

Glad Tidings

December

FROM THE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

2024

“Buy the truth, and sell it not.” (Prov. 23:23)

Philippians 4:13

Strength For Today And Bright Hope For Tomorrow

I Corinthians 15:19

As we move towards the conclusion of yet another year and reflect upon the last twelve months, most likely we can say along with the hymnwriter, “mixtures of joy and sorrow I daily do pass through.” As we reflect and take inventory of the last year, I hope we can see the happy, joyful moments that we have been blessed to enjoy by God’s grace. We need to count our many blessings, name them one by one, and it should not surprise us what the Lord has done, but sometimes we need to be reminded of just how much we have been blessed by individually counting (maybe even writing down) our blessings one by one. I hope we can thank the Lord for his blessings, care, provision, and grace in our lives, not just in the last twelve months, but throughout our entire lifetime.

However, as we think back on the last year, there also inevitably will be moments of sorrow, sadness, pain, and disappointment. While we don’t need to dwell on those moments perpetually, we should acknowledge those hard times and hopefully can also see the care and provision of the Lord even during the low valleys of this last year. The mixtures of sorrow make us much more thankful for the joyful moments when they come. If we did not experience sorrow here in our lives, we might be too content in this world, instead of longing for our home in heaven where there is no sorrow, pain, sadness, death, or tears.

This stark contrast of joy and sorrow was appropriately addressed by the Lord. “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.” (Eccl. 7:14) In the day of prosperity, we should be joyful. We need to enjoy the mountain top vistas because they are typically very fleeting. Furthermore, you may find when you reach a milestone peak in your life, that it does not provide quite the fulfillment or satisfaction you expected it would. We are not made to live on the mountain top because there is not much food or water there to sustain long-term life. Rather, most people have to live down in the valleys. We visit the mountain tops on short term special trips or vacations, but we live in the valleys by the lush rivers and fields. Mountain top moments are typically short and fleeting in our life, so it is appropriate to thoroughly enjoy those happy moments of prosperity when the Lord blesses for them to come in our life.

However, on the other hand, when the day of adversity inevitably comes, we should not become overly depressed or distraught. The appropriate

response when the day of adversity comes is to “consider”. We consider and examine and meditate that God has set the one against the other, for what purpose? That man should find nothing after him. God has created a balance to life; he has “set” the day of prosperity over against the day of adversity. We need to enjoy the days of prosperity but don’t get too high during that good time. When the days of adversity come, we need to “consider” and not get too low or overly discouraged. Don’t get too high during the good times and don’t get too low during the bad times but consider that God has appointed one against the other so that we should “find nothing after him.”

Our true joy is not realized solely in prosperity or removed in adversity, but God has set one against the other that we may learn that true joy, true contentment, true satisfaction is not found in receiving blessings or enduring adversity but in daily, intimate, close fellowship and communion with our Lord Jesus Christ. Why does God suffer adversity to come in our lives? One reason is that we will consider and learn that true joy is not from the ease or comfort of our life, but rather true joy comes in walking with God, even if he does call us to go through days of adversity according to his good, acceptable, and perfect will. True joy comes from seeking and finding Christ, even if we find fellowship with Christ in the midst of the fire like the three Hebrew men in Dan. 3.

In Eccl. 3:1-11, the Lord tells us through Solomon that “*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.*” (v.1) Season in this verse means “an appointed time, an appointed occasion”. There are things in life that are proper and good in their time. However, we must remember that seasons are only temporary; seasons are transitional stages that are preparing for and then ultimately transitioning to the next season. Every season of nature is good and useful in and of itself – spring, summer, fall, and winter are all good and needful for the environment; even the cold of winter sometimes gives us the beauty of snow. Every season of our lives is proper and useful in its own way as well, but that season is always transitioning to a new season right after it. In this way, our lives are usually in constant fluctuations, either beginning, in the middle, or ending a new season almost all the time.

When we go through the seasons of prosperity or adversity, remember these seasons of our life are not just random, but are oftentimes necessary to prepare us for the next phase in our future. It is necessary for

a caterpillar to be in a cocoon to properly develop into a butterfly. If that caterpillar tries to skip over or alleviate this process, the caterpillar's growth and development will be severely hindered and not grow into a beautiful butterfly. In Eccl. 3:2-8 we are given 14 contrasting duets of times of prosperity and times of adversity; each duo has a positive time and a negative time. What we see in each of these contrasting duos of good and bad is that they are constantly fluctuating in our lives – we go can so quickly go from a time of laughter and dancing to a time of weeping and mourning (Eccl. 3:4); we go from a time of building up to a time of breaking down (Eccl. 3:3); we go from a time of getting and keeping to a time of losing and casting away (Eccl. 3:6), and then the vice versa happens just as quickly.

There is an appropriate season and purpose for every event under the sun. Particularly notice these contrasts in v.4, “A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.” All of these emotions are appropriate in the right setting, but inappropriate in other settings. Someone should not attend a funeral and be dancing and laughing. Yet on the other hand, in a time of joy and prosperity, one should not purposefully kill the mood by weeping and mourning. All of these situations and emotions are appropriate in the right time and the right place. Therefore, we can dance and laugh in the days of prosperity, and we can mourn and weep to a degree in the days of adversity. However, we need to consider and learn this lesson – that we should find nothing after the Lord.

These contrasting and alternating times are summarized by Solomon in Eccl. 3:11, “*He hath made everything beautiful in his time*”. Every season is beautiful and proper and beneficial in its proper place and perspective. Remember, these seasons are beautiful in “his time”, in God's time, not in our time. We might desire for a difficult season to be over and pass on quickly into a more prosperous season, but we need to let each season “have its perfect work” to make us more mature and stronger for the next season. Each season can be beautiful in our lives, if we allow for God to use it for its intended purpose that is unique to that season. The work necessary to be performed in each season is different and unique. It is necessary to plant your field in the proper season in the spring, but then you have to go through the season of cultivation and patiently wait and labor before you can reap a harvest at that due season. You cannot reap the fruit of your harvest unless you are patient to wait for that proper season when the fullness of the harvest has come. If you try to reap before the proper harvest time, you will circumvent the growth of the crop to its full maturity. Therefore, we must not short-circuit either the planting or growing season but just wait patiently for God's beautiful season of harvest to arrive (Eccl. 3:2b). It was necessary for a hot-headed 40-

year-old Moses who hastily killed an Egyptian to learn patience in shepherding sheep in Midian for 40 years to prepare him to lead the stiff-necked Israelites out of bondage. Joseph spent 13 years in and out of servitude and prison to cultivate him with the wisdom to be second in command of Egypt at age 30 during a time of famine. Every season of our life, even if it's not glamorous, is needful and beneficial to our continued growth in discipleship.

Life is a roller coaster with rapid and drastic pendulum swings of not only our emotions but of major life events – from joy to sorrow, from laughter to mourning. We see this world around us that is so prone to drastic changes and when we consider that, it leads us to “find nothing after him”. The constant fluctuations of this world lead us to desire something that is stable, secure, and consistent. That is why the severe and drastic changes of this world lead us to run to something that is stable, sure and steadfast, an anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19-20). Whatever God does shall be forever (Eccl. 3:14), so he will not be changing like the events of this world do so quickly. There is stability and safety to trust in the Lord in the days of prosperity but also in the days of adversity.

Our true prosperity does not come from money, promotions, marriages, births, or other providential blessings, but true prosperity is in serving the Lord in humility. Therefore, we can still be spiritually prosperous even in the days of adversity because we seek and find Him. Our “completeness” is not found in this world, but in Jesus Christ (Col. 2:10). Therefore, even if days of adversity come in our lives, we can still have joy and completeness in seeking and finding Jesus Christ. (Elder David Wise)

EDITORIAL OFFICE

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Elder Jonathan Wise & Elder David Wise, Co-Editors

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK
By Elder Larry Wise (1944-2024)



Where would we be without our Saviour, Jesus Christ? We would still be unsaved from our sins and hell bound. We could not do anything good because Jesus said, "...without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5) We would be without the gospel because there would be no good news to declare. We would be void of the church because Jesus was the Rock upon which the church was built. However, thanks be to God that we do have the miraculous conception, birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Miraculous Conception: Every human being brought into this world is conceived by some kind of union between a man and woman. Sin is transmitted through the man to their offspring. David himself said, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5) Jesus, however, was not conceived in sin as he would have been had it been because of union of Joseph and Mary. The angel told Joseph, "...fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 1:20) She would bring forth a son which would be called Jesus for He would save His people from their sins. He could not accomplish this mission without being sinless. He was the clean thing that came out of an unclean (Mary) thing.

Miraculous Birth: Millions of men have been born since the first birth of Cain and they have all been born of sinful parents; therefore, they had to be sinners. Although Jesus was born of a sinful, unclean woman, this woman was a virgin who had never known man in a carnal way. This miraculous birth had been prophesied hundreds of years before it actually happened. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7:14) Matthew tells us that this Immanuel is to be interpreted "God with us." (Matt. 1:23) Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. Paul tells us about this miraculous birth and the purpose for which it was intended: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4-5) Jesus was a child born and a son given and His name was to be called,

Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, and The Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6)

Miraculous Death: Every individual's death is a result of sin; there's nothing miraculous about that except that the Spirit returns to God for the child of God. Man is without any power in the day of death as the scripture declares, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death..." (Eccl. 8:8) The enemies of Jesus had attempted to seize Him and kill Him more than once, but He slipped right through their midst because "His hour was not yet come." Jesus had all power in heaven and earth and had power over His own death. Jesus said concerning His life and death, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:18) Jesus died before the normal time it took a man to die under crucifixion. When Joseph of Arimathea came and begged the body of Jesus, we read, "And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead." (Matt. 15:44) Every man's death is a result of sin; Jesus' death was a result of sin, not His but the sins of His people which were laid on Him and thus He died.

Miraculous Resurrection: There had been other people resurrected from death in the Bible, but all these lived only to die again. Not only was this true, but it was another power exerted upon them to restore natural life. Jesus had power, not only over His death, but over the grave. He was always the Son of God; however, His resurrection declared Him to be the Son of God. "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:" Rom. 1:3-4) Jesus was never to die again because what He did never had to be repeated, contrary to Old Testament practice for sin atonement. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." (Rom. 6:9-10)

Miraculous Return: Jesus' return from heaven will be just as miraculous as his conception, birth, death and resurrection. His home going was visible and in His return the Bible says, "...every eye shall see Him..." (Rev. 1:7) Praise God!

(From December 2019 Glad Tidings)

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."
(1 Timothy 3:16)

**UPDATE ON THE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST
CHURCHES IN AFRICA**
(October 2024)

Elder Martin Onyoni from Kisii, Kenya was able to visit the United States recently from October 1st to 31st, 2024, preaching in churches in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas. Elder Martin Onyoni and Elder Vernon Johnson provided an update of the Lord's work in Africa during his time in the States. Let us be diligently praying for continued open doors for the gospel in Africa and abroad.

Kenya. In 2008, the Lord providentially opened a door for a Primitive Baptist church to be constituted in the town on Kisii in the country of Kenya. Brother Martin Onyoni had been burdened to seek the Lord's will in the scriptures, and providentially found the website of Denton Primitive Baptist Church in Denton, Texas, pastored by Elder Vernon Johnson. Just a few years before, Brother Vernon had felt a strong burden to begin to write a series of articles on Primitive Baptist beliefs, not necessarily knowing for what purpose. After Brother Martin contacted Brother Vernon through the Denton PBC church website seeking teaching, it became evident why the Lord burdened Brother Vernon to write those series of articles that have become the basis for teaching the churches in Africa and have been compiled into a book, *The Bible Study Notebook*, that can be purchased on Lulu.com or Amazon.com. Also, Denton PBC felt burdened to have a prayer meeting in 2006 seeking open doors for the gospel. Just a few years before, Denton PBC felt burdened to have an initial prayer meeting and the church subsequently grew from 10 members to 30 members in 18 months. After having the second prayer meeting, praying for the Lord to open new doors for the gospel, the same day that the Denton PBC was praying, there were 8 people in Kenya who were praying that the Lord would show them the truth. Brother Vernon got an email two days later from Brother Martin Onyoni from the other side of the world in Kenya seeking teaching of Primitive Baptist beliefs. Oh, how it is true we have not because we ask not! May we all be praying – individually and meeting together as churches to have prayer meetings similar to this, that God would open doors to advance his kingdom!

In 2008, Brother Vernon along with Elder Mike Ivey and Elder Obey Ndalima went to Kenya for two weeks to constitute the Primitive Baptist church in Kisii, Kenya. Five other churches were constituted during this time that still remain today.

Today, there are 5 Primitive Baptist churches constituted in Kenya, with 6 ordained elders, and 8 men exercising in the ministry. There are 14 fellowships that Brother Martin and the other elders study with. These fellowships consist of people who have submitted to baptism in the Primitive Baptist

church but have not yet been constituted into an official Primitive Baptist church. Due to the overwhelming desire and hunger for teaching from these fellowships and their leaders, every Saturday afternoon for 3 hours, Brother Martin and other elders meet with the leaders of these 14 fellowships and others to study the word of God together.

Tanzania. Brother Obey Ndalima came from Tanzania to the United States and Birmingham, Alabama to attend a bible college. In 2004, upon being intrigued by the name "Primitive Baptist", he attended Vestavia Primitive Baptist Church in Birmingham, pastored by Elder Sam Bryant. He was soon baptized and began to preach at Vestavia. He was ordained as an elder in 2005. Brother Obey had a strong burden to return to Tanzania to constitute a Primitive Baptist church in Dar es Salaam, which he did in 2006. Brother Obey also was instrumental in the establishment of the Primitive Baptist churches in Kenya in 2009, traveling to Kisii, Kenya to help Brother Vernon Johnson in constituting those churches.

In Tanzania today, there is 1 constituted Primitive Baptist church in Dar es Salaam and 1 fellowship, with 3 ordained elders and 2 men exercising in preaching.

Zambia. In Zambia, there are at least 3 constituted Primitive Baptist churches and several fellowships with 8 ordained ministers. Elder Jeff Chabala has been blessed to baptize over 3,000 people in the last 6 years since his ordination in 2019.

Uganda. In Uganda, there are 2 constituted Primitive Baptist churches and 2 fellowships, with 2 ordained elders. Several other men are showing interest to have the Primitive Baptist elders to come and teach them the doctrines of grace.

Rwanda. In Rwanda, there are 3 large fellowships, with one of those fellowships having over 200 attendees. During one of Brother Martin's visits, he baptized over 60 people in one day. They have 6 men who are exercising, with 2 of those men set to be considered for ordination in the spring of 2025.

Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, there is 1 constituted Primitive Baptist church and 3 fellowships, with 1 ordained elder.

Ghana. In Ghana, there are 3 large fellowships with 3 men leading each of those fellowships and beginning to exercise in preaching.

Malawi & Mozambique. In Malawi, Brother Martin has been in contact with disciples there for 3-4 years now. They have a large congregation of about 400 people who have been studying Primitive Baptist materials. Originally a Bro. Shadreck Nkhoma contacted Brother Vernon Johnson and related that the Lord had blessed him to help start around 60 churches in Malawi and that he hoped to see them all one day become Primitive Baptist churches. Brother Martin and other elders are making arrangements to go to Malawi for 2 weeks in 2025. Elder Jeff Chabala and Elder Mark Mulenga of Zambia at the request of a

Bro. Gideon Mugona visited Malawi with a large number of men from Malawi and Mozambique who have expressed a burden to preach the gospel and are leading fellowships in around 60 congregations which were previously Pentecostal congregations. They have all expressed a desire to become Primitive Baptist and they baptized around 60 on that visit. Elders Jeff and Mark plan to return in November 2024 to preach and teach to a large number of people seeking the truth in Malawi. Besides the ones who were in the previous visit there are several other groups of people who have reached out to Brother Vernon for studies that the two elders will also visit and teach and preach to.

Botswana. As an outreach of Elder Jeff Chabala who at one time lived in Francistown, Botswana, 2 churches were established and 2 men were ordained to pastor these 2 churches. Subsequently these two men have been diligent to visit several villages throughout Botswana and have established several fellowships in Botswana. These 2 elders along with Elder Mark Mulenga have recently spent about 10 days in studies with 46 men who have expressed a burden to preach the gospel. They also baptized 27 of these men who had not previously been baptized.

Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, & the Congo. As word has spread throughout the southern part of Africa several men have reached out to Elder Jeff Chabala asking him to come and share the word with them. Elder Jeff Chabala along with Elder Mark Mulenga have visited these countries and have established fellowships and churches in each of these countries.

Sweetwater Outreach. When the work in Africa began, Brother John Blevins from Alabama – who was an engineer by trade – felt a burden to help the Primitive Baptists in Africa but struggled to find the right avenue to help. After visiting, the Lord burdened Brother John to use his engineering skills to help in designing water filtration systems to provide safe and clean drinking water to the communities in Kenya. Brother Martin previously almost died of typhoid and malaria until Brother John helped them with filters to be able to drink clean water. Most Africans drink contaminated water and deal with a litany of health problems from drinking that bad water. Brother John established Sweetwater Outreach as an organization to provide filtration and safe drinking water to the people in Kenya and Africa. Now, Brother Martin and the other elders oftentimes use the water filters and clean water education from Sweetwater Outreach as a tandem to their preaching ministry in new communities and fellowships to help them drink clean water in addition to sharing the good news of the gospel. If anyone desires to help contribute to the work of Sweetwater Outreach and provide clean drinking water to people in Africa, you may visit: <https://www.sweetwateroutreach.org/>

Summary. Considering there was no Primitive Baptist presence in the entire continent of Africa prior to 2006, it is truly amazing what the Lord has done in 18 years among our African brethren. This summary of God's movement in Africa reads like the book of Acts – new fellowships seeking the truth, new churches constituted, new men exercising and being ordained to the ministry, and people being baptized by the thousands! This stands in stark contrast to the Primitive Baptist churches in America that I would say are generally struggling and receding (arguably very lukewarm and Laodicean), rather than advancing the kingdom of God. There is much we in America should learn from our African brethren and sisters. Their devotion and zeal for the church and gospel should be our pattern to follow – or more precisely the devotion and zeal of the original Baptists in the book of Acts and early church should be our pattern to follow. May we continue to pray for the churches and the ministry in Africa for God to open more open doors for the growth of the Lord's kingdom! We also pray for God to send revival among our churches in America as well!

BLISSFUL HOPE

Hail! sweetest, dearest tie that binds
Our glowing hearts in one;
Hail sacred hope, that tunes our minds
To harmony divine.
It is the hope, the blissful hope,

Refrain:
Which Jesus' grace has giv'n;
The hope when days and years are passed,
We all shall meet in heav'n.

What tho' the northern wintry blast
Shall howl around our cot,
What tho' beneath an eastern sun,
Be cast our distant lot;
Yet still we share the blissful hope, [Refrain]

From Burma's shore, from Africa's stand,
From India's burning plain,
From Europe, from Columbia's land,
We hope to meet again.
It is the hope, the blissful hope, [Refrain]

No lingering look, no parting sigh,
Our future meeting knows;
There friendship beams from every eye,
And hope immortal glows,
O sacred hope! O blissful hope! [Refrain]

DENIED BY CHRIST?

Elder Marty Smith

Mark 8:36-38: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Simon Peter confessed that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God, in the presence of others in Matthew 16:13-17, and Jesus Christ confessed Peter as one taught directly by his Father in heaven.

Simon Peter denied even knowing Jesus in Matthew 26:69-75, and Jesus Christ denied Peter before the Father, to provide comfort from his bitter weeping, until after His resurrection.

Many people in that generation believed in Jesus Christ (giving evidence they were born again) but would not confess him before men (John 12:42-43). If they continued in that state, their last days on earth could be very grievous, for the Lord was coming during that very generation (Matthew 24:34) to judge Jerusalem, and their souls would be lost in fear, despair and ignorance. Matthew 24:36-44 indicates that this 70 AD judgement would be the result of a visit to Jerusalem by the Son, the Father, and the holy angels. It provides lessons for us today.

During the destruction of Jerusalem, the disciples who confessed and followed Jesus Christ saw, however, that this destruction was only of a physical city and nation, and that the heavenly Jerusalem of Hebrews 12:22 was well established as their home away from home. They even saw the desolation of Judaea as an opportunity to help their fellow saints! They thus obeyed the command which the Lord Jesus gave His disciples before He went to the cross: "In your patience possess ye your souls." (Luke 21:19)

I do not think the teaching in Mark 8:36-38 is about eternal destiny, but about daily peace for individuals in that (and this) generation. Believers who were ashamed of their Lord lost their souls in despair, while disciples who were faithful and patient possessed their souls in hope.

OBITUARY OF COMMON SENSE

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as knowing when to come in out of

the rain, why the early bird gets the worm, life isn't always fair, and maybe it was my fault. Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you earn) and reliable parenting (adults, not children, are in charge). His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned, but overbearing, regulations were set in place.

Reports of a six-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate, teenagers suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition. Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job they had themselves failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer paracetamol, sun lotion or plaster to a pupil, but could not inform the parents when a pupil became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband, churches became businesses and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home, but the burglar could sue you for assault because you protected yourself and your own.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust, his wife, Discretion, his daughter, Responsibility and his son, Reason. He is survived by three stepbrothers; I Know My Rights, Someone Else is to Blame, and I'm A Victim. Not many attended his funeral because so few realized that he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.

(Author Unknown)

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES

One evening my Mom, Sandra Wise, was babysitting our two boys while Paige and I both had commitments. While playing basketball in the driveway, Isaac fell and scraped open his knee pretty good. While Mom was cleaning the wound, Eli (age 5) said, "wait, wait!" He ran to his bedroom, coming back with his Cocomelon doctor kit. Mom told him to take Isaac's temperature, which he did and said, "Oh, he's hot!" She then told him to get the stethoscope and listen to him. Eli put it onto Isaac and waited a few seconds before exclaiming, "his stomach sounds good!"

(Jonathan Wise)

CHURCH NEWS

New Prospect Primitive Baptist Church, New Albany, MS. Dec 1, 2024. New Prospect Primitive Baptist Church, New Albany, MS will have a Christmas singing the 1st Sunday night in December 2024 (Dec. 1) beginning at 5:30pm with singing for about an hour, followed by food and fellowship. Elder Rusty Wise is Pastor of New Prospect.

Bethany Primitive Baptist Church, Ecu, MS. Dec 8, 2024. Bethany Primitive Baptist Church, 5 miles west of Ecu, MS will have its annual Christmas singing on 2nd Sunday night in December 2024 (Dec. 8) beginning at 5:30pm with refreshments served afterwards. Come and worship the Savior in song with all the saints.

Laodicea Primitive Baptist Church, Lafayette Springs, MS. Dec 15, 2024. Laodicea Primitive Baptist Church, Lafayette Springs, MS will have a Christmas singing 3rd Sunday night in December 2024 (Dec. 15) beginning at 5:30pm with supper afterwards. Elder Steve Weaver is Pastor of Laodicea.

Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church, Randolph, MS. Dec 29, 2024. Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church, Randolph, MS will host the 5th Sunday night fellowship meeting in December 2024 (Dec. 29). Supper at 5:30pm and worship at 6:30pm. This meeting rotates between New Prospect, Laodicea, Bethany, and Hopewell Primitive Baptist churches.

ELDER ORDINATION



Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church, Echola, MS. On Saturday, October 5, 2024, a presbytery of 19 elders from 4 states and 2 countries (Elder Martin Onyoni from Kenya was able to participate in the presbytery as well) met at Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church to consider Brother McNeil Honea to the full work of the gospel ministry. During questioning by Elder Josh Coker, Brother McNeil preached powerfully the doctrinal and practical beliefs of the things most

surely believed among us. Elder Luke Hagler delivered a tender, touching, and powerful ordination prayer. Elder Neil Honea (Brother McNeil's father), Elder David Crawford, and Elder Tim McCool (Pastor of Bethlehem) delivered the charges to Brother McNeil and his wife, Sister Autumn. We are thankful for the gift displayed in this young brother, and are prayerful for the Lord to bless his ministry abundantly among God's people for many years to come. Be praying for this young brother in the beginning of his ministry. Elder McNeil and Sister Autumn Honea currently reside in the Dallas, Texas area.

**PRAISE REPORT
MULTIPLE RECENT ELDER ORDINATIONS**

We are thankful for the blessings and answered prayers with 4 men being ordained to the ministry as an elder in Mississippi and Alabama within the last 4 months.

-Destry Hill ordained out of Enterprise Primitive Baptist Church in Enterprise, AL on Aug. 31, 2024.

-David Berryhill ordained out of Mount Gilead Primitive Baptist Church in Smithdale, MS on Sept. 28, 2024.

-McNeil Honea ordained out of Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church in Echola, AL on Oct. 5, 2024.

-Morgan Sims is set to be ordained out of Grace Primitive Baptist Church in Pearl, MS on Nov. 23, 2024.

We need to continue to fervently pray for God to raise up preachers and pastors and call men to serve in the ministry. However, we want to be sure to give thanks and praise to God for answered prayers in calling these 4 men to serve in the Lord's kingdom.

Matt. 9:36-38: "36) But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. 37) Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 38) Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

WAYS TO SHOW YOUR PASTOR APPRECIATION
Elder Matt Jordan (10/9/2024)

Ways you can show your appreciation for your pastor during Pastor Appreciation Month (which is October) or any other time of the year:

*As a member of the flock he tries to serve, ask your pastor what he has observed in your spiritual walk that

you need to consider in trying to walk closer with the Lord.

*Pray that your pastor will answer with complete honesty and unmistakable love and Scripture.

*Since you are a disciple of Christ, be willing to take your pastor's counsel and examine it in light of Scripture.

*As a member of the flock your pastor tries to serve, be prepared to take heed to his counsel and make changes in your life.

*Don't wait until Pastor Appreciation Month to tell him that you pray for him and that you appreciate his labors.

*Occasionally ask your pastor to prayerfully consider a subject or passage as a topic of his preaching and teaching.

*Don't worry too much about your pastor becoming puffed up. The Lord doesn't need your help to keep your pastor humble.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28

SOUL WATCHERS

By Elder Tim McCool (April 2024)

I have often heard preachers referred to as "soul savers." But the reality is that Jesus is the soul saver, not preachers. It was His blood shed for His people, not mine. Yet the Bible does refer to preachers as "soul watchers." Heb. 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls..."

This is an interesting term applied by the Holy Spirit to preachers. It interests me even more, because I am one. The Holy Spirit also refers to preachers as ministers, stewards, servants, oxen, soldiers, flock feeders, and overseers, just to name a few. Each one of those terms would be worth looking at – especially in a day and time when I think we have lost sight of what a preacher is really supposed to be.

But when it comes to soul watcher, it literally means "one who is sleepless in watching over the children of God." There is a reference here to the OT "watcher on the wall." Ezekiel had a lot to say about the watchers on the wall. In ch.3, vs.17-21, he tells us what it means to be a watcher on the wall as a minister. If you know anything about history, watchers on the wall would stand guard to see if enemies might be approaching a city. They would also grant permission at times for those to enter and leave the city.

God was angry with the OT version of preachers. In the OT they were called priests or prophets. They were supposed to be taking care of the people's spiritual well-being (not their salvation, for that was in God's

hands). Here God warned that if you see someone going in a direction that is destructive and the preacher does not warn them, and they are destroyed by their action, the God would look to the watcher / preacher. That is a huge responsibility!

Ezekiel goes on to condemn the watchers in ch.34. Here he refers to them also as shepherds. He said they were not strengthening or helping to heal the sick sheep, not binding up the broken, not bringing again those who were driven away, and not seeking those who had strayed away. They were also being cruel and harsh.

This is a great lesson for what a soul watcher should be. We should be strength and help to heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again those who were cast out by others, and seek those who have strayed. And do this all with an attitude of mercy and love. Personally, I often come to these verses and check myself, to see if I am straying away from this clear model that the Lord laid out for soul watchers.

Sadly, it seems that men in the ministry today are doing more "brand building" than soul watching. Brand builders are making names for themselves, not for Jesus. Soul watchers are fine with knowing their name will be forgotten someday. May the Lord bless the ministry to watch for the souls of God's people. I am thankful to know Christ is the soul saver. But I want to strive to be a good soul watcher.

THE PREACHER'S JOB DESCRIPTION

By Elder Michael Gowens (2014)

A preacher may learn much about the nature of the work to which the Lord has called him simply by studying the three main Greek words translated by the English verbs "to preach" and "to teach" in the New Testament.

(1) Kerugma (or kerusso, from the noun kerux) means "to publicly proclaim, publish, or herald the good news" and speaks of the need to maintain emphasis on the central fact of the cross of Christ, the Savior of sinners, in pulpit ministry. (see 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Tim. 4:2).

(2) Didache (from the noun didasko from which we derive the English word "didactic") means "to teach, tutor or instruct" (Mt. 7:28-29; Titus 1:9; Eph. 4:11) and speaks of the importance of explaining the meaning of Scripture in an academic and cognitive format.

(3) Dialelogomai (from which we derive our English word "dialogue") means "to speak back and forth, or alternately; to reason with or discuss." This is the word translated "preached" in Acts 20:7 and Acts 20:9 when Paul "preached to" [dialogued with] the Ephesians until midnight and Eutychus went to sleep and fell out of the window. It speaks of the importance of fielding the legitimate questions God's people may have about the

Lord and his truth and giving Biblical answers to those questions. I suspect that this format was quite common in the primitive church when so many of the believers met in house-churches.

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE ELECTION?

Elder Tim McCool

By the time you read this the 2024 election is over. It's history. Whether it turned out like you want probably depends in part on your worldview. As I have said before, it is a trap to fall into thinking one man or one woman is the solution to our nation's problems. Our nation's government was not designed to be ruled or all problems solved by a single president or political party.

I am sure we all have election on our minds. But I want to bring a different election to our thoughts. Most of the time if you ask someone "Did you hear about the election?", they will automatically think of a Tuesday in November. However, I want to bring to our attention a much more important election. This is an election that causes all other elections to fade into insignificance. And it is an election that, in the days our country was founded, 3 out of 4 church goers could converse about what it meant. Sadly, today there may be some reading this who have never heard of the most important election of all time. If this is your first exposure to that election, praise God for the opportunity to share it with you!

The most widely read Apostle said in I Thes.4:1 "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." Do we know of our election of God? The apostle Peter in greeting God's children in I Pet.1:2, described them as "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..."

These are just a couple places this election is referred to in the Bible. To elect means to "choose". Paul said in Eph.1:4 that Jesus has "chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..."

So, have we heard of this election? Regardless of how your vote turned out recently, you can rest assured you win this election. We win because Someone Else won it for us. My brother takes office on the Supreme Court in January. I am so proud of him. But I bet if he could have gotten someone else to do the work and drive the miles he drove campaigning across our state, he would have loved it. My brother had to work to win that election. But this election is different. Christ won it for us. Some think it works like this - Jesus voted for me, Satan voted against me, and my vote breaks the tie. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

This election was not a joint consult with the devil or with us. It was solely the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. He set up the election and he set the rules for winning.

If it had been up to us to win it, we would not even be in the race! Isaiah said, "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..." (Isa.64:6). We had no ability to enter or win. Adam's sin assured this fact. But Christ's sacrifice led to a massive landslide victory for us in this election. The sacrifice for our sins on the cross was the winning vote.

Did you hear about the election? It once was a common and accepted truth discussed among believers. Maybe it will be again if we embrace God's teaching. My Dad raised us boys to be friendly. And I try to be. I am often asked if I am running for office like my brother. Sometimes I respond by saying that I am not running and never plan on it. I have only been in one election, it was before the foundation of the world, and it took Someone Else to win it for me! I praise God for winning the election for me. Did you hear about that election?

DISAGREEING IN GOOD CONSCIENCE WITH A SPIRIT OF LOVING REGARD

By Elder Michael Ivey

"And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other" Acts 15:39

God's second great commandment to followers of Christ, to those who endeavor to be more like Jesus, is to "Love thy neighbor as thyself." (See Matthew 22:39). Furthermore, with the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus instructs his disciples to -cast a broad net- when considering who is our neighbor. (See Luke 10:30-37) Just so, Jesus implies we are to love those with whom we disagree regarding basic religious beliefs.

We must also love our neighbors who hold political opinions different from ours. Consider, for instance, Jesus calling as Apostles Matthew, a Jew who was a Roman tax collector and Simon the Zealot, who was a member of a political party which sought insurrection against the Roman occupiers. The two could not have been more opposite in their opinions regarding Roman occupation. Yet, the two found common purpose and common ethical ground in the Savior. Irrespective of their differing political opinions both discovered how to serve and please God by placing their greatest loyalty in Jesus and their highest priority in doing his will.

Even more, the narrative of a disagreement between Barnabas and Paul recorded in Acts 15:36-41 teaches us how faithful brethren can disagree, follow different courses, and yet continue to love one another and serve God. The account cites a basic disagreement between two sound and faithful servants of God pertaining to a third brother. Barnabas wished John Mark to accompany he and Paul "to visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the

Lord.” But Paul believed John Mark was unreliable because he had previously departed from them at Perga to return to Jerusalem (see Acts 13:13); and so, he opposed Barnabas' suggestion. Scripture indicates they were not able to resolve their dispute; and “departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.”

Yet, God blessed the labors of all three going forward. God immediately blessed Paul to meet and begin to mentor Timothy. (See Acts 16:1-5) He blessed Barnabas' labor to encourage and help strengthen John Mark. And God used Mark to write the Gospel According to Mark.

Furthermore, scripture indicates all three continued to lovingly regard one another. Paul later sent for Mark to labor with him. “Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:11) And it can be inferred by Paul's mention of Barnabas in 1 Corinthians 9:6 that the two labored together going forward. Thus, disagreement did not keep them apart. Rather, they found they were bound together by a common identity in Christ and common duty to love and serve God and to love one another.

The key to brethren loving one another in disagreement is to always endeavor to speak and act in good conscience toward God; to always seek to be on God's side rather than trying to convince self and others that God is on my side. You see, God doesn't take sides. He is the Truth and is morally impeccable. Therefore, aligning oneself to His side is always the morally correct place to be!

Amazingly, it is possible for brethren who disagree over some issue to each be on God's side at the same time! That was the case with Paul and Barnabas who disagreed over John Mark. You see, God's side led Barnabas in good conscience to disagree with Paul over John Mark because he felt a burdened to encourage and help strengthen the brother who later wrote of the Gospel According to Mark. Yet Paul was also on God's side. Like Barnabas, Paul acted in good conscience toward God. Thus, he left John Mark with Barnabas and under the leadership of the Spirit he met and began to mentor Timothy.

BUT WHILE MEN SLEPT

Elder Rusty Wise

“But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.”-Matthew 13:25 KJV

The sleep under consideration is not that of a laborer that has finished the work of the day and is now in need of a calm and sweet repose, but rather one that is slothful in his duties and responsibilities, a careless

steward of the blessings of God, of which are his church and his word.

The wise man Solomon, writing to his son, urged him, admonished him to not throw away such wonderful blessings as the Lord has provided. Not to squander them as he had. Not to be slothful in the affairs of life, but to be vigilant and prepared for a life of challenges. “Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.”- Proverbs 4:10 KJV

Solomon also penned a divinely inspired warning about the reward of laziness: “How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.” - Proverbs 6:9-11 KJV

What is it that we miss when we become slothful? What are we willing to exchange for such behavior? It might be a precious moment that we could have shared with our Saviour (Peter, James and John). Perhaps we lost a great blessing while we slumbered with temptation (Samson). Maybe even our carelessness deprived one of his saints of wondrous joy (David and Uriah).

Whatever the case, may we ever be striving to be faithful and dedicated servants of God, sacrificing the pleasures and desires of the flesh, seeing to the needs of others, trusting in God, holding the mysteries of the kingdom, and contending for the faith. All of this and much more that we may be judged good and faithful servants of the most high God.

If we stand in need of a boost, may we taste of him that is sweeter than honey. May we drink and be refreshed from the fountain that never runs dry.

KNOWLEDGE INCREASETH SORROW

Elder Joe Nettles

Ecclesiastes 1:17-18: “[17] And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. [18] For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.”

Even the wisest mortal man among mankind realized that the more you know about this sin-cursed world, the more grief you'll experience. This isn't to say that we should embrace ignorance. We are encouraged to learn in the Bible. However, in learning we must also guard our hearts from the despair that comes from inundating yourself with world events over which you hold no sway. We aren't meant to portend ourselves omniscient. We are meant to do right, pray, and trust the One whose essence is omniscience and omnipotence. Embrace your peace in Jesus Christ today, children.

THE FATHER

By Elder Rickey Taylor

1 John 5:7: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

This scripture tells us that there are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We would like for you to consider in this article – The Father. Since the Father revealed himself through the face of his Son, Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6), considerably more space is given to the Son for us to learn about him. The Father is no less important than the Son or the Spirit.

Father comes from the Greek word "pater" which means the head of the family. So God the Father is the head of our family, thus he is called the Father. In scripture, we see that the Father is the judge in many things in the scripture. I feel that because of that we sometimes only have a perception of him being a legalistic, uncaring deity. That is far from the actual truth about the Father.

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.” (2 Corinthians 1:3) This scripture expresses the Father as merciful and a comfort to us all. We clearly can see the Son was merciful, caring, and a comfort to us. The same qualities exist in the Father just as equally as they do the Son.

In fact, Jesus tells Philip that if you have seen the Son, then you have seen the Father. **“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:9)** When Jesus told his disciples that he would soon depart from them and go back to his Father, this made them sad about his departure. They felt that this would leave them all alone and without anything to take comfort in. Now Christ said that he would pray that another comforter would be sent to them, which was the Holy Spirit. But he also says that they could also ask the Father for what they needed and he would give it to them. For the disciples to ask someone beside Christ seemed like a difficult thing to do. They didn't know the Father like they did the incarnate Son, or so they thought.

Then, Christ tells them this. **“At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.” (John 16:26-27)** Let's start at the beginning of these verses.

At that day. Which would be the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit would come down upon them as a mighty rushing wind and fill them with greater knowledge about Christ, the Father, and the gospel church. **Ye shall ask in my name.** They would ask the

Father, in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. **Because you have loved me.** Not that God started loving them just because they started to love his Son. For he loved them before the foundation of the world. **That I come out from God.** Not that Christ came out of the body of his Father, as a natural man is born of the seed of his Father. But that Christ was sent of his Father to redeem his children for he existed before he became flesh and blood.

For God loveth you. Think about this. God the Father loves you. Who was it that entered into a covenant with the Son to assure that his people would live with him in heaven forever? **The Father (Romans 8:28-30).** Who was it that chose his children before the foundation of the world, that they would be holy and without blame in Christ Jesus? **The Father (Ephesians 1:4-5)** Who is it that said to Christ when you have finished the work that you were given, sit down at my right hand to be a Mediator between I and my children so they can commune with me, even though they reside in a sinful body. **The Father (Hebrews 1:14)** Even though we are sinners who wants us to pray to him? **The Father.** The Father loves us just as Christ has loved us. It is an everlasting love that will never end! (R.L. Taylor)

POWER OVER THE GRAVE

Elder Larry Wise (April 2018)

Jesus' body was laid in Joseph's new tomb,
Destined to be here from mother's womb.
In the tomb's confines He wouldn't remain,
As that would thwart the reason He came.

He came from heaven—His people to save,
He had power to conquer—even the grave.
His work was done—He ascended on high,
His people justified—we can surely rely.

All this sprang from God's covenant of grace,
For His people destined to see His face.
We rejoice to be among the teeming number,
Kept safe by the One who doesn't slumber.

Jesus came from the tomb for those He chose,
By His own power—from the grave He arose!
Showed Himself alive—so we could believe,
In His power and grace—should not grieve.

Some sweet day—we'll see Him in glory,
Finally will understand the grand old story
Of His saving grace and wonderful love,
Bestowed on sinful man from heaven above!

God be with you until, by God's grace, we meet
again in the next Glad Tidings or in heaven.