Fill all our lives with love and grace divine,  
And glory, laud, and praise be ever Thine.

### Eternal Refreshment

Whether engraved in stone monuments amidst countless cemeteries or in fictionalized stories, writings, and even cartoons, a most familiar inscription would be "Rest in Peace."

In Revelation John tells us that those who die knowing the Lord enjoy a rest: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

### Our Privilege and Opportunity

We have the great privilege of experiencing refreshment which may be either physical or spiritual. We will one day experience the refreshment that is our eternal rest. We also have the opportunity to be Philemon in the lives of others by providing the form of refreshment that is needed. And what greater joy is there than playing a part in assisting another to make sure of his or her eternal refreshment? ☞☞

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Continued from page 6 of Pastor's Insert

<sup>2</sup> G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1962), 151.

<sup>3</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC (Eerdmans, 1982), 185.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT, 251.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce, 185.

<sup>6</sup> Debbie Hunn, "The Baptism of Galatians 3:27: A Contextual Approach," *ExpTim* 115 (2005): 373-74.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 374-75.

<sup>9</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Westminster, 1970), 128.

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Brethren, be willing to see both sides of the shield of truth. Rise above the babyhood which cannot believe two doctrines until it sees the connecting link. Have you not two eyes, man? Must you needs put one of them out in order to see clearly?  
—C. H. Spurgeon

Divine sovereignty and human free will are like the two parallel lines that never meet in geometry. . . . Accept the premise; operate on that basis. . . . Don't rag the subject to death.  
—Mark Minnick

Faith is an essential principle of human life, without which there can be no salvation. . . . There is absolutely no virtue or merit in faith. Trust is man's answer to God's truth. Faith is the condition, not the ground of salvation.  
—Griffith Thomas, *Romans*, Vol. I

It is accepted that man's will is circumscribed in its exercise, that it operates within very definite limits, but it is bounded by the overall controlling plan and purpose of God, that the divine sovereignty is supreme in the larger outreach of all things.  
—Samuel Fisk

Karl Barth points out (p. 307, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. II) that in the first edition of the *Institutes* and in the Catechism of 1542, Calvin "referred election primarily to the Church," but changed decisively through the years, so that in the final edition of the *Institutes*, the whole concept of election revolves about the unconditional election and reprobation of particular men. This became the concept of Reformed theology.  
—Robert Shank

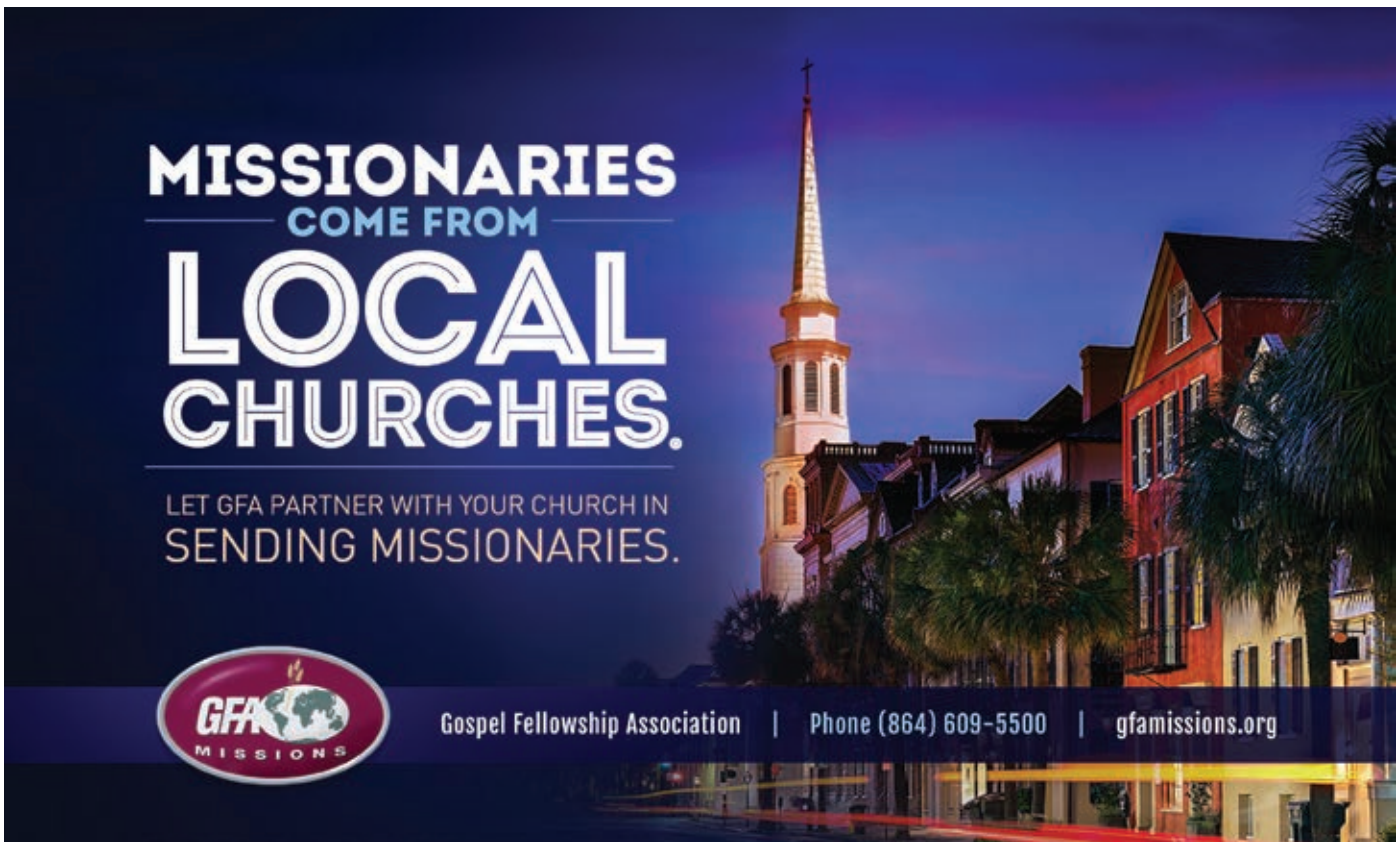
When voluntary sin has been committed by a child of Adam, voluntary faith must enter into salvation. Insofar as any human being sins for himself, he must believe for himself.  
—A. T. Pierson

The expression [*progegrammenoi eis touto to krima*, "before of old ordained to this condemnation," Jude 24] does not imply any predestination of persons, but merely imports that they were long since foretold, and thereby designated, as persons who should suffer.  
—S. T. Bloomfield

Asahel Nettleton was a nineteenth-century Calvinistic evangelist. John Fletcher was an Arminian friend of John Wesley. . . . Nettleton's teaching has been popularly summarized in the phrase "once saved, always saved"—but he was not quite sure that he was even once saved! John Fletcher taught "once saved, maybe lost"! I find neither doctrine very encouraging.  
—Michael Eaton, *No Condemnation, A New Theology of Assurance*, pp. 3–4, 9


Calvinism emphasizes divine sovereignty and free grace; Arminianism emphasizes human responsibility. The one restricts the saving grace to the elect; the other extends it to all men on the condition of faith. . . . The Bible gives us a theology which is more human than Calvinism, and more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian than either of them.  
—Philip Schaff

Compiled by Dr. David Atkinson, pastor of Dyer Baptist Church, Dyer, Indiana.



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## Grace from Eternity to Time

Continued from page 7

basis of a believer's assurance of salvation is the finished work of Christ, while for Beza, the ground of assurance is the believer's perseverance in the Christian life after his conversion.

*What does precede faith? Calling and conviction* are biblical terms for God's preconversion work in the heart of the sinner. Jesus described the Holy Spirit's convicting work, which precedes faith. The Spirit "reproves" or "convicts" sinners of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7–11). Paul describes an order in which God foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and then glorified those who are saved (Rom. 8:29–30). Calling precedes justification. No one comes to Christ apart from the Spirit's pre-conversion work of calling or conviction. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3).

### Conclusions

Regeneration and faith are simultaneous in Scripture: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). These and other verses make it clear that God gives new life (regeneration) at the point of faith in Christ.

Repentance and faith are simultaneous (Acts 20:21; 1 Thess. 1:9). It should be noted that Paul puts repentance before faith in Acts ("repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"), and he intimates that faith precedes repentance in 1 Thessalonians ("ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God"). The two apparently occur so closely and simultaneously that there is no way to separate them.

Justification and faith also occur at the same time. Paul describes "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: . . . To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might

be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:22, 26).

When we deal with the biblical issues surrounding a person's salvation, it is a mistake to separate them in time. God planned salvation in eternity past. We clearly understand that. We also know that glorification and heaven await the believer in the future. When we speak of the events surrounding a person's coming to Christ in time, the order is *logical*, not *chronological*.



Since 2009 Fred Moritz has taught at Maranatha Baptist Seminary. He ministered at Baptist World Mission from 1981 to 2009.

<sup>1</sup> Warren Vanhetloo, personal message to Dr. Moritz, July 15, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Vanhetloo is stating his position that the Spirit's indwelling is unique to the dispensation of the churches, and Old Testament saints would not have known that ministry.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 710. Reymond's complete discussion, well worth the reading, may be found on pages 704–11.

<sup>6</sup> R. C. Sproul, gen. ed., *The Reformation Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1664. This quote is in the insert article on "Regeneration."

<sup>7</sup> *New Geneva Study Bible. The Reformation Study Bible* was "formerly titled *The New Geneva Study Bible*." Ibid., frontispiece.

<sup>8</sup> George Zeller, "Geneva Study Bible" (Middletown, CT: Middletown Bible Church website, [www.middletownbiblechurch.org](http://www.middletownbiblechurch.org)), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> John Peter Lange and Philip Schaff, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 68.

<sup>11</sup> Kevin DeYoung, "A Brief Defense of Infant Baptism" <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2015/03/12/a-brief-defense-of-infant-baptism/>. Accessed September 15, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> This issue is fully explored in R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Carlisle, England, Paternoster, 1997). This is Kendall's PhD dissertation at Oxford University.



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rejection preceded the Mosaic curses in both Isaiah's day and Matthew's day. The irreversible declaration of Mosaic curses as judgment for disobedience is God's response to the Jews. God did not cause the initial rebellion. But God will make sure that His irreversible judgment is carried out. God causes the judgment; He does not cause the rebellion.

*Mark 4:12.* Mark also records the kingdom parables. The same elements found in Matthew's account are also included in Mark's. The Jews had rejected Jesus and His offer of the kingdom. As a result, Jesus spoke in parables. When the disciples asked why He spoke in parables, Jesus said it was not for "those outside" to know the truths about the kingdom. This constitutes a statement of judgment (the Mosaic curses) upon Israel. The judgment was irreversible. Isaiah 6 is cited to confirm that the situation in Jesus' day was the same as the situation in Isaiah's day. "This is not 'fulfillment' in the sense of a prediction coming true, but rather a typological correspondence between two phases in the ongoing history of God's appeal to his people."<sup>3</sup>

*Mark 8:18.* The focus is not on the Jews in Mark 8:14–21. Instead, Jesus is interacting with His disciples. They had forgotten to take bread with them for their boat trip. Along the way, Jesus warned them about the "leaven of the Pharisees" and the "leaven of Herod." The disciples thought Jesus was speaking of their failure to bring bread. In reality, Jesus was trying to teach them a spiritual lesson about the danger of the beliefs of the Pharisees and Herodians.

In response to the disciples' thinking about physical bread instead of spiritual truths, Jesus asks them a series of penetrating questions. Some of Jesus' questions allude to Isaiah 6:9–10. This context is different than the kingdom parables passages in a number of ways. First, the believing disciples are addressed, not the unbelieving Jews. Second, there is no statement of judgment (i.e., it *was* given to the disciples to know these truths). Third, the material from Isaiah 6 is given in questions rather than statement of fact.

Mark does not use Isaiah 6 here to identify the curses pronounced on the Jews as he did in Mark 4:12. Instead, he uses the obduracy of the unbelieving Jews (Mark 4) to tell the disciples how serious and disappointing their failure to grasp the spiritual truth was. "The unbelief of the disciples was bordering on that of Jesus' enemies!"<sup>4</sup> How sad and ironic. Even though it was given to the disciples to understand the mysteries of the kingdom and to receive much more revelation from Jesus than the cursed Jews (in Isaiah's and Jesus' day), they demonstrated a similar failure to comprehend that truth.

*Luke 8:10.* Luke records a shorter version of the disciples' question about why Jesus spoke in parables. Just like the parallel passages (Matt. 13:14–15 and Mark 4:12), Luke here says that Jesus spoke in parables to prevent the Jews from understanding. Jesus does not cause the rebellion of the Jews. He does, however, render certain the irreversible Mosaic curses on the Jews through His use of parables. Jesus prevents the Jews' repentance so they will face the

judgment (i.e., Mosaic curses) that He has declared on them.

*John 12:40.* After His triumphal entry, Jesus spends time teaching during His passion week. Part of His teaching included a prophecy of His crucifixion and resurrection (John 12:23–33). This teaching was endorsed by God's voice from heaven which was a "sign" for the people (John 12:28–29). In response to this prediction, some unbelieving Jews revealed their rejection of Jesus by referring to the OT prophecy that Jesus would reign forever (Micah 4:7). How could Jesus be Messiah if He died, since then He couldn't reign forever?

In response, Jesus quotes two passages from Isaiah. First, He quotes Isaiah 53:1 to connect the death of Christ with the prophecy of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. The Jews' rejection of Jesus was so complete, they thought it was a good idea to kill Him. This was part of God's plan (Acts 2:23). Second, he quotes Isaiah 6:9–10 to explain why the Jews did not believe, even after miraculous signs. "Isaiah's ministry was designed by God to point forward to the rejection of Israel's prophet *par excellence*, Jesus, who is the Servant of the Lord."<sup>5</sup> If rejecting Isaiah's preaching brought the curses of the Mosaic Covenant, rejecting the preaching of Jesus would certainly bring those same curses.

*Acts 28:26–27.* Well into the church age after Paul had witnessed the continued rejection of Jesus by the Jews in synagogue after synagogue, he met with a group of Jewish leaders in Rome during his first Roman imprisonment. He preached the kingdom and Jesus to them. Even though some Jews believed, some did not. When the Jews could not agree among themselves, Paul quotes Isaiah 6:9–10 to explain their unbelief. Bock says, "It presents the passage as describing something that has occurred instead of a strict prediction, because this is how the matter has in fact turned out."<sup>6</sup> The Jewish leaders in Rome during Paul's day were in the same condition as the Jews during Jesus' day and as the Jews in Isaiah's day. They were rejecting their Messiah as a result of God's irreversible judgment (i.e., the curses of the Mosaic Covenant).

Paul adds a further incriminating statement against the Jews. The Gentiles *will* hear and accept the salvation of God (Acts 28:28). Paul also alludes to Isaiah 6:9–10 when he discusses the place of the Gentiles during the present dispensation. Gentiles will be "grafted in" while Israel continues to experience the curses of the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Rom. 11).

### **Suggested Conclusions**

Isaiah 6:9–10 is based on Deuteronomy 29:2–4. Therefore, it became the perfect exemplar for the nation of Israel when speaking about the irreversible judgment of God (i.e., Mosaic curses) that follows the Jews' rebellion against God. It was particularly useful as an exemplar because Isaiah also spoke of the suffering servant, Jesus Christ (Isa. 53).

The NT Gospels always uses this exemplar of Jews who refused to accept the suffering servant. In each of these instances, Jews are prevented from repenting as an irreversible judgment for previous rebellion. Instead of the

# Regional Fellowships



## Winter Board Meeting

The Winter Board Meeting is a working meeting for Board discussion and planning and is designed to allow committees to make functional progress in their designated areas. For many years it was held at the Embassy Suites near the Atlanta Airport. In recent years we have met at the BJU Seminary in conjunction with BJU conferences, and in Glendale, Arizona, in conjunction with the Gospel Proclaimed conference in Chandler. This year, however, because we needed to give our undivided attention to upcoming transitions in FBFI, and for the convenience of most Board members attending, we returned to the Atlanta Airport venue.

Over the last ten years or so, FBFI has considered adopting nomenclature that is not as susceptible to confusion or corruption as the word "Fundamental" has regrettably become. Two years ago, the term "Foundations" was suggested, since it is a common synonym that would allow us to retain the acronym "FBFI." In Atlanta we made the use of this term official. FBFI will continue to use Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International, Inc., as our corporate name. Essentially, FBFI is "doing business as" Foundations Baptist Fellowship International, although we will continue the regular practice of referring to ourselves as simply "FBFI." As well, we will continue to use "fundamental Baptists" and "fundamentalists" in any setting we choose, usually where the terms are understood accurately or historically and where we are not likely to cause confusion in witnessing to those who know the term "fundamentalist" only in what has become a pejorative and inaccurate way. Our discussions included the admission that many fundamentalists, even

among us, have avoided using the term for quite some time.

The second significant decision related to Dr. Vaughn's need to retire from his position as president for both personal and professional reasons. The Lord has made it clear to him that his focus going forward must involve local ministry with less travel and greater attention to the needs of his daughter Becky. The Board members were unanimous in their appreciation of Dr. Vaughn's leadership but recognized his need to spend more time caring for his daughter. The meeting agenda had been set with Dr. Vaughn's decision in mind, so the transition was a significant part of the discussion. The transition process will be worked out over the next few months. The Board asks that all friends of FBFI make this a matter of earnest prayer.

In addition to those two items, the regular business of the organization was addressed, and the Chaplains present were provided a training opportunity with Associate Endorser CH (COL) Joe Willis. As always, one of the highlights was the time of fellowship with other members. God has given us some great leadership both on the paid staff and among the board members. We are thankful for all who were able to attend, but we greatly missed those who could not.

## South Regional Fellowship

The FBFI South Region met at the Wilds of North Carolina on Monday and Tuesday, March 20–21. The theme of the meeting was "Check Your Vital Signs: A



Conference to Examine the Health of Your Church.” John Vaughn, Marsh Fant, and Bob Jones III were the General Session speakers, and the attendees, both men and ladies, enjoyed a variety of workshop speakers. As usual, the Wilds staff were exceptional hosts and hostesses. The food, activities, fun time, fellowship, and especially the music were a blessing. The staff’s sweet spirit added to the encouraging tenor of the two days together. Tony Facenda, the pastor at Still Waters Baptist Church in Nags Head, North Carolina, is taking a greater leadership role in a well-organized South region. We have already made plans for the 2018 meeting and have set the location and dates for the 2019 meeting. You can find the information at our web page, [fbfisouth.org](http://fbfisouth.org).



### Northwest Regional Fellowship

The FBFI Northwest Regional Fellowship on March 21–21 was a treasure to all of us because of the fellowship, preaching, and teaching. This year’s theme was “Engaging Souls for the Kingdom.” Jeff Musgrave, representing the Exchange, was our keynote speaker. The preaching times can be seen at [WBC Eugene.com](http://WBC Eugene.com) as the sessions were recorded on Facebook live. There was a time for the ladies to gather and discuss issues for pastors’ wives. The hospitality team at Westside Baptist Church did an outstanding job of feeding us and making us feel welcome. It was good to meet other pastors from Oregon who were attending the FBFI for the first time. It is always a treasure to be enriched by our servants in the Northwest.



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# The Jehoshaphat Principles

## Lessons from the Life of Jehoshaphat

### Some Questions

- Are *separatists* really *haters* or is there more to this biblical teaching and its applications than a personal rejection of others?
- Is biblical separation really about personal feelings or is it ultimately about God's feelings as revealed in Scripture?
- Are all theological apostates nasty and obnoxious or can they be really wonderful human beings—nicer and better mannered than some fundamentalists?
- Do a man's vibrant, winsome personality and manners validate everything he may do and believe?
- Is there something *wrong* with those who are willing, in obedience to God's Word, to be confrontational on issues of fundamental importance?
- Is it really unreasonable, unnecessary, and a violation of biblical love to refuse mutual spiritual enterprise with unbelievers?
- Do we really need to be concerned about what happens in the next generation—especially if we can, by a few concessions, make great progress in the present?
- How can we justify ever saying anything negative about godly men who are being greatly used of the Lord?
- Is our position and practice on biblical separation determined by what God says or by how people in our culture think and respond to it?
- Whose feelings, in the end, will determine what we believe and practice—God's or man's?
- Will the outcome of our life and ministry really be determined by what God says or by our own wisdom?

The answer to these questions becomes quite evident in a study of the life of King Jehoshaphat, one of the greatest and godliest of the kings of Judah.

### Some Answers

This man personally led a reformation, a movement to bring the people back to God. In so doing, he personally traversed his country from south to north. He restored the structure of priests, Levites, and judges as outlined in the books of Moses. He set the Word of God as the standard for all activities and functions of the nation.

In addition, he very thoroughly removed idolatry from the land. Specifically, he avoided the worship of Baal and the wicked practices resulting from the sins of Jeroboam (northern kingdom) which were magnified in the idolatrous reign of Ahab.

In the northern kingdom of Israel, it took sixty years from the official establishment of apostasy and idolatry under king Jeroboam **for apostasy and idolatry to reach its apex**. This happened under the reign of Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel. Idolatry was rampant, and Baalism was established and entrenched.

In the southern kingdom of Judah, following the death of King Jehoshaphat, **it took only eight years for Baalism to be mainstreamed into his own kingdom** under wicked Athaliah. His own children and his grandchildren were slaughtered in the process. All of the blessings and accomplishments of the reign of this godly king were destroyed in a very short period of time. How could this be?

There was one fatal flaw in Jehoshaphat's reign—a violation of the basic biblical principle that good and evil, right and wrong are never to be joined together. We are biblically enjoined to separate them one from the other. Jehoshaphat, in making an alliance of peace with Ahab, gave his son Jehoram in marriage to Ahab's daughter Athaliah.

To Jehoshaphat, this was a wise and prudent move, insuring peace with the northern kingdom and insuring greater national strength to confront the enemies around them. To the prophet of God it was a different matter. The prophet rebuked Jehoshaphat specifically for helping the wicked and helping those who hated the Lord.

In spite of this, God was gracious to Jehoshaphat, who with renewed vigor sought to turn the hearts of his people to the Lord. During his lifetime there was peace and blessing.

The story changed dramatically following his death. Under the influence of his wife Athaliah, his son Jehoram walked in the ways of Ahab. Idolatry and immorality were aggressively promoted throughout the land. Within eight years Athaliah was on the throne of Judah. Apostasy and idolatry were firmly entrenched, and Baalism was mainstreamed into the kingdom over which Jehoshaphat had reigned.

What if Jehoshaphat had refused to make an alliance with Ahab? What if he had followed the teachings of Moses and remained separated from the wicked? The record would have been totally different! Biblical separation, as negative as it may seem, is enormously important in the preservation of the foundation upon which the work of God is established.

The apostle Paul tells us that Old Testament events are given as examples for our education. There are important lessons that can be learned from the life of Jehoshaphat. In the next issue, we shall list a few.

Dr. David C. Innes has served as senior pastor of Hamilton Square Baptist Church in San Francisco, California, since January of 1977.



## Felony Charges

Pro-life activists David Daleiden and Sandra Merritt have been charged with fifteen felony charges in the State of California. Similar charges were raised against the pair and later dropped in the State of Texas. The charges stem from taping fourteen conversations with different employees of Planned Parenthood and StemExpress without their knowledge or consent.

According to the defendants, the recordings revealed that Planned Parenthood harvested organs through abortion and sold them at a profit in violation of both state and federal law. Both Planned Parenthood and StemExpress claim the videos were fraudulently edited, but Daleiden insists that unreleased video will debunk that claim.

Fourteen charges center on illegal taping of individuals without consent. The final charge is criminal conspiracy to invade. The California Attorney General insisted the filming was an attack on women and healthcare. Daleiden says he welcomes his day in court.

Read more at [christianpost.com/news/abortion-planned-parenthood-sting-videos-felonies-daleiden-california-178932/](http://christianpost.com/news/abortion-planned-parenthood-sting-videos-felonies-daleiden-california-178932/).

## UK Children and Their Teachers

In Great Britain, members of the National Union of Teachers voted “to campaign to ensure a comprehensive age-appropriate content including promotion of LGBT+

matters for all schools from nursery throughout all phases of state education.” Homosexuality and transgenderism must, in their opinion, be taught to nursery school-aged children.

The stated motivation for this campaign is that British government is not doing enough to promote inclusion. Annette Pryce, an executive member of the National Union of Teachers, opined, “Those generations of young LGBT people who have been failed by the system are still not told explicitly in the law that their lives are important too.”

Dissenting voices have indicated that compulsory sex education for four-year-olds is “devastating,” “robbing them of innocence.”

Read more at [christianpost.com/news/children-must-be-taught-transgenderism-homosexuality-nursery-school-uk-teachers-say-181006/#460yYB41hiiKEoJ0.99](http://christianpost.com/news/children-must-be-taught-transgenderism-homosexuality-nursery-school-uk-teachers-say-181006/#460yYB41hiiKEoJ0.99).

## Ordaining Homosexuals

A group of nearly 150 United Methodist clergy have signed a letter demanding the inclusion of LGBTQI as clergy. The letter comes as a preemptive move as Bishop Karen Oliveto is about to stand before the United Methodist Judicial Council, the denomination’s highest court. Oliveto is an openly gay bishop who has entered a same-sex “marriage.” The court will determine whether she may remain in her post as a bishop.

The letter states in part, “We stand in support of every clergy person threat-

ened by unjust actions, and our sibling, Bishop Karen Oliveto, as her standing is being challenged before the Judicial Council. Bishop Oliveto’s election is a visible demonstration of what is possible within The United Methodist Church when the gifts, graces, and call to ministry of LGBTQI persons are recognized and fully valued.”

Not all Methodists are willing to change its ordination rules.

John Lomperis, a member of the Institute of Religion and Democracy, states, “There is absolutely zero integrity in the way some people have self-servingly lied about supporting our denomination’s values so that they could get ordained with us and then get paid with United Methodist money while working to undermine our Church from within.”

Read more at [christianpost.com/news/over-150-queer-umc-clergy-sign-letter-demanding-lgbt-ordination-181026/#p01aySCZsm6iyogz.99](http://christianpost.com/news/over-150-queer-umc-clergy-sign-letter-demanding-lgbt-ordination-181026/#p01aySCZsm6iyogz.99).

## Brainwashing Horror

In a recent video out of Syria, Islamic State executioners behead two more prisoners. Nothing is revealed about the two prisoners or their “crimes.” They are simply marched through an area of steam, then they are pushed face-down into water and are beheaded.

As horrifying as the beheading is, this clip is narrated by a six-year-old boy, dressed in camouflage and a black head scarf. He holds the knives for the executioners and explains

on the video “the infidel and the killer never meet in Hell.” He goes on to explain that the terrorist is granted peace by Allah.

Read more at [christianpost.com/news/6-year-old-isis-child-soldier-helps-behead-prisoners-preacheshell-horrifying-video-181007/](http://christianpost.com/news/6-year-old-isis-child-soldier-helps-behead-prisoners-preacheshell-horrifying-video-181007/).

## Gordon Confusion

The *Boston Globe* was quick to report a story of intrigue and division regarding Gordon College and the mass resignation of the college senate. The *Globe* assumed that the resignation was a show of solidarity for an LGBT activist who was passed over for a promotion at the Christian college. Gordon responded to clarify the facts.

First, DeWeese-Boyd was an associate professor at Gordon and is a known LGBT activist. Second, DeWeese-Boyd sponsored programs at Gordon to encourage safety and inclusion for the LGBT community. Third, the college senate, a group of seven faculty members, recommended DeWeese-Boyd for the position of full professor. Fourth, President D. Michael Lindsay and Provost Janel Curry did not accept that recommendation based on reasons consistent with the Faculty/Administration Handbook. Fifth, the entire senate tendered their resignations even though three members’ terms were to expire at the year-end anyhow. Sixth, the letter of resignation is the only public statement the group intends to make

## NOTABLE QUOTES

regarding their resignation, and they did not specifically identify the issue regarding DeWeese-Boyd. Seventh, DeWeese-Boyd has already filed a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination claiming that she was not promoted because of her work with the LGBT community.

Read more at [christianpost.com/news/gordon-college-dismisses-claim-faculty-senate-resigned-to-show-solidarity-with-lgbt-activist-professor-181030/#OIFOc1IMuMvF5kep.99](http://christianpost.com/news/gordon-college-dismisses-claim-faculty-senate-resigned-to-show-solidarity-with-lgbt-activist-professor-181030/#OIFOc1IMuMvF5kep.99).

### Florida Student Exonerated

Marshall Polston, a sophomore student at Florida's Rollins College, received note that he may return to class. The letter officially exonerated him from all charges brought against him by his professor, Areeje Zufari.

Polston challenged his professor's statement in class that Jesus was never resurrected and that His disciples did not believe He was the Son of God. He received a grade of 52 on his next essay for the class. Polston, who is a straight-A student, contacted Zufari by e-mail and accused her of using the grade to silence him in class. Zufari filed a complaint that she felt it was not safe to return to class. When she did return, she concurred with a Muslim student that homosexuals should be punished as dictated in Sharia Law. After that class, Polston was placed on summary suspension for creating a "threat of disruption within the operation of the college." Zufari also sought a "protection against stalking" from the Orange County Circuit Court. She accused him of violating that order—an accusation about which Polston claims to have evidence to the contrary.

**I**t is with man as with wheat; the light heads are erect even in the presence of Omnipotence, but the full heads bow in reverence before him.—Joseph Cook

**T**he devil, no doubt, is everywhere. That malicious spirit is unwearied in his efforts to do us harm. He is ever watching for our halting, and seeking occasion to destroy our souls. But nowhere perhaps is the devil so active as in a congregation of Gospel-hearers. Nowhere does he labor so hard to stop the progress of that which is good, and to prevent men and women being saved. From him come wandering thoughts and roving imaginations—listless minds and dull memories—sleepy eyes and fidgety nerves—weary ears and distracted attention. In all these things Satan has a great hand. People wonder where these things come from, and marvel how it is that they find sermons so dull, and remember them so badly! They forget the parable of the sower. They forget the devil.—J. C. Ryle

**T**he backslider likes preaching that would not hit the side of a house, while the real disciple is delighted when the truth brings him to his knees.—Billy Sunday

**I**n a word, one act of faith will do them more good than Pharaoh and all his forces. But they refuse to trust God. They decide that a good horse will do them more service than a good promise. They think Egypt offers them more security than heaven.—John Flavel

**C**ling to Christ, I say, and never forget your debt to Him. Sinners you were, when you were first called by the Holy Ghost, and fled to Jesus. Sinners you have been, even at your best, from the day of your conversion. Sinners you will find yourselves till your dying hour, having nothing to boast of in yourselves. Therefore, cling to Christ.—J. C. Ryle

**P**arenting is not first about what we want for our children nor from our children, but about what God in his grace has planned to do through us in our children.—Paul David Tripp

Now that his client has been exonerated, Polston's lawyer is calling for a full investigation into Zufari's behavior.

Zufari's sister simply claims this is all just "fake news."

Read more at [christianpost.com/news/florida-college-exonerates-christian-student-suspended-muslim-professors-rollins-179231/](http://christianpost.com/news/florida-college-exonerates-christian-student-suspended-muslim-professors-rollins-179231/).

### No Parental Consent

Tulsa, Oklahoma, mother Miracle Foster is expressing outrage over a school field trip that resulted in a three-year birth-control implantation performed on her daughter without her approval.

Miracle's daughter attends the Langston Hughes Academy for Arts and Technology. After attending a sex-education class, the students had continuing questions that the school felt could better be answered at a field trip to the clinic, Youth Services of Tulsa. Miracle gave permission for her daughter to attend the field trip but was entirely unaware that an implant was a possible outcome of the trip.

Title X federal law makes parental consent unnecessary for children over the age of twelve to receive "family planning services."

School principal, Rodney Clark, did not even consider the trip to be a "field trip" but simply a sex-education class.

Read more at [theblaze.com/news/2017/04/03/mom-outraged-when-daughter-16-gets-birth-control-implant-after-school-arranges-trip-to-clinic/](http://theblaze.com/news/2017/04/03/mom-outraged-when-daughter-16-gets-birth-control-implant-after-school-arranges-trip-to-clinic/).

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*Newsworthy* is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of FBFI.

Compiled by Robert Condict, FBFI Executive Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.

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# ON LANGUAGE & SCRIPTURE

## The Generic *He*

It's time for my opinion on the generic *he*, the much fought-over pronoun, and a source of some consternation for English Bible translators. I was recently voted the top redheaded word nerd in the southern quadrant of Mount Vernon, Washington, in the 35–37 age group. So, you know, my opinion on this important issue ought to carry about as much weight as an ant. Think about that.

One of my favorite linguists, Steven Pinker, the top word nerd in his town, was asked in an interview about the generic *he*. He blames English itself. It's missing something. He said, "Who wants to say, 'Jack and his sister played a game: who could find the ugliest picture of himself?'" It's jarring. But so are most of the alternatives, most of the time. Like "s/he," or like "he or she," or like the apparently random variation some books use.

Pinker tried a non-random tack: in half the chapters in his book on English usage he used *he* and *she* to refer to writer and reader, respectively. In the other half he switched them. I suppose that's a solution . . . if you like jarring solutions.

But Pinker pointed to another solution, one you have almost certainly used yourself in daily speech when you weren't minding your *hes* and *shes*: Jane Austen, author of world-famous prose in English classics such as *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* used *they* as a generic singular pronoun almost five dozen times. This wasn't just in the speech of low-life characters or of Mr. Collins; she sometimes did this in the voice of the narrator.

I have, in fact, heard a seminary professor with a doctorate and a reputation for refined oratory use *they* to refer to a singular entity in a sermon in front of 3000 people. The singular *they* is not illogical; people can almost always easily tell from context that the word is being used in its singular sense.

Singular *they* sounds a bit informal, and it may continue to do so for many years yet—so it does feel odd to my ears in a Bible translation. But in my opinion, modern English Bible translators should be given the freedom to analyze usage patterns in contemporary written and spoken English without political pressure (from any side) to land on a particular answer. Language changes, and it's okay. All the words we use have changed since Babel, and yet we can still understand each other. Plus, most changes are glacial and we all get to fight over the fun ones for a couple decades before anything really happens.

Dr. Mark Ward Jr. is a Logos Pro at Faithlife.



## The Progress of Doctrine in

*Note: The content of this column is highly condensed from T. D. Bernard's classic, The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament. For the sake of readability, the following excerpts do not mark ellipses.*

### LECTURE II: THE GOSPELS (Part 1)

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1). The Gospel, considered as fact, began from the Incarnation, and was completed at the Resurrection; but the Gospel, considered as doctrine, began from the first preaching of Jesus, and was completed in the dispensation of the Spirit. When the Lord quitted the world, he left the material of the Gospel already perfect, but the exposition of the Gospel only begun. "The beginning of the Gospel" is a name which in one sense comprehends "all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day when he was taken up." To us this stage of the divine teaching is represented by the writings of the four Evangelists; and I would now consider this collection as the beginning of the orderly development of the Christian doctrine in the whole New Testament, and then as a course of teaching which bears a certain character of systematic advance.

#### **1. The Gospels Collectively Function as the Commencement of Christian Doctrine.**

**1.1. The Gospels present the facts and person on which all Christian doctrine is founded.** Now the Christian doctrine is a doctrine concerning *facts* which have occurred and a *person* who has been manifested within the sphere of human observation. No literary fact is more remarkable than that men, knowing what these writers knew, and feeling what they felt, should have given us chronicles so plain and calm.

**1.2. The Gospels present a multiple witness to the facts and person on which all Christian doctrine is founded.** Four times does the Lord walk before us in the glory of grace and truth, and four times are the great facts of the death and resurrection of Christ rehearsed to us in the minuteness of circumstantial detail. Open these pages where we will, the sense of reality revives within us. We feel afresh that we have not followed cunningly devised fables, have not loved an idea, or trusted in an abstraction. Brethren, let me urge upon you the habitual study of the holy Gospels for this revival of the reality and simplicity of faith. Dear as the Gospel stories are to the simple peasant, they are yet more necessary to the student and the divine. It is plain that the four histories are

modified by their own instinctive principles of selection and arrangement, which result in giving four aspects of their common subject, as the Royal Lawgiver, the Mighty Worker, the Friend of Man, and the Son of God—four aspects, but one portrait. It is represented from four different points of view; but, however represented, it is the same Jesus.

**1.3. The Gospels' focus on the facts and person on which all Christian doctrine is grounded reminds us that Christianity is first and foremost a relationship to that Person.** Jesus Christ created the Gospel by his work; he preaches the Gospel by his words; but he is the Gospel in himself. The expression is but the condensation of a hundred passages of Scripture which declare him to be that. Is it not indeed the distinguishing feature of the Christian system, that it places the foundation of salvation in living relations with a living person, rather than in the adoption of opinions or of habits? The writings of the Evangelists do not present to us a scheme of doctrine as to the nature of Christ or as to the work which he does. They present to us the Lord Jesus himself, as he showed himself to men in order to win their confidence and fix their trust. Men learned to know him and to trust him before they fully understood who he was and what he did. Thus the New Testament, in giving us these narratives for our first lessons in Christian faith, teaches us that the essential and original nature of that faith lies, not in acceptance of truths which are revealed, but in confidence in a person who is manifested.

#### **2. The Gospels Individually Display a Progression of Development from One to the Next.**

**2.1. Progression is apparent from the Synoptics to John.** The collection is divided into two parts by a line of demarcation perceptible to every eye and recognized in every age; the first three Gospels forming the one part and the fourth Gospel the other. The former naturally precedes, and in its effect prepares us for the latter. Thus the triple Gospel, which educates us among scenes of earth, prepares us for that which follows.

**2.2. Progression within the Synoptics (from one Synoptic to the next) is displayed in the prevailing character and historical associations of each.** Again, if the synoptic Gospels are taken by themselves, we observe, even within the limits of this division, certain orderly steps of advance. Each of these narratives has its own prevailing character,



# the New Testament, Part 2

whereby it makes its proper contribution to the complete portrait of the Lord: each also has its own historical associations, whereby it represents a separate stage in the presentation of Christ to the world.

**2.2.1. Matthew.** Matthew, ever recognized as the Hebrew Gospel, is the true commencement of the New Testament, showing how it grows out of the Old, and presenting the manifestation of the Son of God not as a detached phenomenon, but as the predestined completion of the long course of historic dispensations. It is the Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ, the *son of David*, the *son of Abraham*. It founds itself on the ideas of the old covenant. It refers at every step to the former Scriptures, noting how that was fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets. It is a history of fulfillment.

**2.2.2. Mark.** Mark is traditionally connected with Peter, who first opened the door of faith to Gentiles. It is the Gospel of action, rapid, vigorous, vivid. Entering at once on the Lord's official and public career, it bears us on from one mighty deed to another with a peculiar swiftness of movement. Peter's saying to Cornelius has been well noticed as a fit motto for this Gospel: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good and healing all those who were oppressed of the devil!"

**2.2.3. Luke.** The whole tone of this Gospel constitutes it pre-eminently a Gospel for the Gentiles, specially adapted to the Greek mind, the mind of the world. Its internal character thus accords with its historical position, as the Gospel of Paul, written by his close companion, and circulated, we cannot doubt, in the Churches which he founded.

As the book of Acts shows us three stages in the outward progress of the Gospel first within the bounds of Judaism, then in the work of Peter spreading beyond those limits in the Roman direction, and finally in the ministry of Paul delivered freely and fully to the world; so do the synoptic Gospels, as they stand in the canon, correspond to those three periods.

**2.3. Progression is apparent within John's Gospel itself.** John begins, not like his predecessors, from an earthly starting point, from the birth of the son of Adam, or the son of Abraham, or the opening of the human ministry, but in the depths of unmeasured eternity and the recesses of the nature of God.

Such is the character of the Gospel collection. As a scheme characterized by unity and progress it has obviously the

appearance of design: and the appearance of design is an argument for its reality. But whose design is this, which appears not in the separate books, but in the collection taken as a whole? The agents were severed from each other, and wrote as their respective turns of mind and historical circumstances determined. Where then was the presiding mind which planned the whole, and, in qualifying and employing the chosen agents, divided to every man severally as he would? The Spirit of the Lord is here.

## LECTURE III: THE GOSPELS (Part 2)

*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord? (Hebrews 2:3). This so great salvation began to be spoken by the Lord. He was the messenger and teacher of this salvation, as well as its author and giver. It was fully wrought by the Lord; but, besides that, it began to be spoken by the Lord, its announcement coming first from his own lips. Yet this personal speaking was only a certain stage in the course of its publication. [For Hebrews reports that it began to be spoken by the Lord; that fact will have a significant bearing on how we view the subsequent stages of doctrine unfolded in the NT.]*

### 1. The Relationship of Christ's Teaching to Christian Doctrine.

**1.1. The teaching of Christ in the Gospels includes the substance of all Christian doctrine.** Shall I enter into detail, and begin to show how the whole argument on justification in Romans is involved in the assertion, that "the Son of Man was lifted up, that he that believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:14–15)? How the exposition of the Christian standing in Galatians is comprehended in the words, "The servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever. If the son make you free ye shall be free indeed" (Jn. 8:35–36)? How the sacrificial doctrine of Hebrews is implied in all its parts by the words, "This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28)? Though such proof in detail is here impossible, it would yet be easy to show that every doctrine expanded in the Epistles roots itself in some pregnant saying in the Gospels; and that the first intimation of every truth, revealed to the holy Apostles by the Spirit, came first from the lips of the Son of Man. There was nothing then on the lips of the preachers of the Gospel, but what had been begun to be spoken by its first preacher.

**1.2. The teaching of Christ in the Gospels is clearly not the last word on Christian doctrine.** Yet those words *do not bear the character of finality*. The doctrine delivered in the Gospels appears to need, and to promise, further explanations, combinations, and developments. The character of that ministry on the whole is introductory. It is so in its *form*, in its *method*, and in its *substance*.

**1.2.1. Its highly parabolic form represents the initiatory nature of its Christian doctrine.** Our Lord's general teaching, in regard to its *form*, is cast in the mold of parable or proverb. This prevailing character of our Lord's discourse is to be noticed, not only in the large amount of professed parables, but in the general habit of proverbial sayings. "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs, but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father" (Jn. 16:25). These words remain as a sufficient testimony that the peculiar character of language, in which the salvation began to be spoken by the Lord, is a mark of an introductory stage, and is both a sign that the time for showing plainly is not yet come, and a pledge that it is to follow.

**1.2.2. Its occasional method implies the fragmentary nature of its Christian doctrine.** As the form of the teaching leads to this conclusion, so also does its *method*. It is seemingly to a great degree a method of chances and occasions; carried on by words suited to the moment, by separate addresses, or replies to particular persons, and by explanations added to particular acts. It would hardly appear likely that such a mode of teaching was intended to be final, rather we should expect it to prove (as in fact it did) the prefatory announcement of a coming system of truth.

**1.2.3. Its suggestive substance indicates the unfinished nature of its Christian doctrine.** Glance through a few of these sayings: The heavens open, and the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man (Jn. 1:51); the Temple destroyed and raised up again in three days (Jn. 2:19); the birth of water and the Spirit (Jn. 3:5); the Son of Man who came from heaven, who goes to heaven, and who is in heaven (Jn. 3:13); the lifting up like the serpent in the wilderness, that men may not perish (Jn. 3:14); the water which he will give, springing up into everlasting life (Jn. 4:14); the eating the flesh and drinking the blood as the means of everlasting life and of being raised up at the last day (Jn. 6:54). These sayings, and many others like them, are at the time left unexplained. The doctrine does not therefore bear the character of finality. We expect another stage.

## **2. The Nature of Christ's Teaching in the Gospels.**

The doctrine of the Gospels not only looks as if it were to be followed by another stage of teaching, but declares that

such is the fact. I come to my second proposition, that the personal teaching of the Lord is *a visibly progressive system, which, on reaching its highest point, declares its own incompleteness, and refers us to another stage of instruction.*

**2.1. Christ's teaching in the Gospels is a visibly progressive system of Christian doctrine.** Place side by side the first discourse in Matthew [the Sermon on the Mount] and the last in John [the Upper Room Discourse], and the truth of the first part of this proposition is at once apparent, namely, that the personal teaching of the Lord is *a visibly progressive system*. There is a greater interval between these two discourses than there is between the teaching of the Gospels as a whole and that of the Epistles. But while these disclosures are yet in progress they are suddenly cut off. We enter the upper room, and attend the last discourse, which is the close and the consummation of the teaching of the Lord on earth.

**2.2. Christ's teaching in the Gospels announces its own incompleteness and anticipates further instruction in Christian doctrine.** We turn then to that portion of the word of God in John 14–17. The Lord would have it understood to what point in the progress of his teaching we are come, and what is the relation between that which is now ending and that which is about to begin: "*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*" But these many and weighty things shall not be left untold: "*When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth.*" [The Lord's earthly ministry] was to be followed by a new testimony from God. The testimony came; the things were spoken; and in the apostolic writings we have their enduring record. The brief communications in which the salvation began to be spoken by the Lord must lose half their glory, if a mist and darkness be cast over that later teaching which was ordained to throw its light upon them.

## **Conclusion**

The reader of the Gospels is not suffered to close the volume without a solemn admonition of the purpose for which it has been placed in his hands. "*These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through his name.*" Does it wound our hearts to see this wondrous record misapprehended, its unity denied, its glory darkened? Perhaps it is a sadder sight in the eye of heaven when its inspiration is vindicated, its perfection appreciated, its majesty asserted, by one who at the same time for himself neglects the great salvation. Such a case is not impossible—perhaps is not uncommon. At least let it be remembered, that the study of the testimony is one thing, and the enjoyment of the salvation is another, and that the record of the things which Jesus did and said has attained its end with those only, who, "believing, have life through his name."

# Death Notifications

One of the most difficult jobs in the chaplaincy is serving death notifications. When I receive a call from higher headquarters that a soldier has died in combat, my heart is grieved. I know that by the day's end I must go with a casualty assistance officer and share a life-changing message to an unsuspecting wife and child, a mom and dad, or an aged grandmother and grandfather. No matter how many times you perform the task, it never gets easier.

One early summer day in Florida, I received "the call" late in morning, which means by the time you get everything together, you and your assigned partner will not deliver the bad news until late afternoon at the earliest. As I received the information about the young sergeant who had been gunned down by a sniper that morning in Mosul, Iraq, my heart was broken, and I began to pray for guidance and wisdom on how to make this call. Little did I know how much this call would impact me.

After going through a quick rehearsal regarding our actions when we would arrive at the home, the Lieutenant (LT) and I departed. I was reading the paperwork just to make sure I had all the facts straight, in the event that the family would ask me questions regarding their loved one's death that day. Ironically, and to my surprise, the LT stopped just a short distance from base. I asked her why she stopped here, and she said that this was the address. To my horror, there standing in the backyard was one of my church members grilling dinner. My heart sank as I quickly thumbed through the paperwork again. I didn't see this family's name on the papers.

As I slowly got out of the car, I remembered that my friend from church had an older daughter and that she had just moved back home with her parents when her husband deployed to Iraq. As I made eye contact with my friend, he greeted me with a warm smile and told me he was surprised to see me. A moment later the LT stepped out of the car, and my friend's smile quickly turned to a grimace. The expression on his face is still etched on my memory to this day.

However, the pain of the moment was about to get worse. I asked my friend if his daughter was at home. The question must have clued my friend on why this young officer and I were standing in his backyard dressed in our service uniforms. As his head dropped, the back door swung open and a young woman in her twenties bounded down the steps. The smile on her face was so pretty, but when she saw the two of us standing by the back fence, her smile quickly departed and tears began to stream down her cheeks. I thought I was going die. My heart was pounding out of my chest. I had delivered this message to many families over the past two or three years, but nothing came close to the feeling I had in delivering this horrific news.

Tears began to well up in my eyes, and then the young woman slowly began to walk toward the LT and me. I

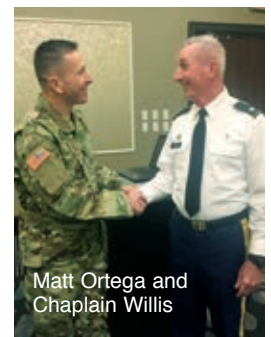
fought for strength to catch a breath when I realized that this young woman was about six or seven months pregnant. I had to hold it tighter. I am supposed to be the strong one for everyone else, but I was about to melt down right there. Finally, the LT spoke and asked the young lady her name, just to verify that we had the right home and the right people. When my friend confirmed that they were the family of this young sergeant, the LT recited the message that she had memorized earlier in the day. The LT left off speaking and stepped back a few steps for me to move forward. It was now my turn to speak. I began to move closer to the family while extending my condolences, my grief for their loss, and to give an offer of assistance for the future.

To my surprise the young woman peacefully sat down on a nearby cooler and gathered her composure. She then looked up with a serene peace that passes all understanding as the Scripture says and began to softly speak. I leaned closer to hear her words, and she faintly smiled and said, "Well, at least I know he is in heaven right now." I was so choked up that I couldn't even speak, for right here in front of me I was witnessing the greatest and sweetest expression of Christian peace. I have been around several Christians who were about to take their last breath, and the peace that God gives at that moment is indeed miraculous. However, in all my days as a Chaplain, I had never experienced anything so precious. After we finished the task of notifying the family, the LT and I headed back to the car. I realized I had just seen the mighty hand of my Heavenly Father meet with us in that backyard that day. I did several notifications in the future, but I would never experience one like that one ever again.

## Chaplaincy Transitions

John C. Vaughn

Readers may be aware that while serving as the Chaplain of the Greenville Police Department since the late 1980s, I was also an FBFI-endorsed Chaplain. On May 1, 2017, Chaplain Joe Willis became the FBFI Endorser—just in time to endorse me for a new hospital chaplaincy going forward. With our eyes on a new century for FBFI beginning in 2020, we will be electing a new president at the Annual Fellowship this June. In the next issue of *FrontLine* we will present some other elements of our transitions as we continue to "Proclaim and Defend" the Foundations of the Faith. Chaplain Willis is no stranger to this column nor to our chaplains, and we are confident that he is the man to take the FBFI chaplaincy into the future.



Matt Ortega and Chaplain Willis

kingdom, Jews would receive the curses of the Mosaic Covenant. In fact, this led to the crucifixion of Jesus.

This exemplar is used once to reprimand the believing disciples of Jesus (Mark 8:18). This does not corrupt the meaning of the exemplar. Jesus merely compares His disciples (in their failure to understand) to the rebellious Jews (who are prevented from understanding so they will experience the Mosaic curses). It was Jesus' way of pointing out how tragic their failure to understand was. They were like cursed people (and they did not need to be and shouldn't have been). The exemplar is a perfect foil for the believing disciples.

Paul uses the exemplar to teach that the curses of the Mosaic Covenant upon the nation of Israel continue during the church age (Acts 28:26-27). This explains Israel's continual refusal to repent in the present dispensation. It also makes it possible for God to use Gentiles, who hear and accept the salvation of God, to make Israel jealous (Rom. 11:11).

Dr. Andy Hudson is the New Testament professor at Maranatha Baptist Seminary.



<sup>1</sup> Gary Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 194.

<sup>2</sup> Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 217.

<sup>3</sup> R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 199.

<sup>4</sup> James A. Brooks, *Mark*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 130.

<sup>5</sup> Todd A. Scacewater, "The Predictive Nature of Typology in John 12:37-43," *Westminster Theological Journal* 75 (2013): 142.

<sup>6</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 755.

**Mailbag** Continued from page 5

a computer bag for reading on a long flight or poring over an article or two in my kitchen while mixing up a fresh batch of bread. As I read, I often mark thought-provoking paragraphs or sentences that I want to either remark on or ask questions of my husband when he comes home at the end of the day. This morning, the article written by Dr. Craig Hartman in the November/December "Thank God for Israel" edition informed and blessed me as I considered God's faithfulness to His people! I look forward to reading the remainder of the magazine!

Deborah Lake  
Lawrenceville, GA

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# The Ministry of Interceding for Others

**W**e read in 1 Samuel 12:23–24, “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you . . . for consider how great things he hath done for you.” In this passage, we find Samuel praying for the children of Israel who had asked for a king to reign over them. This was a wrong request! In fact, we read the sharp rebuke Samuel gave the people in 1 Samuel 10:18–19: “Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you: And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us.”

They wanted to be like all the other nations; in reality, they were saying they didn’t want God to rule over them. This grieved the heart of Samuel, and he wanted them to see how much it grieved God as well. He said to the people in chapter 12:16–18, “Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.” They saw the visible displeasure of the Lord displayed before their very eyes, and they responded in verse 19, “Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.” They were pleading with Samuel to pray for them because of their sin.

Samuel replied in verse 23, “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.” Samuel was interceding on behalf of the Israelites. The *American College Dictionary* defines “intercession” as follows: “An interposing or pleading with God in behalf of another or others, as that of Christ or that of the saints in behalf of men.” What wonderful results occur when someone intercedes for others!

We have a prime example of this in the life of Moses when he interceded for the children of Israel. When the Lord was giving Moses the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, the children of Israel grew impatient because Moses tarried so long on the mountain, so they made a golden calf and began to worship it. We see the anger of the Lord in Exodus 32:8–10 when He said, “They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.” Then we see the mighty power of Moses in interceding for these people in verses 31–32: “And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” Was Moses’ interceding effective? Yes! The whole nation of Israel was spared because of this man praying for them.

Today, we as the Lord’s people are to intercede for others as well. First, we should pray for the nation of Israel. Psalm 122:6 states, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.” Second, we are to pray according to 1 Timothy 2:1–2: “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” As we intercede for others, may we never forget that our Lord Jesus Christ is interceding for us! Hebrews 7:25 says, “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” May we all intercede for each other daily!

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