

# Glad Tidings

January

FROM THE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

2026

*“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*

*“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” -1 Thess. 5:23*

My mind has been repeatedly drawn to the doctrine of the preservation of the saints in grace lately, for a variety of reasons. Preservation is the “P” of the “TULIP” acronym used to describe the concepts of the doctrines of grace, and it is not only a precious doctrine but also a critical one to understand. It means a person can never fall from the grace found in the Lord Jesus Christ, or, to put it another way, can never lose his or her salvation.

Paul here is delivering a doxology praising God for the fact that He will ensure no heir of promise, spirit and soul and ultimately resurrected body, will fail to end up dwelling in heaven with him for eternity. They will be “preserved blameless,” without their sin laid to their charge, through the atoning work of Christ. As he goes on to say in the following verse, “Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.” (1 Thess. 5:24).

Jesus himself spoke on preservation or eternal security in unmistakable terms: “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day.” (John 6:38-39). Jude wrote to those who “are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called,” (Jude 1), and Peter tells us we have “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.” (1 Pet. 1:4).

Preservation does not include the Lord ensuring that his children maintain any specific degree of externally observable good works until the end of their earthly life, that they will always repent of straying from paths of righteousness, or that they will “progressively sanctify” themselves in their walk with Christ. Such ideas, where absence of such is taught to be evidence of not being a child of God, are false doctrine and can lead to much doubt and despair, which is the opposite of the comfort that the gospel of grace should provide the Lord’s sheep.

The Spirit will, scripture teaches us, always work within to lead us unto godliness, because after the new birth we are a “new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17) and have been “delivered from the power of darkness” (Col. 1:13), but discipleship is not encompassed in God’s plan of eternal salvation. This should be clear because of the fact not all God’s children will even be born into

this world, have the mental capacity to follow him, or have lived in an era and place to even understand the truth of Christ.

If someone is repeatedly exposed to the above teachings, it is likely that when they inevitably go through failing seasons of life and mourn over their sins and shortcomings, feelings such as “am I really one of His elect? I haven’t continued to grow in grace and knowledge like I should and despite efforts to repent I continue to easily stray” can easily develop. Rest assured someone who isn’t a child of God will not experience such conviction, as the “natural mind receiveth not the things of the spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:14). Furthermore, families can lose the peace which should be found in the doctrines of sovereign grace when a loved one passes in the midst of living in disobedience and poor choices.

“Once saved, always saved” is a popular refrain in Christendom. It expresses a general truth we should all agree with, but remember most are speaking of this in the context of believing that a personal decision is what makes eternal life and the forgiveness of sins become a reality in the life of a sinner. The bible teaches us: “By one offering, he hath perfected forever them that were sanctified” (Heb.10:14). That is pretty definitive isn’t it? He did so for those who were “sanctified,” set apart by the sovereign choice of God and given to Christ.

It is important to think about preservation of the saints/eternal security in terms of the big picture of covenant redemption. As the old hymn says, “long ere the sun began his days, or moon shot forth her silver rays, salvation’s scheme was fixed, ‘twas done, in cov-nant by the Three in One.” This doctrine, like so many, is rooted in the “everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20), because God would not be who He declares Himself to be in the bible if He could fail to accomplish what He promised to do

The Lord’s children are preserved by the very thing that started it all- the glorious love of God bestowed upon us before the world began. As Jehoida Brewer wrote, “Hail sovereign love that first began the scheme to rescue fallen man.”

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”(Rom. 8:29); “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...(1 Pet. 1:2)

With qualifications, I like to say that rather than “once saved, always saved” it would be more accurate to say “once loved, always saved.” Yes, salvation has several

different elements and was legally secured on the cross by the shedding of Jesus' blood, but because it was according to the promise and power of an all-powerful God, it was as good as done when God decided to cast His love upon a vast host of mankind and purpose to save them. Remember this was done by the Lord, who said of himself, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all of my pleasure." (Isa. 46:10) Though Christ was still centuries away, David famously declared, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12), and the Old Testament saints entered into heaven on the merit of Jesus' sacrificial death that had not yet occurred.

The most famous passage on this topic is likely Romans 8:38-39: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which in Christ Jesus our Lord." As referenced before, the love of God started and will carry the covenant of grace to its conclusion-the Lord's children with Him in glory. Scripture declares that nothing can separate someone from God's love, yet the majority of believers embrace the idea that multitudes of people who God loves will be separated from Him for eternity at their deaths unless they make a choice to follow Him (which is of course impossible without prior regeneration). This does not harmonize. Jesus declares He gave His life for the sheep, and that they are all given eternal life and will never be plucked from His hand (John 10:11, 27-28). Remember, His death actually "perfected forever." He paid the price, and the wrath of God has already been satisfied for the sins of those whom He loved and died for. That's why God's children are preserved in grace. As Elder Ricky Harcrow has said, "Jesus is going to get what he paid for."

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#### EDITORIAL OFFICE

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Elder Jonathan Wise & Elder David Wise, Co-Editors

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

Whether we see the dawning of a new year or the dawning of a new day, we see the compassions and mercies of the Lord and are reminded of the faithfulness of our God and what He has done for us as undeserving sinners. "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." (Lam. 3:22-23)

Without any intervention by God, we would ultimately be consigned to the fires of hell, but God is rich in mercy and had a great love for His people, dead in sin, and raised them up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 2:4-6) Jeremiah wasn't acquainted with Paul's scripture but yet he was inspired to write of the mercies and faithfulness of God and his hope was renewed.

The year has a beginning and an end; the world had a beginning and it will have an end. The faithfulness of God is involved in both and so is light. The Bible tells us concerning God by the apostle John. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (I John 1:5) God is the One that vanquishes darkness as He did in the very beginning of time as darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Gen. 1:3) God speaks and it is done; He commands and it stands fast.

There can be no darkness in God or He would not be God. In fact the scripture says, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." (I Tim. 6:16) No man can approach this light but only by the giver of light can this approach be made because men loved darkness rather than light.

The Psalmist says, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple."

(Psalm 65:4) There is a cause that allows any man, woman or child to approach unto God and that cause comes from God, in whom is no darkness at all. It is only by this Divine intervention that we ever have a desire to dwell in the courts of the Lord and be satisfied with the goodness of His house. The faithfulness of God performs this great work.

Jeremiah was blessed to be in the light of the Lord and had been formed, sanctified and ordained a prophet from his mother's womb. The only way we can see true light is to dwell in the light of the Lord. David said, "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." (Psalm 36:9)

While dwelling in the darkness of depravity, we cannot behold the light of the gospel; we can behold the light of the day while in this state but we cannot love and honor the creator of that day. We must be delivered out of our darkness of depravity to truly render praise to the Father of lights. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" (I Pet. 2:9) Praise to God who hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.

If we are void of light, we cannot walk in the light. If we haven't any faith, we cannot walk in the light so where does faith come from? Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith, without which it is impossible to please God who dwelleth in the light no man can approach on his own. Now we are in a position to experience what John wrote about: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7) The one thing that breaches fellowship with God is sin; however, if we are walking in the light, there is no sin. It is the same with walking in the Spirit. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16)

Each day brings new mercies, compassions and light and we find these naturally and spiritually they are revealed in the gospel which brings life and immortality to light. (II Tim. 1:10) At the close of the day we can thank the Lord for His mercy and grace; if and when we awake in the morning we can echo the Psalmist, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me." (Psalm 3:5)

The new day is a new opportunity to serve the Lord and not walk in darkness; only one way to do that. "...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12) One day we will all awake with His likeness being preserved, body, soul and spirit. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (I Thess. 5:24) Yes, what a day that will be!

## CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART

By Elder Jerry Wise  
Pontotoc, Mississippi

Sun's coming up, just as it has since God created it with the word of his mouth, as he has spoken all creation into existence and it will remain until the coming of Christ Jesus our Lord.

What a blessing to have been given such great and precious knowledge to Jehovah God of mercy, strength, and power be praised for ever and ever.

I want to arise this morning with full confidence and clarity that my God is in the heavens and doeth whatsoever he will in heaven and earth.

I want to arise to a renewed spirit of grace and glory of the one who took my place on the cross and paid my sin debt that I could not pay.

I want to start today without fail with a humble prayer and the reading his word and hear the promises of my Lord and Savior again and again, that I'm his child and heaven awaits.

I want to hear my Jesus tell over and over again come unto me: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

And Lord, would thou bless me this morning and all days: "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:9-10)

"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee." (Psalm 139:17-18)

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." -2 Corinthians 13:14

From the Master's table!!!  
O Victory in JESUS!!!!!!

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## FAITH

By Elder Rusty Wise  
Tupelo, Mississippi

Faith is that which is given in the "new birth" and that which is exercised through hope, belief, and trust.

Hebrews 11:17-19: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,"

Abraham was a man of like passions just as we are. When he was 75 years of age, he heard the voice of

God. Having received the promises and being given hope, he obeyed God's command.

Paul would testify that hope is not as a wish or a desire, but rather as something that has already happened, but has not yet been made manifest, an earnest expectation. Romans 8:21-25, and that faith is the substance of that hope.

Abraham had been given a great promise, a great hope of an heir for both he and his wife Sarah. And just like we, Abraham's was anxious for the promise to be delivered. And just like we, he had lapses in remembering that promise.

The faith being ever present, yet his belief diminished from time to time. Thus, the trials he experienced were the exercise of that faith, whereby his trust in God became stronger.

Our prayer to God daily should be, Lord I believe, but help thou my unbelief. When the day seems darkest may we plead to the Father, lead thou me.

By faith we are able to do these things, yet it is often after we experience such, that we understand better through faith. Abraham's hope, belief and trust were such that as he departed from his servants to go to the altar of sacrifice, he knew that both he and Isaac would return unto them. May we go with more of the same today.

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**Some say that except one gives consent for Jesus to save him from his sins, he cannot be saved. Is this so?**

By Elder Joe Nettles  
Hamilton, Mississippi

Those who advocate this show a woeful misunderstanding of the Bible's teachings on representation. What does representation have to do with salvation? Simply, the only way one can be saved from his sins is if he was represented by Christ at Calvary. One may here retort, "Jesus represented every human creature on the cross!". Oh, no he did not. Notice the following scriptural proofs of a limited atonement in Christ: 1) In John 10:15-16, Christ states for whom he came to give his life - "...I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring..." Compare this to the picture of his return in Matthew ch. 25 where the sheep are the redeemed, but the goats are the damned. Sheep and goats are two distinctly different creatures. Christ died for the sheep only. 2) Another proof is the continual reference to the Lord's redeemed as the "elect" (Romans 8:33; Matthew 24:31; Luke 18:7; Colossians 3:12; Titus 1:1; I Peter 1:2). The term "elect" means a choosing of one or some while leaving others behind. You can't have a presidential election, for example, if everyone chooses all the candidates for president! 3) In Matthew 9:13,

the Lord taught, "...for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If Christ came to die for all the self-righteous, proud reprobates in this world, then why wouldn't he call on them to repent as he does those who feel their sinfulness? 4) The Bible teaches time and again that the principle for which Christ came and died for his people was love (John 3:16; John 15:13; Romans 8:35-39). We are also taught that the Lord will invariably chasten all those whom he loves (Rev. 3:19; Hebrews 12:6). Now, consider that not all of mankind will be chastened (Hebrews 12:8; Psalm 94:12-13). Consequently, all men are not loved by Jesus and represented by him. Many feel that this truth is not "shiny happy" enough and will teach otherwise. However, the truth is the truth even when not convenient to accept.

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**TROUBLED ON EVERY SIDE**

By Elder Michael Ivey  
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." -2 Corinthians 4:8-11.

This passage of scripture should give believers great comfort as it indicates responding to trials and tribulations as did Christ, we are "delivered unto death for Jesus' sake" so that the life of Jesus is "manifest in our mortal flesh." In other words, when we are confronted with trouble and other type circumstances mentioned we are experiencing an aspect of dying. (We do so because all the struggles of life are results from original sin and the wages of sin is death.) However, when we endure this dying "for Christ's sake" and react to it as He did, we manifest His life in our mortal flesh.

Jesus was troubled on every side, being opposed and rejected by the primary leadership elements of Jewish society including the temple priests, Herodians, Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes as indicated beginning in Matthew 21:23 through Matthew 23:39. He was perplexed, in a strait with no way to escape death and also do the will of the Father, as evidenced by His prayer in Gethsemane "If it be thy will, let this cup pass" and His cry on Calvary, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." Although He "knew no sin" Jesus was persecuted and "endured such contradiction of sinners against himself." Jesus was cast down, being disrespected by ridicule and

scorn, unbelief and rejection, by beating and crucifixion.

Likewise, true believers are "troubled on every side," opposed at every turn from the left or the right. Though they oppose each other, nevertheless, the ungodly on both sides join hands in common opposition to those who through love for God insist their political theories ("fables") and rules ("commandments of men") whether left or right do stand or fall according to examples and principles found in God's word.

We are perplexed by the rhetoric and antics on both sides. The solutions promised by the left and right do not and cannot deliver us in any sustained way. At best, all their promises end at the grave. As such, they do not give us any lasting sense of confidence because they are incapable of declaring our righteousness before God by giving full assurance and strong consolation of our hope in Christ.

Moreover, in the past and up to this day believers are persecuted by those who misrepresent what we believe and uphold. They falsely accuse us and slander us. We have been threatened, physically attacked and even killed in the name of God (by those who blaspheme God's name), in the name of Satan, and in the name of almost every cause in between.

We are cast down when worldly values are imposed on us, seeking to undermine our faith in God and hope of heaven. We are cast down upon as ignorant objects of scorn and ridicule for believing God is the Creator, that marriage is between one man and one woman, that life begins at conception. We are cast down when godly sensibilities which we hold dear are casually dismissed by those who rudely take God's name in vain, who turn LORD's day (Sunday) into game day, who prey upon our children and insist our darlings believe and promote ideas and behaviors that oppose God's word.

However, although in all this we are dying yet by manifesting the life of Christ according to His examples and teachings believers are empowered to endure trouble from every side without becoming trapped by bad choices and demands that we "choose a side." Rather, with the liberty that accompanies Christ-like living believers choose to lineup with Jesus and like Him, use trouble as occasion to faithfully honor God in our attitudes and behaviors in keeping with His word and according to the power of His might.

When we are perplexed by challenges in which neither side proposes a godly way forward, we need not despair. Jesus, who is the way, always knows the right way and by His Spirit, He leads the way.

Moreover, when we are persecuted by the left or the right with threats of rejection, isolation, irrelevance and worse, our hope in Christ provides consolation by giving us full assurance of His promise: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

And finally, by manifesting lives like Christ, though cast down by worldly powers and vain philosophies,

we are not destroyed. Our lives are not ruined by their ideas or tactics (whether or not their tactics work according to their design) because by manifesting the life of Christ we place our confidence not in self or either side, but in God. And because as faithful believers our confidence is in God, it is not overthrown. Moreover, we confidently embrace optimistic hope in joyous expectation of Jesus' return. Nor is our world shattered by these "dying" trials because by manifesting the life of Christ believers have access to the true, lively world view which includes eternity, and which is larger and more empowering than the small, perverted, ever-failing world views concocted by political ideology. Thus, faith is not overthrown. Even more, it grows when we manifest the life of Christ is by diligently adding to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity and then we glory in tribulations because the love of God is shed aboard in our hearts.

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### **A TIME TO REEVALUATE**

Elder Matt Jordan  
Arab, Alabama

What God has called us to be - the Church - has never changed. Events throughout history have caused the Church to reevaluate its understanding of what that means... to BE the Church. Perhaps this is where we are today. A time to reevaluate. The early church was characterized by corporate worship, corporate fellowship, collective prayer, charity among themselves, and ministering to those around them.

Corporate worship is of the highest order and priority for the Church. Our manner of worship is well defined in Scripture. It isn't based on needs but is an established pattern found in the New Testament. Corporate fellowship is based on common beliefs and is closely tied to worship. But the other Church activities - prayer, charity, ministry - are very much needs-based. They take on many faces and can look quite different depending on the need. That is, the needs of those within and of those without drive the manner of these activities.

For the Church to be fully engaged in those needs-based activities, the hearts and minds of the people must be aligned with the mind of Christ as humble, sacrificial servants. This is often where reevaluation should begin

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"Excuse making is an unprofitable business. It began in the Garden of Eden. The serpent is the president and chief director of the company. We should not serve him. It is better to confess our faults than to make excuses for them." -Elder R.H. Pittman, 1940

**A PRAYER WARRIOR IN THE HOSPITAL**

By Sister Anna Machiavello  
Tyler, Texas

(David Wise Note: Ava Machiavello – my niece, and Sister Anna’s daughter – was born in July 2025 with hypoplastic heart disease (the left side of her heart doesn’t work). She had to have major heart surgery about one week after her birth and thankfully has done very well from the first surgery. She is scheduled to have a second major heart surgery on December 15 (this is being written in early December 2025 before the surgery). We ask for your prayers for Ava and the family as she continues to navigate life with her heart condition, and we are so thankful for answered prayers thus far such as this that was recounted by her mother.)

We were on week three of Ava being in the ICU and we were feeling worn down, tired, worried, and overwhelmed. I was sitting alone in her hospital room while she slept, and I was feeling the situation particularly strongly that morning. There was a knock on the door, and the housekeeper came in to take out the trash and mop the floors. We had grown so accustomed to the lack of privacy: the constant stream of nurses, doctors, RT’s, housekeepers, etc that filtered in and out all day and night. I had stopped paying much attention to them.

I heard the housekeeper ask me if she could look at my baby. She was an old woman, she didn’t speak very good English, and she was so soft spoken that I’m surprised I even heard her. She went to peek into the crib at Ava and I heard her muttering something under her breath. “What did you say?” I asked her. “I say, Jesus heal the baby. I pray for baby,” she responded. “I work here 20 years. I clean all the rooms, everyday. I pray for all children when I clean rooms. I ask God to heal.” She looked me in the eyes and smiled. “God is good.” She took out our trash and mopped our floors and then she left. She went on to the next room on the ICU floor, where she was going to pray over the child in there. And then to the next, and the next, and the next.

How many rooms had she cleaned everyday for 20 years? How many children had she said an earnest prayer for, all day, everyday, for 20 years? This small, insignificant woman, going about her job in the background, is a mighty prayer warrior, daily lifting up all of the sick children she sees with assurance and faith that God is good.

I cried when she left. I thanked God for people like her. I felt her prayers on Ava that morning. I only saw her for about two minutes, we only exchanged a few sentences, but I will never forget that prayer warrior in the hospital.

**The Psalms 1 Man**

By Elder Clayton Nowell  
Headland, Alabama

In Psalms 1, we have instructions that if heeded, will make for a blessed, consistently fruitful, steadfast, and spiritually prosperous life. That’s not to say that it will be a life free from trouble and sorrows, for Jesus said “In the world ye shall have tribulation:” (see John 16:33) But, it will be a life of fellowship with God (John 14:23), who hears the cries of His people (Psalms 34:15), who supplies our every need (Philippians 4:19), who sent His Son to save us from our sins (1st Timothy 1:15), and who has promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5) Always, and in all ways, we have help and supply for every day we live. Those are the sure promises from God who is eternal, who cannot lie, who is all powerful, who knows everything, and who loves His people better than we will ever understand this side of glory.

To illustrate such a blessed condition, the Spirit led David to describe a tree planted by the rivers of water. There is no lack of water so it can grow, be fruitful, and be kept refreshed in the blistering heat that will surely come at times in its life. To know what God has done for us through His Son, is a well-spring of refreshing. Daily, He supplies us with His grace. While many blessings are conditional upon the kind of walk we pursue in this life, and God does discipline as needed, He is also so very merciful and longsuffering with us. Remember, even when Israel was stubborn and rebellious in the wilderness, and God sent judgments upon them, yet the manna fell right on schedule. Think about that. Aren’t you glad that God grants repentance? I am.

So what are some of the desires, habits, and precautions one needs to practice to enjoy such a life? He starts by telling us some things NOT to do. Evil communications DO corrupt good manners. (1st Corinthians 15:33) You can’t listen to ungodly counsel, hang out with sinners, or stand with those who scorn the right ways of God and His authority to tell us how to live, and have fellowship with God. So, your small daily choices and your choice of friends and associates have much to do with the health of your spirituality.

But what is needful, is “finding delight” in the law of the Lord and meditating upon it day and night. This is huge! Along with telling us what not to do, here is one thing that is absolutely essential to walking in fellowship with God. Matthew 5:6 promises that they that hunger and thirst after righteousness SHALL be filled. Hebrews 11:6 promises that God rewards them that diligently seek Him. So, for what are you hungering? What are you diligently seeking? Is it the Lord and His righteousness? If you want to enjoy the blessedness of the Psalms 1 man described in Psalms 1, we must be feeding on His word, thinking about it

often, and putting its teachings into our choices and footsteps daily.

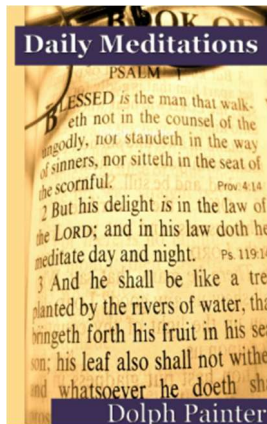
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### CHURCH NEWS

There are no church meetings in January and February in North Mississippi, but there will be some meetings in March that will be in future editions once those details are finalized.

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### FEATURED BOOK



#### Daily Meditations, By Dolph Painter

Daily Meditations has 365 devotions for each day that discuss family, historical events, current events, God's saving grace, daily living, as well as many other subjects.

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### OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES

This year after eating a great Thanksgiving meal, when asked if anyone had something they would like to share, my nephew, Charlie, said, "That was a great meal, but everyone never forget this one fact: God with you always." Amen young Brother Charlie!

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### ANNUAL BIBLE READING PLAN AND BIBLE TIMELINE

As we begin to make New Year's Resolutions for the upcoming year in 2026, arguably no resolution is more important than a renewed commitment to the daily reading and study of God's word. One annual bible reading plan you might consider using is this 5 day a week, 3 section plan designed to help you read the bible in one year.

Also, to aid you in reading God's word, you might consider downloading the Bible Timeline of the Old and New Testament to place each passage of scripture in the appropriate historical context.

A PDF version for your download of the Annual Bible Reading Plan and the Bible Timeline of the Old and New Testament can be found at this link:

<https://clearspringspb.com/bible-reading/>

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#### How Belief Is Counted for Righteousness: An Important Bible Doctrine

By Elder Chase Harrison (2012)  
Memphis, Tennessee

***"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." - Romans 4:3***

So many today in reformed theology and mainstream Christianity mix and muddle the very important distinctions between the different aspects of Biblical justification. When the words "justified" or "justification" are encountered in the Scriptures, they are oftentimes erroneously interpreted on a level plain with no distinctions made whatsoever. They tend to interpret every occurrence of justification as having eternal weight and consequence, assuming that every instance of its usage has reference to our eternal standing before God the Righteous Judge in the eternal court of Heaven. Let me briefly demonstrate the logical end to this thinking and show the dangerous and heretical conclusion that one MUST inevitably arrive at if they attempt to equivocate every aspect of justification that the Scriptures teach.

There are four types or aspects of justification mentioned in the Bible:

- **justified by grace** (Romans 3:24; Titus 3:7)

- **justified by blood** (Romans 5:9)

- **justified by faith** (Romans chapters 3 & 4; Galatians chapters 2 & 3)

- **justified by works** (James chapter 2)

- (*NOTE: justified by the law is talked about and could be added to this list, but it is worthy to note that almost every time justification by the law is mentioned it is only used as a point of contrast to being justified by grace and/or faith; Thus, I am leaving it out of this particular study.*)

If one attempts to equivocate all of these, then they will inevitably arrive at the following erroneous conclusion if they are honest and consistent with their interpretation of the Scriptures: *For one to be justified by grace, then they must also be justified by blood. And if one is justified by blood, then they must also be justified by faith. And if one is justified by faith, then they must also be justified by works. Else, the full spectrum of eternal justification would not be scripturally complete.*

Do you see what this interpretative method of equivocating all aspects of justification has done?!? Consequently, it has equivocated grace and works! Furthermore, it establishes that eternal salvation, and eternal justification before God, is by works! And we know that there is a plethora of Scriptures to refute the idea of eternal salvation by works:

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

***"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES: it is the gift of God: NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast." - Ephesians 2:8-9***

***"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, NOT OF WORKS, but of him that calleth;)" - Romans 9:11***

***"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" - 2 Timothy 1:9***

***"NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" - Titus 3:5***

Clearly, we see eternal salvation and eternal justification before God is not by OUR works nor OUR righteousness. Yet, the Bible teaches that we are justified by works. We must rightly divide this multifaceted subject of justification and find the sound distinctions that make our Biblical interpretation as consistent and harmonious as possible with the whole of Scripture.

Now that we have shown the error of the interpretative method of equivocating all the aspects of justification in the Bible and understand that there needs to be some distinction between them, let's reintroduce our original study verse and address its often misunderstood meaning:

***"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." - Romans 4:3***

Mainstream doctrines, such as Arminianism, use this verse of Scripture (among others) as their proof-text to teach that, like Abraham, you must believe in

God in order to become righteous before God and to be declared righteous before God. Let's address this verse across the entirety of the New Testament Scriptures and see what it really means.

There is a BIG difference between the actual imparting of righteousness by God in regeneration and the "counting" of righteousness when we believe. As always, let's consider what all the Scriptures say on the subject and let Scripture help to interpret Scripture:

***"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was COUNTED unto him for righteousness." - Romans 4:3***

***"...for we say that faith was RECKONED to Abraham for righteousness." - Romans 4:9***

***"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was ACCOUNTED to him for righteousness." - Galatians 3:6***

***"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was IMPUTED unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." - James 2:23***

Ok, we have four Scriptures that teach the same or similar principle. We must try to rightly divide them so they all harmonize, and we should piece them all together so that we come to a solid and consistent Biblical conclusion regarding the precise meaning of this important doctrinal principle.

The four key words used in the four Scriptures above are: COUNTED, RECKONED, ACCOUNTED, and IMPUTED

All of these have very similar and synonymous meaning. In fact, although they are four different English words, in the KJT all four of these words come from the exact same Greek word: G3049 - logizomai. We get several of our English words from it such as log, logic, logistics, and logarithm.

The basic definition of this Greek word is:

- to take into account; to make an account of
- to consider, take into account, weigh
- to reckon inward, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate

- by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer

But, one doesn't have to know a lot about Greek or speak Greek to understand what this word means. Just look at the first three letters of the word: L-O-G.

What is a log? It is best compared to an inventory sheet or a balance sheet. Consider your bank checking account and your check book. The checking account is where your money is actually kept and stored. The log in your check book is where you record your transactions and try to keep your account balanced for your own records and information. Now, let me ask a question. If I wrote a \$1,000,000 deposit into the log of my check book, would that put any money into the actual account? Absolutely not! I WISH it worked like that! If kept up properly, the log just reflects what is in the account at all times, BUT writing something in the log does NOT create any money in

the account. Similarly, when Abraham believed God, it did not create righteousness in him nor make him righteous, but it showed that he was already righteous and righteousness was LOGGED to his account.

Another example. The definition of this word could also be described as: "to take an inventory". Since I currently work in the grocery business, I will use examples and analogies that I am familiar with. Consider the inventory of a grocery store. At the end of each fiscal quarter when we take the closing inventories of our stores, we go in and COUNT each item and LOG the results for later calculations and reports. Now, when we counted the inventory, did that create or put actual inventory in the store? Absolutely not! Obviously, the inventory is already there, and we just count it and log it so that we have a more exact and precise knowledge of our inventory. Taking inventory does not create any inventory or cause the inventory to come into existence! Similarly, when Abraham believed God, it did NOT create righteousness in him nor make him righteous. But by believing, it was inventoried to him that he was already righteous and counted to him as such.

Spiritual belief, i.e. exercising faith in the Lord, does not make us righteous or cause us to be righteous. It shows that we are already righteous, and it is inventoried to us and logged to our account as such when we exercise and exhibit the faith and righteousness that God has already worked in us via the new birth. As it was true with Abraham, so it is true with us today. The Apostle Paul in Romans chapter four does a great job of tying this example of Abraham to us today and believers throughout all time:

***"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;" - Rom 4:20-24***

Now THAT is justification by faith! The effect of this "justification by faith" that Abraham experienced was a justified mind and conscience that was strong in the Lord and fully persuaded of His promises and abilities! As the above Romans passage demonstrates, likewise, so it is with us today. This same applied concept and principle of justification by faith, Abraham being the chief example, is still relevant to us today (and to all New Testament gospel believers throughout the rest of time) in that righteousness is imputed to us when we believe in the Resurrected Savior and God's power to raise the dead. This is what it means to believe in God and it to be counted to us for righteousness.

Therefore, it is in this way that Abraham is said to be the "father" of all them that believe:

***"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also" - Romans 4:11***

And it is in this way that we are said to be the "children" of Abraham:

***"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham....So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." - Galatians 3:6-9***

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**Excerpt from the Experience of Grace of Elder  
D.L. Hitchcock (1813-1903)  
(The Gospel Messenger, 1884)**

I passed a period of about four years of trouble and anguish of soul. Around the 1st of June 1834, my troubles were so great I could not hide them. One evening I was standing looking at the setting sun, it occurred to me look well at it; it is the last sight of it, when it sets it seals your condemnation. When it went out of sight I had to say, "farewell sun, and all earthly things; this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

It was a night of darkness, mourning and grief to my poor burdened and condemned soul. But God through great mercy spared my life through the night; and long before day I was up looking for the sun with greater anxiety than ever before. I walked the yard round and round, trying to praise God for sparing my life to see another day. I was for a few moments with my back toward the East, and turning, there was the sun with all its brightness and glory! In a moment it was revealed to my poor soul, this is Christ, the Son of God, rising for your justification! He was delivered for your offences and raised again for your justification! And there is the righteousness you have been trying to work out. I cried out, "Glory to God in the highest." Peace was in my soul! I felt that my sins were all forgiven and they would never be a burden to my soul more.

But another burden soon got on my mind and whispered, "you ought to go to the church and be baptized." I was afraid to go, but could not stay away satisfied; so I went to the church at Harmony, Putnam County, Ga., and was received into the fellowship of the church August 1834, and baptized by Richard Pace.

It was not my privilege to live in this happy frame of mind long at a time. I soon found that there was a new and dangerous element making its way into the church. Fuller's followers began to come in with their new inventions, preaching free will, and a general

atonement, etc. Some of the members were already soft enough to receive them, and their new doctrine. Those who could not endorse their doctrine, but contended against it. They were admonished not to oppose it, lest they be found fighting against God. Though I was young and ignorant, having never up to this time read a chapter in the Bible, nor heard much preaching, my own experience taught me that salvation was of the Lord and by grace alone. I could not endorse those new ideas. In 1837 we withdrew from them and were constituted into a church called Mt. Zion.

I was married December 1834, to Miss Sarah Moore. The first impressions that it was my duty to preach for the comfort and edification of God's people, was made the same morning that I obtained a hope in Christ. It seemed to grow stronger and stronger until it became a constant burden to my mind. On one occasion the burden was so heavy that I stopped my horse, loosed him from the plow, went over into a patch of woods and poured out my soul in prayer to God asking him to remove this burden from me; and if it was His will that I should preach, to enable me to do so with as much ability as others.

All this time I was trying to learn how to read the Bible: I would work all day and study half the night. I had a great anxiety to read and understand the Bible. I learned to read a little by spelling the words as I went. When I got so I could read a little better, I took it for my task to read the Bible through in one year. I did so; and then read it through the next year and so continued till I had read it through four times in four consecutive years. For with one breath I would ask God to enable me to preach; with the next I would declare I would not do it. No doubt many will be astonished at my inconsistencies, as well as myself; but so it was. The brethren and some of the sisters would often say to me, "you will have to preach, and you had as well go at it." I would answer, "no, I cannot."

I concluded that I could live no longer under such heavy distress, so I left the country to go where I was not known. I paid my fare and went to Walton County, put me up a shop and went to work, thinking all was well. But my trouble soon returned two-fold worse than before, so much so I really felt like I was in the very belly of hell. But in my agony of soul I promised the Lord if He would let me live and go back to Putnam County, I would try to preach.

The Lord and the people in Putnam were already making arrangements to that end entirely out of my sight. I soon received a letter from my old friends in Putnam informing me what they had done, and what they would do, if I would return to Putnam; one would do one thing, and another thing; one would come with his wagon and team and move me back without charge. I read the letter and wept freely for joy, and felt to say, "the Lord is good."

So I arrived back in my same old neighborhood and church; but still with an aching heart. The brethren from time to time would offer me a chance to preach, but I really felt no nearer ready than before I left. The brethren being so well acquainted with my rebellious nature and timidity, concluded to try another plan; so in conference the brother Deacon arose and said, "Brother Moderator, I move that we give Bro. Hitchcock license to preach". In a moment nearly every other brother said, "I second the move." Before the Moderator could speak, I was on my feet all in a tremble, and said, "good Lord, Bro. Winn! Who ever heard such a move? What, license a man to preach that you never heard try?" The Moderator said, "sit down, Bro. Hitchcock, you are out of order." And they would take the vote despite all I could say; and it was unanimous. The same brother arose and said, "now Brother Moderator, I propose to appoint the 3rd Sunday in this month for Bro. Hitchcock to preach" which was the 3rd Sunday in September 1846.

I only had two weeks allowed me before I had to preach, or fail. I spent almost the whole time in prayer that God would prepare me for the work. One night while I was bowed and pleading my imperfections before God, something seemed to whisper within, saying, "my grace is sufficient for you." The time came and several brothers from Tirzah Church came a distance of eight or ten miles, and were at my house by 8 or 9 o'clock. They said that they feared that I would run away; and they came to carry me to the place of meeting. They then began persuading my wife to go. She told them that she would not go for one thousand dollars; but still they got her to go.

Being late in arriving, we found the whole grove crowded with horses and vehicles, and enough people to fill the house quite full. I felt that I could not face them and try to speak; but they commenced singing praises to God. I arose from my seat and started towards the table, the Deacon jumped up and opened the pulpit door and said, "go up there, that is the place for preachers." I said, "I know that, but not for me."

So I took the floor and lined out a hymn, and the brethren and congregation sung. I tried to pray, and when I closed, I arose from my knees and set down, saying in my mind, "what shall I do?" The Deacon spoke and said, "get up and go to preaching." I arose and commenced talking. I would not quote a text; but thought I would work on in a way that they would not know that I had any text. But the one I thought I would use was, "loose him, and let him go." I spoke about forty-five minutes; I could see no one laughing at me, but all looked serious. When I sat down, old Bro. Akin, from Crooked Creek Church, arose and began to speak, though so full he would pause awhile from emotion, and then go on again. I soon found that he knew what my text was and would apply it to me, and said, "brethren you have done right - loose him and let him go -the Lord has a use for him."

## THE VOICE OF THE LORD

By Elder Rickey Taylor  
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Isaiah 55:10-11: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

A voice is distinctive to a person. We know the voice of our spouse, the voice of our minister, even the voice of a child. A Mother knows her child's voice better than anyone. When I left home to be on my own, I would call my mother and when she would answer I would always feel that I should inform her who it was that is calling. She would always say, "Yes I know!" How did she know it was me? Probably from the many long nights I kept her awake from crying when I was a child who had acquired the measles, chicken pox etc....

The voice of the Lord is distinctive to him. His voice is the only one that speaks with an unlimited power. When he speaks his desire, that is what will come to pass.

Here in Genesis we read that God simply spoke the word and it was at his beckoning voice that the earth came into existence. Gen. 1:3, 9, 11 "And God said, Let there be light: and **there was light**. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: **and it was so**. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: **and it was so**."

The Lord Jesus Christ came in flesh and blood being God in the flesh spoke his desire and it was so.

Mark 5:35, 41-42 "While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, **I say** unto thee, arise. And **straightway the damsel arose**, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment."

In Mark we read of the voice of the Lord speaking to the wind and sea. Mark 4:37-39 "And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and **said unto the sea**, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

In John we read of what Jesus said at the tomb of Lazarus. John 11:43-44 "And when he thus had

spoken, he cried with a loud **voice**, Lazarus, come forth. **And he that was dead came forth**, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

When Christ went back to heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father, His voice has not ceased to speak wonders into existence through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit today speaks the spiritual heart into existence in a still small voice that only his children can hear, when the heart is regenerated.

John 5:25 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the **voice** of the Son of God: and they that hear **shall live**."

The heart is dead in trespasses and sins. It is totally incapable of doing any good, nor care about serving God until the voice of the Lord turns that stony heart into a fleshly heart, simply by his voice.

And there is coming a time when the Lord shall speak and the dead shall come forth upon hearing his voice.

John 5:28-29 "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves **shall hear his voice**, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

This day has not yet come for us but oh what a day that will be when it does happen.

Let us wait and look for this day that will be joy for all of the children of God. (January 2017)

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"Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so."

Here is the single most profound mystery in the universe, and the crown jewel of all theological truth! No thought gives greater comfort in trial; no truth provides greater incentive to keep going; no fact provides a more solid basis for identity than this. That Jesus could love an unworthy sinner like me, or you, is truly the most wonderful thing in the world. (Elder Michael Gowens)

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1 John 4:10-14 "10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12) No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.."

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