

# Glad Tidings

## FROM THE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

### MAY & JUNE 2026

*Philippians 4:13*

*Strength For Today And Bright Hope For Tomorrow*

*I Corinthians 15:19*

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” —Matthew 6:21

In this verse from our Lord Jesus’ sermon on the mount, He gives us this warning, in the context of the passage, against worldly mindedness and emphasizes the importance of kingdom-focused living.

The danger is that worldliness will ensnare and lead away the heart of a child of God, while in contrast a life that puts its focus on serving the Lord will strengthen it and put it in the right position before God. The heart is extremely important in Scripture, because men can only observe our words and actions externally, but the Lord is concerned with the state of our heart and only He can look into those depths and see what resides there. Thanks be to God that due to grace the hearts of God’s elect are changed at a time of the Lord’s choosing. Man in his natural state does not possess a heart with the ability to seek after God. However, in the book of Ezekiel we read: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” (Ezek. 36:26)

In this description of what occurs when someone is born again, God changes our hardened, stony heart that cannot feel the burden of our sinful condition to a heart that is tender, or a “heart of flesh.” This is completely according to the work of God, not our will. It is our will, completely contrary to the law of God, that we must be saved from; “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power...” (Ps. 110:3)

People often advise to “follow your heart,” but Scripture says “the heart is deceitful above all *things* and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9), so don’t follow that advice. God’s people have a new heart, yes, but the remnants of our nature remain in our flesh, which wars against the spirit. What the Christian-minded person should do is endeavor to pray for and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. To do this we must “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God...” (1 John 4:1).

So again, the heart is of the utmost importance. Solomon tells us to “keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” (Prov. 4:23) All this being said, someone might ask, shouldn’t it say, “where your heart is, there will your treasure be?” To be sure, that statement is true. Your heart being in the right place is critical, and it being so undoubtedly leads to service to God. However, God’s infallible Scripture expresses it this way for a reason.

Remember, it says “where your treasure is.” In the prior two verses it says: “Lay not up for yourselves

treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” When we think of treasure we think of things like money, wealth, abundance, jewels, precious metals, or other items of great value. We are told to not lay up these vain things or make them our priority in life, because they can be gone in an instant. They are not only fleeting; they also will not result in true contentment. We are to lay up treasures in heaven, that is to say through faithful service to the Lord. Paul expresses it as an admonition to “set your affection on things above, not things on the earth.” (Col. 3:2)

Just as one invests treasure, so your heart will be found where you have invested yourself. If someone has been seeking first the kingdom of God, then his or her heart will be one of devotion. But if it is a life centered around the things of the world, it will be found in spiritual coldness and distance from God. This text suggests an important principle. The reality is we don’t always have the desire to do things we should, and it takes self-denial to prioritize those things over worldly alternatives. When someone consistently chooses their ambitions, their children’s sports, or their hobbies over the assembly of the saints for worship, those habits will negatively affect the heart. It also shows children that in your view church is optional, regardless of what you say about Christ and how important He is.

Beyond church attendance, we must also deny the flesh to spend time communing with the Lord, in reading and studying His word, and serving others. Without those, just being present at worship serves limited purpose. The Bible tells us to be doers of the word and not simply hearers (James 1:22). I know we have to battle to say no to this world and to things we feel need to do or want to do, or things we truly enjoy doing and aren’t harmful (and in some cases truly beneficial) when put in their proper place in life. But the more you do so and invest time in spiritual things and develop Christian-minded habits, your heart will eventually catch up and they will be precious to you. It just takes purpose and diligence to get there. “And he said to them all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)

The same principle is found in 1 Timothy 3:13: “For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” A man

certainly has to have displayed commendable boldness in faith to qualify to serve as a deacon, but by stepping up and faithfully executing the duties of the office, even when they feel inadequate and unprepared, their faith deepens and grows. It's a return on a spiritual investment in both cases, but not one made with the goal of receiving anything in return. Instead, it is what we owe out of thanksgiving to our great Savior. So let us remember to lay up for ourselves the proper treasures and invest in what truly matters—pressing into the kingdom of heaven. Our hearts will be strengthened and found in the right position as a result. (Jonathan Wise)

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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)

People have always tried to blame someone else since the Garden of Eden as Adam blamed the woman God gave him for his disobedience and Eve blamed the serpent. Sin leaves no room to blame anyone but the one who has sinned. However, we have a Saviour who took the **blame** for our sins to appease the wrath of God. God's people were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they would be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Eph. 1:4).

As those chosen in Christ, there must of necessity be one to assume their guilt to finally present them **faultless** before His presence with exceeding joy (Jude 24). Jacob did not want to let Benjamin go with his brothers into Egypt to see Joseph but Judah spoke up and said, "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:" Judah would be a "surety" (security, pledge) for Benjamin's welfare and if he failed to fulfill that surety, he would bear the "blame". Likewise, Jesus became our surety. In Heb. 7:22 we read, "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." Jesus took upon Himself the eternal "security" of His people as our high priest and will present them "without blame" before Him in love because they were chosen to that end. He shall not fail or be discouraged; Judah could have failed in his surety but not Jesus Christ as He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:14).

We are forever reconciled to God by the shed blood of Christ and it took the death of Christ for this to be accomplished. We were alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works yet Christ bore our blame in His own body. "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and **unblameable** and unproveable in his sight." (Col. 1:22). The merits of that shed blood and reconciliation is applied in the new birth. God's born again people are composed of spirit, soul and body and Paul writes concerning these three: "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." (I Thess. 5:23). I am to blame for many things in my life but what a day that will be when I (by His grace) am presented before the Father without blame before Him in love!

In that eternal day we will be faultless because of what Christ has done for us: however, we are called upon through obedience to do things that we might be blameless in this life. Paul writes for us to do all things without any murmurings and disputings. Why should we do this? The first reason is because the Lord has commanded us and the other reason is given by Paul in Phil. 2:15: "That ye may be **blameless** and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" We should do the things that are good and pleasing to God without complaining that others who are seeking to find fault might find none. The twelve disciples sent out by Jesus were sheep in the midst of wolves but were told to be wise as serpents but "harmless" as doves. (Matt. 10:16). A dove is a symbol of peace and the Spirit so may we all follow script and be blameless and harmless.

The second coming of the Lord is not an event to scare the people of God to make a decision for Christ

which supposedly would save them from hell to heaven. It is quite the opposite; it is a comforting message and a motivator for righteous living. Peter writes about the heavens being on fire and the elements melting with fervent heat. Then he writes, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and **blameless**." (II Pet. 3:14). We should all want to live in such a way that we would be found blameless should the Lord return at any moment. This takes constant diligence and allegiance to the Lord of glory which cannot be done without faith; therefore, this command is for born again children of God because only those have faith.

We are told to run our race with patience, looking unto Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith. (Heb. 12:2). Then we are told to follow peace and holiness, without which no man would see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14). The Bible has a great deal to say about the proper look and it doesn't disappoint in this lofty goal of seeing the Lord. We will all see Him in glory and be blameless but will we see Him by faith through obedience in this life? How do we follow peace and holiness? "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;" (Heb. 12:15). Grace never fails us but it is possible for us to fail grace. (May 2018)

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### Winter Storm Meditations

Elder Jerry Wise  
Pontotoc, Mississippi

(This series of three daily devotionals were written during the winter storm in late January 2026 when much of North Mississippi—and Brother Jerry too—was without power for multiple days and some even weeks.)

**Cold.** As the ice storm has left its mark over many areas of the country, we can still take time each day to pray and praise the true and living God Jehovah for blessings seen and very importantly unseen.

Some people turn cold-hearted in situations like we're experiencing; they tend to look on the side of bitterness and are in a constant mood of complaining, becoming ungrateful for the blessings they do have.

There have been times in my ministry where I've come across some in churches like the cold weather—or they are lukewarm at best—and we've all met the same types of people in everyday life, but in all fairness—we don't know what they may be facing in life's uneven pathway.

When the power went out, we were thrown back in time. Some families staying together, sitting around the fireplace, no electricity, little or no phone service, no computers, no iPads, just reverting back to good

old conversations—getting reacquainted, telling stories—a laugh every now and then—being reminded of how blessed we are, as many I'm hearing of that had to abandon their homes, looking for somewhere to go—sleeping in the vehicle, motor running and heat on high.

As I sat in darkness, one thing that came to mind was a scripture in Matthew 4. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:16-17)

So even in the cold icy conditions with no electricity to power our modern conveniences; we all need reminding—Christ has become our light and power. Being inconvenienced at times—or doing without our toys – is a test of being grateful or ungrateful; attitude is up to us.

God's been lenient and generous to his complaining people. We are but vessels of clay in His hands—vessels of mercy. Let not our hearts grow cold and indifferent, but remember what Christ did for us, and may we be kind and tender hearted to our neighbor.

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

**Blessings No Matter What.** There are certain aspects of this power outage that have been very peaceful. Nights where the only light was the fire. Alone in front of that light, praying at times and just thinking of blessings, our home, warm bed, family sharing, people coming together, thoughts of the less fortunate than myself.

I have plenty and nothing to complain about; my Lord is greater than my problems or better yet, my being somewhat inconvenienced, knowing how many have suffered for the cause of Christ, but most importantly Jesus sufferings for this wretched sinner undeserving of the least of his many blessings bestowed upon me.

Staying focused on the Lord is where we all come very short in difficult circumstances. My goal today is to prayerfully and gratefully keep that focus.

**Dependency.** You may have heard the saying: You don't appreciate it until it's gone. Loved ones are like that, you know. Those that helped you on different occasions. You may not have appreciated them as much as you should have. You depended on more times.

Here we are once again, learning how it is without electricity. We've become so dependent upon electric power and never given it a lot of thought in our

everyday life. Electricity is the reason we have technology to make our lives so much more comfortable. Believe me when I say, "I don't want to do without it." Take time to count everything in your home that's tied to electric power.

Now list everything that's outside of your house that's tied to electric power: from the street lights to every business you know are powered by electricity. What's the most central thing you are dependent upon? What's your greatest, 24-hour, 365 days a year powered by? Inventions for the good of mankind are a gift of a higher power.

From the wheel to electricity—and all in between—are of a power, unmatched by human minds to comprehend—and yes, man invented things but by what powers given? Our bodies are powered by an infinite knowledge, that creates by speaking and it's done—and man cannot duplicate, no matter what he invests.

Through God Almighty, we live and have our being—in the mysteries of this complex body and the spirit that controls its functions. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; and male and female created he them." (Genesis 1:1,27)

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7)

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Revelation 4:11) We depend upon our Heavenly Father for everything and his son Christ Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life.

To God be the Glory for ever and ever. Praise Him praise Him! Jesus our blessed Redeemer! Remember to forgive as Christ has forgiven you!!!

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### **Can the Wicked, Natural Man Know that there is a God?**

By Elder Joe Nettles  
Hamilton, Mississippi

Romans 1:18-21 — *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; [19] Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. [20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: [21] Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."*

I firmly believe that this passage is descriptive of all natural mankind's knowledge and tendencies. However, I have known many good men and true who interpret this passage as referring to born-again (yet corrupted) men. They base this interpretation on the statements regarding these men having knowledge of God that is manifested in them, even the ability to conclude the "eternal power and Godhead". They posit that natural man cannot know that there is God, nor that anything regarding Him can be known unless the new birth has occurred to reveal it.

There is at least one error in this conclusion that I would care to address in this article, the question, "Can the wicked, natural man know that there is God?" To answer that question, let the Bible give the reply:

Psalm 10:11,13 — *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it ... [13] Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.*

(The wicked under consideration not only acknowledge God but then dare to address Him spitefully!)

Psalm 71:10-11 — *For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, [11] Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.*

(Obviously from this we see that the ones spoken of speak of God as one able to guard and protect the righteous. Some may retort with claims that this statement refers to one such as King Saul, regenerated but errant. Yet, the context denies that because just a few verses preceding we read of the same, "Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man." One would have to strain to pretend this refers to an errant child of God.)

Job 21:14-15 — *Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. [15] What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?*

(This does not at all seem to describe those whose hearts cry "Abba, Father" through the work of the Spirit, does it?)

John 8:54-55 — *Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: [55] Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.*

(Though a mixed congregation was present, this was obviously addressed to the unrepentant, unregenerate Jews amongst them. They vociferously claimed God, yet they never knew him.)

Exodus 7:5 — *And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon*

*Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.*

(Certainly, in my opinion, this refers to the whole of Egypt in that day. Though there were probably some elect amongst them, there were definitely non-elect among them. Whether elect or non-elect, they all knew that the LORD was very real and very angry.)

It seems undeniable that ingrained in every man is both a conscience and a sense that there is a Creator. The wonders of creation attest to the latter. Paul wrote that the natural creation of which we are a part is sufficient to manifest:

- God's eternal power is plain in that if we see time, space, and matter, and it had to come to be from nothingness, then there must be One who predates and is not subject to time, space, or matter. In other words, He is eternal.

- The Godhead carries the idea that God is our head. If there is a Creator who supersedes time, space, and matter, then it is foolish to think we are not answerable to Him.

In conclusion, this knowledge isn't there to prompt man to elevate himself towards salvation (as our Arminian friends claim). The Bible makes very clear that this is impossible in man's nature. This knowledge is, however, allowed by God for the purpose to make manifest just how wicked and obstinate fallen, unregenerate men are. Even knowing the eternal power and Godhead, they still disregard and reject such a Lord!

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### **FEED MY FLOCK**

Elder Rusty Wise  
Tupelo, Mississippi

John 21:15-17 "[15]...feed my lambs. [16]...feed my sheep. [17]...feed my sheep."

The word "feed" (Βόσκει), G1006 in Strongs concordance, is found in verses 15 and 17. It means to provide nourishment.

The word "feed" (Ποίμαινε), G4165 in Strongs concordance, found in verse 16, means to take charge or to be a shepherd, which is to take care of the needs of the flock, not only to feed but to nurture and comfort.

The flock being comprised of lambs and sheep, which are accounted so by age or maturity. By implication the lambs need milk and the mature sheep need that which is stronger.

But the overall implication is that the lambs and the sheep are of one flock guided by the shepherd of that flock. Thus there is no dividing, they are all together.

Giving the pastor of the church immense responsibility to feed all the flock and bring them along together. That we might "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18)

May we be blessed to be better shepherds of the flocks of our care.

### **Jesus and the Hallel Psalms**

Elder Tim Cunningham  
Ethridge, Tennessee

"...bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." (Psalm 118:27).

The 118th Psalm is part of a collection known as the "Hallel" Psalms (Ps. 113-118). "Hallel" in Hebrew means, "praise." It is the word from which "hallelujah" is derived: "praise Jehovah." These Psalms were recited or sung during the Jewish feasts, especially Passover. To this day, Jews continue to recite the "Hallel" during their Passover seder.

The Hallel Psalms focus upon deliverance, both national and individual. Therefore, the Jews deemed these six Psalms appropriate to celebrate their deliverance by God from Egypt on the night of the first Passover, when the Passover lambs were offered and the blood applied to the doorposts of the Israelites' houses (Exodus 12). But even a casual reading by a Christian reveals that these Psalms point especially to the greater deliverance from the bondage of sin which was accomplished by the Messiah-the Lord Jesus Christ- and His great sacrifice on the cross. "...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." (1 Corinthians 5:7).

As Jesus ate His final Passover meal with His disciples in the upper room on the eve of His crucifixion, He would have recited the Hallel with them. Mark records, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of olives." (Mk. 14:26). This hymn was quite likely the final Hallel Psalm, Psalm 118. In this Psalm, Jesus sang of the "sacrifice" being bound with "cords" to the "horns of the altar" (v. 27). The "horns of the altar" were horn like projections at the four corners of the altar of burnt offering, where animal sacrifices were offered. The obvious purpose of binding the animal by each limb with cords was to prevent the animal from escaping. This is a picture of the cross of Christ, on which He was bound by nails through His hands and feet. Imagine: the Lord Jesus sang of His own impending death which would take place only a few hours later!

The great difference between Christ and the animal sacrifices offered under the law is that there was no danger that Jesus would have attempted to escape. His was a willing death, a voluntary sacrifice. Although both Jew and Gentile were implicated in His death, He freely offered His life on the cross. He said, "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..." (John 10:18).

It is true that in His humanity, He recoiled from the knowledge of the horrible torture He would endure. In the Garden of Gethsemane, "...he fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matthew 26:39). He prayed this prayer

three times in Gethsemane, and each time He willingly submitted to the will of the Father. There was simply no other way for God's people, in their fallen, depraved condition, to be redeemed and reconciled to God.

The Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, was not bound to the altar of the cross by the nails driven through His hands and feet. He could have easily summoned "twelve legions of angels" to save Him from His sufferings and death (Matthew 26:53). That which held Jesus on the cross was the eternal purpose of God, the eternal covenant of grace, and His eternal love and affection for His "sheep"-those who were given to Him by His Father (read: John 6:37-40; 10:15, 27-30; 17:1-3).

The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world with an express purpose: "...he shall save his people from their sins". (Matthew 1:21). He fulfilled everything required by God's righteous law to accomplish His objective. Nothing deterred Him. He declared on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). He prayed to His Father, "...I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4). The eternal salvation of God's elect, foreknown, predestinated people is an accomplished reality.

May we, from the depths of our hearts, lift our own "hallel" to the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal deliverance from the condemnation of sin and the free gift of eternal life!

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### **THE ROD OF CORRECTION**

by Elder Buddy Abernathy  
Reform, Alabama

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." (Pro. 22:15)

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." (Pro. 13:24)

Sin originated with Adam when he disobeyed God's law in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:6; Rom. 5:12, 19). Since that time, every child (except Jesus Christ) has been born with a sin nature. This sin nature manifests itself in the behavior of children. The book of Proverbs refers to this behavior as foolishness (Pro. 22:15). Foolishness involves an attitude of selfish defiance which motivates children to be rebellious and disobedient to their parents. God instructs parents, especially fathers (Eph. 6:4), to use the rod of correction to drive the foolishness far away. The rod refers to what we would call a switch (a small shoot or young branch). The primary purpose of the rod is to correct. It trains children to comply with the commands given by the parents. If the rod is used "betimes" (early and consistently) it will not be needed for a long period of time. According to God's word, a father who refrains from using the rod hates his child (Pro. 13:24).

The training process with the rod is not complicated. When utilized correctly, it trains children to obey their parents' commands without hesitation. One of the first words an infant needs to understand is "no". He can learn the meaning of this word even before he learns to crawl. However, when a baby begins crawling and then walking, he will naturally want to touch things and pick up objects. When he reaches for a forbidden object, calmly say "no" in your normal voice. If he ignores you and begins to pick up the object, just say "no" again in your normal voice and tap his hand with a small switch or a small wooden paddle, just hard enough to cause a stinging sensation. You are training him to understand that if your words are ignored, he will experience a sense of pain. It will only take him a few experiences with the rod to learn what "no" means. Eventually, any time you say "no" he will stop in his tracks because he associates ignoring your words with the sting of the rod. This same procedure can be followed with anything you instruct your child to do. This includes training your toddler to sit still and be quiet in church. I emphasize again that this is primarily the duty of fathers. If your child doesn't behave during the worship service, immediately take him outside of the auditorium. Apply the rod, tell him he must sit still and be quiet, then return to your seat. Repeat this as many times as necessary. Don't give up. Don't try an alternative method. Don't bribe your child with toys or candy. Don't pass him off to another family member to see if they can get him quiet. You are establishing your God given authority as a parent. Your command must be obeyed every time without delay. Parents who consistently utilize "the rod of correction" with their toddlers will learn that their children can be trained to do whatever they say, the first time they say it.

While the rod is especially useful for training toddlers to obey, it will also be needed to correct disrespectful attitudes and rebellious behaviors. Remember, you're driving away the foolish behavior that springs from your child's sin nature. If your child defies your authority, speaks disrespectfully, or deliberately disobeys; you must apply the rod with a little more severity. Then pick up the child or sit with him on your lap and say in a calm voice, "You must do what mommy and daddy say" It is the sting of the rod, not your loud, angry voice which will gain compliance from your child. Children will not be psychologically damaged when the rod is used correctly. To the contrary, they learn to respect authority. This will save them from many troubles they would otherwise face later in life.

PLEASE NOTE: Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible which I believe is the pure, preserved word of God in English. As such, I esteem it to be the standard of absolute truth concerning all we need to know about training our children. I do not claim to be a child training expert but

I claim that the word of God, especially the book of Proverbs, contains perfect child training principles.

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**The Gospel Pay-Off**  
by Elder Gene Thomas (Deceased)

I believe that the gospel preached by man has certain limitations. I do not believe that the gospel preached by man has any effect on either increasing or decreasing the number of the elect who will be finally in heaven.

I do believe that the true gospel can bring joy and happiness and assurance to a child of God while he lives in this earth. I do not believe that a child of God who has heard the truth of the gospel preached by a God-called and God-sent minister will have more joys in eternal heaven than one who did not have that opportunity of hearing a human blessed to declare the gospel in this life. The benefits and losses relative to the hearing or not hearing of the gospel preached by a human will be realized entirely in this world. Brother, can you find any agreement with this teaching?

I call attention to a lesson that is taught in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each of these writers, under inspiration, discusses the same subject. While there are slightly different wordings employed, the same lesson is taught in all three places. Please take the time read the lesson at each place. Matthew 19:29: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Mark 10:29-30: "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." Luke 18:29-30: "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Having listed these three passages, I will make comments on portions of them. Please notice the strong word "INHERIT" in Matthew that governs the entrance into the life everlasting. This word would mean that one must be an "heir" in order to "inherit." To be an "heir" in this respect would simply mean that one would have to be a member of the family of God in order to "inherit." And a part of the activity that was to be done was the preaching of the gospel. Much had to be done also in preparation for preaching which can be read in the body of these verses.

All the activities which did include "for his name's sake", "for my sake, and the gospel's", and "for the kingdom of God's sake" were to be finalized in this world and all the benefits that were to be gained by what was done would also be realized in this world. Please notice that the "pay-off" for all that was done was in this life—in this world. This has to do with the gospel (as preached by humans) and the end result achieved by the gospel. It strictly applies to this life and this world. The lesson plainly teaches that all works done in these categories are paid off in this world. There is no "carry-over" to heaven. Receiving the 100-fold in this present time means that a full 100 per cent "pay-off" comes in time.

This also teaches in a most positive way that works do not have any thing to do with gaining heaven. The works are already paid off 100 percent in this life. This means a most amazing thing—Heaven is granted on the basis of mere GRACE. It cannot be for works—because the works have been taken care of in this life. The life to come (eternal life in heaven) has to be by grace alone. Now having "beaten around this bush" at length, one ought to be able to realize that the ordinary preaching of the gospel with its benefits are for time only and not for heaven. If the preaching of the gospel by humans has any "pay-off" in heaven, then a part of heaven will be involved with works and not grace. I do not believe that any works of human merit will be regarded in heaven. All of heaven will have regard to the AMAZING GRACE of the ONLY SOVEREIGN that exists. Brother, can you agree with this too? Can you stand with me on this "common ground"? Does this qualify as "solid ground"? Can you stand on it without sliding off? If I know my poor heart, I have a great desire to uphold the truth.

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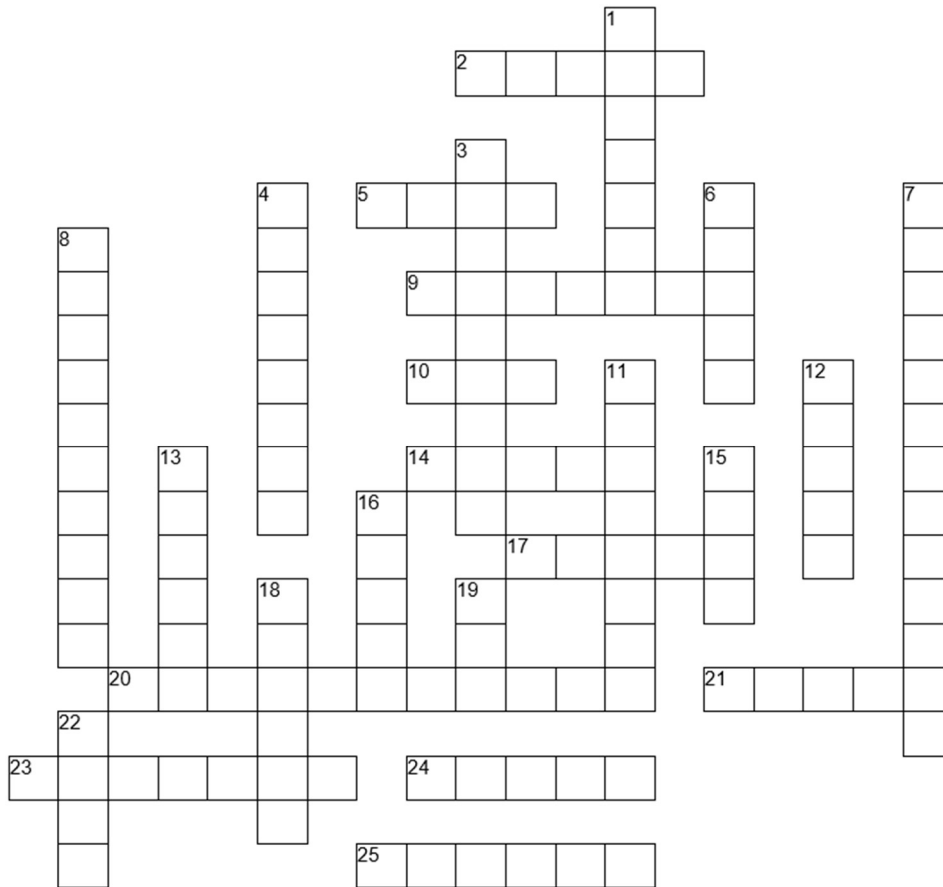
"The thundering of Sinai has never awakened a dead man, but the precious gospel of the Son of God has aroused living men and it is a joy to me to tell it. And if there be one here trembling and fearing before God of the law who is anxious about his soul's condition before God, my glad message to you today is, child, God has given you spiritual life or you would not have heard that thundering of Sinai, and you are saved, and the God who has begun this work will perform until the day of Jesus Christ." —Elder Charles Waters, 1906

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Hebrews 12:18-23: "[18] For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest... [22] But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, [23] To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

Back by popular demand! With the longer edition, we hope to include a crossword puzzle each month going forward. Sister Christine Monroe from Vicksburg, Mississippi has graciously volunteered to create crossword puzzles for Glad Tidings! Thank you Sister Christine!

**SISTER CHRISTINE'S CROSSWORD CORNER**



**Across**

- 2. Moses' older brother
- 5. Whose daughter did David marry?
- 9. Who pleaded with God to spare Sodom?
- 10. What animal took Isaac's place on an altar of sacrifice?
- 14. How many churches did the Spirit address in Revelation?
- 17. What did Aaron have that budded?
- 20. How many books are in the New Testament?
- 21. How many of each kind of clean animal went into the ark?
- 23. Which book was written by Levi?
- 24. What did Solomon have 700 of?
- 25. How many sons did Jacob have?

(Answers on page 14)

**Down**

- 1. The Philistine giant who fought David
- 3. What was Nehemiah's job in the palace of King Artaxerxes?
- 4. What kind of tree did Zaccheus climb?
- 6. Who did Peter stay with in Joppa after he raised Tabitha?
- 7. Who told Peter and John about Jesus' empty tomb?
- 8. What king saw writing on the wall which warned him of coming judgement?
- 11. What is the name of Jacob's youngest son?
- 12. Who was Abram's wife?
- 13. Simon Peter's brother
- 15. Where did Jesus say the narrow gate led?
- 16. How many years did King David reign?
- 18. What animals, called feeble folk, build their houses among the rocks?
- 19. How many ribs did God take from Adam to make Eve?
- 22. Who was the first child born into the world?

**CHURCH NEWS**

**Beulah Primitive Baptist Church, Saltillo, MS. May 1-3, 2026.** Everyone is invited to the annual May Meeting at Beulah Primitive Baptist Church in Saltillo, MS on the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in May 2026 (May 1-3). Friday night (May 1), supper at 6:00 p.m., and worship at 7:00 p.m. Saturday (May 2) morning worship at 10:00 a.m., lunch, followed by afternoon services. Sunday (May 3) worship at 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch. Elder James Isaacs and Elder Ronald Lawrence are invited ministers. Elder Tony Lester is Pastor of Beulah.

**Bethany Primitive Baptist Church, Ecu, MS. May 15-17, 2026.** Everyone is invited to the annual May Communion Meeting at Bethany Primitive Baptist Church, 5 miles west of Ecu, MS on Hwy 346 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in May 2026 (May 15-17). Services Friday night (May 15) at 7:00 p.m. Saturday (May 16) morning worship at 10:30 a.m., followed by a fish fry lunch. Sunday (May 17) at 10:00 a.m. with communion, followed by lunch. Elder Ronald Lawrence is the invited minister. Elder Jeremy Wise is Pastor of Bethany.

**Laodicea Primitive Baptist Church, Lafayette Springs, MS. May 31, 2026.** Laodicea Primitive Baptist Church, Lafayette Springs, MS will host the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday night fellowship meeting in May 2026 (May 31). Worship at 5:30 p.m., followed by snacks afterwards. This meeting rotates between New Prospect, Laodicea, Bethany, and Hopewell Primitive Baptist churches.

**New Prospect Primitive Baptist Church, New Albany, MS. June 5-6, 2026.** Please come to New Prospect Primitive Baptist Church, 912 Fairground Spur Rd, New Albany, MS for our annual meeting June 5-6, 2026. Lord willing, we will start Friday (June 5) evening meal at 6:00 p.m. Then preaching by Elder Joe Nettles (Pastor of Sulphur Springs PBC). Will reconvene on Saturday (June 6) at 10:00 a.m. song service and preaching by Elder Tim Cunningham (Pastor at New Hope PBC) and Elder Buddy Abernathy (Pastor at Blooming Grove PBC). The meeting will conclude with lunch & fellowship. Please help us be in prayer for this meeting and please come. Contact Pastor, Elder Jackie Smith 901-734-9376.

**New Hope Primitive Baptist Church, Hatley, MS. June 12-13, 2026.** New Hope Primitive Baptist Church, located at 60267 Hatley Rd., Amory, MS invites you to worship with us during our 2026 annual meeting, Friday-Saturday, June 12-13. Lord willing, supper will be served Friday at 6 p.m., with worship at 7 p.m. Saturday services will be at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., with lunch served at noon. Elder Charles Kitchens, pastor of Zion's Rest Church in Jasper, AL and Elder Philip Dukes, pastor of Grant's Mill Church

in Birmingham, AL will be our guest preachers. Please remember us in prayer and visit with us if you are able. Elder Tim Cunningham is Pastor of New Hope.

**Raleigh Primitive Baptist Church, Memphis, TN. June 19-20, 2026.** Everyone is invited to the annual meeting at Raleigh Primitive Baptist Church, June 19 & 20, 2026, at 7247 Andrews Road, Bartlett, TN 38135. Services are planned as follows: Friday night (June 19), supper at 5:30 p.m. with worship service at 7:00 p.m., and Saturday (June 20), worship at 10:30 a.m., with lunch following, then afternoon services. Elder David Wise is the invited minister. We covet your prayers for an edifying and blessed meeting that will be glorifying to our Lord and Savior. Elder Chase Harrison is Pastor at Raleigh.

**Yalobusha Primitive Baptist Church, Water Valley, MS. June 26-27, 2026.** Yalobusha Primitive Baptist Church in Water Valley, MS invites everyone to their annual meeting the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend in June 2026 (June 26-27). Services Friday night (June 26) at 7:00 p.m. Saturday (June 27) at 10:30 a.m. followed by lunch. Elder David Wise is the invited minister. Elder James Hall is Pastor of Yalobusha.

**Sulphur Springs Primitive Baptist Church, Caledonia, MS. Singing School. June 25-27, 2026.** Sulphur Springs Primitive Baptist Church will be hosting a singing school, instructed by Elder Bryce Lowrance, on June 25-27, 2026. Schedule is as follows:

-June 25 (Thurs): 6:00 p.m. Supper, 7:00 p.m. Singing school

-June 26 (Friday): 9:00 a.m. Morning session, 12:00 p.m. Lunch, 1:00-3:00 p.m. afternoon session, Break, 5:00 p.m. Supper, 6:00 p.m. night session.

-June 27 (Saturday): 9:00 a.m. Morning session, 12:00 p.m. lunch; afternoon session to be determined

All are invited and welcome. Please contact Pastor Joe Nettles at 912-585-9025, (either call or text), or email us at [joelandlauranettles@yahoo.com](mailto:joelandlauranettles@yahoo.com). If possible, we request notification of your intent to attend by June 17th. However, none will be denied attendance. Any youths under 16 attending without parental accompaniment will be requested to list any allergies and significant health history. We have homes open to overnight attendees. Again, if you desire to stay overnight(s), please notify us if possible beforehand. Church address: 40283 Wolfe Rd, Caledonia, MS.

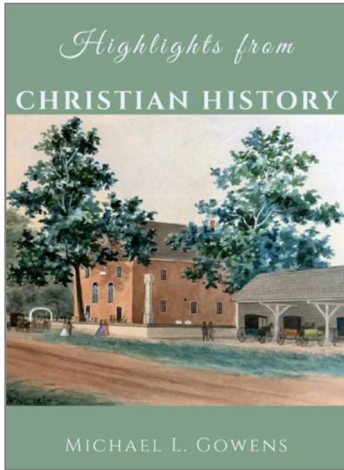
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**OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES**

I asked my 11-year old son Isaac about whether something was already messed up or if one of them had done anything to do it. He responded, "if it was anybody, (6-year old brother) Eli would be the PRIME SUSPECT." (JW)

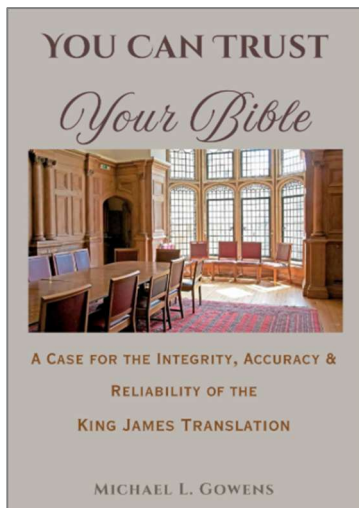
**FEATURED BOOKS**

Sovereign Grace Publications is pleased to announce the release of two titles by Michael L. Gowens:



**Highlights from Christian History** is a 140-page paperback targeted for a populist audience. In the course of eleven chapters, Gowens takes the extremely important, yet frequently daunting, theme of church history and attempts to distill it into crucial, defining events to help believers interpret the contemporary Christian landscape with accuracy. He sketches the key turning points in the 2,000 year history of Christianity in the context of the family known as "Baptists," a generally overlooked and dismissed group, but one that has sought to preserve the purity of the primitive, Apostolic pattern of New Testament church identity.

You may purchase this book at this link:  
<https://www.sovgrace.net/product/highlights-from-christian-history/>



In **You Can Trust Your Bible: A Case for the Integrity, Accuracy & Reliability of the King James Translation**, a 98-page paperback, Gowens makes a

case for his conviction that the KJT is not only trustworthy, but superior to other English translations of the Bible. He cites three principal factors to support his position: 1. The KJT derives from a manuscript family with connections to the primitive church in Antioch of Syria; 2. The story of its translation is punctuated by Divine providence from start to finish; 3. The forty-seven translators of the 1611 edition were credentialed, linguistic scholars that subjected themselves and each other to an extremely strident criteria of "checks & balances" to ensure the accuracy of the translated text.

You may purchase this book at this link:  
<https://www.sovgrace.net/product/you-can-trust-your-bible/>

You may visit the websites below to find an extensive library of Primitive Baptist books:  
<https://www.sovgrace.net/shop/>  
<https://marchtozion.com/book-table/>  
<https://www.lulu.com/spotlight/dm00769/>

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**Put Away Bitterness (Abiding Angst)**

By Elder Mike Ivey  
 Ocean Springs, Mississippi

*"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*—Ephesians 4:31-32

In its simplest expression bitterness is anguished reaction to pain or sorrow. However, when we allow bitterness to linger it becomes a mental habit. Habitual bitterness is a negative and judgmental mindset which governs thoughts and shapes attitudes. It is this habit of bitterness which Paul warned the Ephesians to reject.

Notice the characteristics Paul associates with bitterness. They are wrath (fierce rage), anger (foul temper), clamor (complaining outcry and demand), evil speaking (railings and injurious speech) and malice (ill-will). To counter bitterness, Paul instructs us to be kind (gracious) tenderhearted (compassionate), and to forgive others according to God's standard of forgiveness, which is through respect and honor for Christ.

Habitual bitterness is characterized by some combination of abiding disappointment, anger, resentment, cynicism and victimhood. It is driven by a mixture of self-pity and stubborn pride.

People who are bitter view life through a dark lens. They see everything in terms of what is, was, or will be wrong. They assume the worst for themselves and from others. Lingering bitterness is sometimes a

reaction to negative outcome, either from one's own failures or intense disappointment with others. It can produce accusing self-doubt and unwarranted suspicion of the motives of others. Bitterness is a lonely course. It encourages anger and resentment that drives away friends and family and isolates co-workers. It is a miserable way of life that lacks an upside.

This dark picture of the plight of those who permit bitterness to frame their thinking is addressed in God's word. Esau is an example. When he learned Jacob had stolen the birthright of the firstborn, "he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father." When Isaac declined to revoke Jacob's blessing and give it to Esau the latter appeased his bitter anger and resentment by comforting himself with thoughts of murdering Jacob. (See Genesis 27:30-42)

Jonah is an example of how self-harm can afflict those who are bitter. One of the saddest scenes of bitterness found in scripture is depicted in the closing verses of the Book of Jonah. Bitter anger is evident from Jonah's reaction to God cutting down the gourd vine which was shading him. Jonah had more regard for the vine than for the Ninevites whom God forgave after they repented. His stubborn response in rejecting God's judgment effectively cut off Jonah from the blessing and comfort of providential mercy. The book ends with arrogant, stubborn Jonah sitting alone angry and miserable in the hot sun; with God having the last word: "Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry.?" (See Jonah ch. 4) The pride of bitterness falsely promises self-satisfaction; but it can only deliver misery.

Bitter reaction is sometimes presented in scripture as a reaction to an experience of wretchedness and misery that can accompany intense sorrow. However, this form of bitterness it is a passing response as opposed to a mindset. This appears to be the bitterness Naomi referred to by describing herself as "Mara" (Bitterness) after the deaths of her husband and sons. "And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." (Ruth 1:20) Hannah's sorrow over being barren is described in similar fashion in 1 Samuel 1:10 "And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore." Peter is another example of a bitter reaction to disappointment. Peter was disappointed with himself and wept bitterly after denying the Savior three times. (See Matthew 26:69-75) In these examples bitterness is a reaction to sorrow. However, it did not linger and become a way of thinking about life in general.

The examples of Naomi, Hannah and Peter have three common characteristics. 1. They each responded to the pain of suffering with bitter expression. 2. None became bitter from the experience. 3. God delivered each from their suffering. Naomi was delivered from loneliness and material

want by God's mercy toward Ruth. Hannah was delivered by God promising and fulfilling the promise that she would give birth to a mighty prophet. Peter was delivered after receiving word Jesus had risen from the dead. In all these examples God sent good news to struggling servants. His word renewed their hope by showing them they were not forgotten.

Friends, failures and afflictions may cause us bitter sorrow; but they need not make us bitter. Our God who by hope sent relief and deliverance to Naomi, Ruth and Peter has good news for struggling pilgrims today. The hope of Christ's second and final coming to carry us home is sure and steadfast. When we embrace our hope in Christ it delivers us from all bitterness. Abiding hope gives us a joyful mindset. It floods our thinking with full assurance and strong consolation from expectations of God's daily mercies and Jesus' return. This leaves no place for bitterness to take root in our thinking. Jesus is coming again. "Rejoice in the LORD always: and again I say Rejoice."

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### **Abide and Be Fruitful**

By Elder Ben Cordes  
Lexington, Kentucky

John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Every winter there is a reset with nature. The trees are often the most visible representation of the cycle that is soon to begin again. The branches will blossom and the leaves will bud, and what was once naked will be clothed in green again.

If you are like me, you may do a little inspecting and notice a branch here or there that, for whatever reason, did not produce any leaves. It likely did not take a lot of focus to see the bare branch. They usually stick out like a sore thumb. What's evident is that the branch is no longer doing what it is naturally supposed to do, which is produce.

The expression of leaves on a branch indicates that life is still present. If there are leaves, then there is hope for fruit when the time comes. The branch that bears no leaves or fruit, though still clinging to the tree, has sadly departed from its purpose.

Similarly, we are connected to Jesus through fellowship with Him. He is our Master, we are His disciples. From Him we receive our spiritual nourishment. The sacred word of God, intended to help us live and thrive as Christians in a dark and opposing world. Bringing forth fruit as branches connected to Jesus, giving evidence of His Spirit's presence in our lives.

As Jesus pressed through great difficulties, we also must remain faithful through sorrows and afflictions. The Father will come to inspect the fruit, and what He sees will look like His Son's fruit in us. The Father will

clear that fruit from off the branches, and will make room for more fruit to come.

The hottest summers bring forth the sweetest grapes, so do the great trials of faith produce the sweetest fruit of glory unto God. The purging of the fruit is an act of love from the Father, not punishment. He cares deeply and tenderly for us. The Father sees our potential and knows that we can grow and produce more fruit, if we continue to abide in Jesus.

Thus, the cycle begins again. We stay with Jesus. We learn and grow. We bring forth fruit to God's glory. He purges us for His pleasure, and for our good. We have been useful, again, unto the Father, and He prepares us for another round of fruit to be borne. Keep following Jesus. Do not be the bare branch that sticks out, caring only to be a branch in word and not in deed. In the kingdom of God, we are all striving to be one vine with many branches, bringing forth an abundance of fruit. How beautiful it is to see the fruit of Christ in His branches!

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### STEADFASTNESS

By Maltbie Davenport Babcock

The business of a river is to flow. Its banks may be beautiful or unpleasing; its current string of sluggish; its skies blue or clouded; its waters may mirror flowers in spring and ferns in summer; may float the dead leaves of the fall, or be hemmed in and pressed by the ice in winter—it must flow on. A noisy brook in its youth, a noble river at last, so deep that men so say, "There go the ships," majestically surely the ocean, but from its birth its business is to flow. Here eddies may seem to be turning it back, there the current may be checked by a resisting arm of land, but the central stream moves steadily onward as though led by the hand of destiny.

Is not this steadfastness to mark, to make, the character of your lives? Is it not God's will that we should press steadily on to our goal in obedience to Him, in channels of His choosing, whether in sunshine or in shadow, in the cheer of spring or the chill of winter, neither detained by pleasure nor deterred by pain?

The hosannas of the children rang about Jesus and gladdened his heart, the palm branches were strewn in his path and gave him joy, but he would not build a tabernacle of the branches, good as it was to be there. Agony confronted Jesus, but it could not turn his steadfast face.

His life moved unflinchingly onward, neither beguiled by pleasures nor daunted by perils. He felt both, but would not let them determine anything for him. They must be incidental; to please his Father was fundamental. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord."

Remember, then, amid the joys of life, the glad but steadfast face of our Master, and amid the sorrows of life, the sad but steadfast face of our Lord. How strong, how peaceful, how deeply joyful our lives may be, if they are sacramental, lived in memory of Jesus, the central stream of their deep determination, like His-doing the will of our Father.

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### Pardon Brought to Our Senses

By Isaac Watts

- 1 Lord, how divine thy comforts are!  
How heav'nly is the place  
Where Jesus spreads the sacred feast  
Of his redeeming grace!
- 2 There the rich bounties of our God,  
And sweetest glories shine;  
There Jesus says that "I am his,  
And my Beloved's mine."
- 3 "Here, says the kind, redeeming Lord,  
And shows his wounded side;  
"See here the spring of all your joys  
That open'd when I died."
- 4 He smiles, and cheers my mournful heart,  
And tells of all his pain;  
"All this," says he, "I bore for thee;"  
And then he smiles again.
- 5 What shall we pay our heav'nly King  
For grace so vast as this?  
He brings our pardon to our eyes,  
And seals it with a kiss.
- 6 Let such amazing loves as these  
Be sounded all abroad;  
Such favors are beyond degrees,  
And worthy of a God.
- 7 To him that wash'd us in his blood  
Be everlasting praise;  
Salvation, honor, glory, power,  
Eternal as his days.

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"To our shame we have found it easy to forget or neglect to pray. The flesh must be brought under subjection. Satan's excuses appear so logical, and our menial duties so necessary, that we forbear that precious, sacred and solemn bower of soul refreshment. It is true that sometimes we do not receive the joy and assurance that we do at other times. But, we do not know, nor can we know, the blessing to be received until the effort has been put forth." —Elder Jerry E. Newman

"Your outlook is only as good as your uplook" —Elder Ronald Lawrence

**Abraham and David: Our Examples for Understanding Justification by Faith**

Elder Tyler Sposite  
Palm Beach, California

In Romans chapter 4, Paul cites two Old Testament figures to illustrate the doctrine of justification by faith. The word "justify" does not mean "to make righteous" or "to go from being unrighteous to righteous". It means "to show or declare righteous" or "vindicate". Paul is arguing against the mistaken notion held by some Jews of his time that they had grounds to consider themselves righteous on the basis of circumcision and observance of the Mosaic law. That is what they placed their assurance in. Paul demonstrates that this is impossible, given that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Hence, no man is able to be justified (shown righteous) on the basis of the law (Romans 3:9-21). The means of being declared righteous is faith in the finished work of Christ. That is how the sinner is shown righteous. Romans 4 is Paul's elaboration on this point.

Rom 4:1-10 *What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?* Paul is appealing to the preeminent OT figure that the Jews held in high regard, Abraham, their "father as pertaining to the flesh". If physical lineage and circumcision profited for justification, surely Abraham of all people can confirm or deny this supposition

[2] *For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.* Abraham could glory if he were shown righteous by works before men. He could glory before men for doing the right thing, but he couldn't glory or boast before God.

[3] *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* This verse is popularly understood by many to teach that Abraham went from being a hell-bound, alien sinner, to being a heaven-bound child of God in Genesis 15:6. However, this interpretation is simply untenable given the facts of the case. Abraham had been walking with God by faith for a number of years up to this point, ever since being called out of Ur of the Chaldees (Hebrews 11:8). In Genesis 14, he was blessed by the priest of the Most High God! He was clearly a born-again child of God up to this point. Let's look at Genesis 15:1-6 to get an idea of what is going on here:

Gen 15:1-6 AFTER these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. [2] And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? [3] And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. [4] And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of

thine own bowels shall be thine heir. [5] And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. [6] And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

What is going on in this text? Put simply, Abraham is stumbling in his walk with the Lord. God had already promised to multiply his seed in Genesis chapter 12, yet years later, Abraham expresses sinful doubt concerning this promise of God. One can imagine how the patriarch must have felt during this time. Perhaps he questioned whether he had messed up somewhere along the way, or perhaps he was questioning the Lord's care for him. In any case, that is what is happening here. Abraham is faltering in his faith and in his walk with God. God responds, not by rebuking Abraham, but instead by restating and reaffirming his promises to him. He assures Abraham that he intends to fulfill his promise and give Abraham an heir that would come from his own body, a natural born son, and that he would multiply his descendants. As a result of God's declaration of this promise to Abraham, the patriarch believed in God and his promise, and God counted it to Abraham "for righteousness".

This expression "for righteousness" is a confusing and debated expression among commentators. I take it to mean that faith was counted to Abraham "in order to" or "unto" righteousness, that is, unto the receiving of righteousness in his conscience. Or, unto God declaring him righteous. This is an expression that Paul picks up on and applies to the experience of justification by faith elsewhere in the book of Romans. He speaks of the Gentiles, who were not looking for righteousness, attaining to righteousness (Romans 9:29). That is, discovering or arriving at it in their experience. He says that Christ is the end of the law for, or unto, righteousness for everyone who believes (Romans 10:4) and that with the heart a man believes "unto" righteousness (Romans 10:10). The idea is that God declares to men that they are righteous, when they believe. It doesn't mean they become righteous at that moment. This is what happened to Abraham. God reassured him of his promises and declared to him that he was righteous by faith. Not after he got circumcised.

[4] *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. [5] But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.* Why is Paul contrasting works with believing here? Even though believing, properly speaking, is a work (i.e. something one does), Paul is arguing against the Judaizers here. He has in mind the works of the Mosaic law. If I can't know that I am right with God unless I get circumcised and perform all the requirements of the law, then it is a matter of debt. But Paul is saying, a man does not have to go through that

before he can know that he is righteous. Simply by looking to Christ by faith, a sinner may have the comfort and assurance that he is right with God.

Thus far, we have seen that Paul appeals first to the personal experience of Abraham, who was already born again and walking with God long before Genesis 15:6. Let's take a look at the second example given by Paul:

*[6] Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, [7] Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. [8] Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.* This is a citation from Psalm 32:1-6 A Psalm of David, Maschil. BLESSED is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. [2] Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. [3] When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. [4] For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. [5] I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. [6] For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

Many commentators believe David wrote this psalm after his sin against Uriah the Hittite. Regardless, the context of this passage makes it clear that we are not dealing with an unregenerate alien sinner. David was already a man after God's own heart and a regenerate child of God. The problem faced by David in this text is not that he was spiritually dead, but that he, like Abraham, had stumbled in his walk with the Lord. Albeit in David's case it was more severe. So long as David kept silent regarding his sin, the heavy hand of God was upon him. When David acknowledged his sin, God forgave him and withheld his chastening rod, restoring him to fellowship. The forgiveness in this text is not related to David's eternal destiny, but to his relationship and walk with God here and now. David is describing the "blessedness", that means "happiness", of the man who experiences God's forgiveness, the man against whom God does not hold his sins.

The application as it relates to Paul's argument, is that God receives even the vilest of sinners into his fellowship, when they look to Christ by faith, acknowledging their sin and need of a savior. As Paul will go on to say in Romans 5:1-2, by faith we have peace with God and access into "the grace wherein we stand".

*[9] Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. [10] How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in*

*circumcision, but in uncircumcision.* This completely refutes the position of the Judaizers. God declared Abraham righteous by faith long before he was circumcised. If this is the case, it follows that Gentiles can share in the same blessed assurance by faith, apart from circumcision and works of the Law.

Thus, what we find in Romans 4 is Paul appealing to the personal experience of two regenerate children of God who were forgiven and declared righteous, and restored to fellowship with God by faith, in order to illustrate Justification by Faith. Paul is not making a statement about our positional standing before God, but about our personal assurance and experience of peace with God through faith, apart from works of the law.

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**BIBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS**  
(Puzzle on Page 8—Answers are Backwards)

**Across**

- 2. noraa
- 5. luas
- 9. maharba
- 10. mar
- 14. neves
- 17. ffats
- 20. neveysynewt
- 21. neves
- 23. wehttam
- 24. seviw
- 25. evlewt

**Down**

- 1. htailog
- 3. reraebpuc
- 4. eromocys
- 6. nomis
- 7. eneladgamyram
- 8. razzahsleb
- 11. nimajneb
- 12. iaras
- 13. werdna
- 15. efil
- 16. ytrof
- 18. seinoc
- 19. eno
- 22. niac

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**Albert Barnes on 1 Corinthians 9:26**

*"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:"*

"Not as one that beateth the air": The "phrase" here is taken from the habits of the pugilists or boxers, who were accustomed, before entering the lists, to exercise their limbs with the gauntlet, in order to acquire greater skill and dexterity. There was also, before the real contest commenced, a play with their fists and weapons, by way of show or bravado, which was called σκιᾶμαχία skiamachia, a mock-battle, or a fighting the air. The phrase also is applicable to a "missing the aim," when a blow was struck in a real struggle, and when the adversary would elude the

blow, so that it would be spent in the empty air. This last the idea which Paul means to present. He did not miss his aim; he did not exert himself and spend his strength for nothing. Every blow that he struck told; and he did not waste his energies on that which would produce no result. He did not strive with rash, ill-advised, or uncertain blows; but all his efforts were directed, with good account, to the grand purpose of subjugating his enemy - sin - and the corrupt desires of the flesh-and bringing everything into captivity to God. Much may be learned from this.

Many an effort of Christians is merely beating the air. The energy is expended for nothing. There is a lack of wisdom, or skill, or perseverance; there is a failure of plan; or there is a mistake in regard to what is to be done, and what should be done. There is often among Christians very little "aim" or object; there is no "plan;" and the efforts are wasted, scattered, inefficient efforts; so that, at the close of life, many a man may say that he has spent his ministry or his Christian course mainly, or entirely, "in beating the air." Besides, many set up a man of straw and fight that. They fancy error and heresy in others and oppose that. They become a "heresy-hunters;" or they oppose some irregularity in religion that, if left alone, would die of itself; or they fix all their attention upon some minor evil, and they devote their lives to the destruction of that alone. When death comes, they may have never struck a blow at one of the real and dangerous enemies of the gospel; and the simple record on the tombstone of many ministers and many private Christians might be, "Here lies one who spent his life in beating the air."

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#### **LEAVE NOT A CRUMB**

Elder Rickey Taylor  
Booneville, Mississippi

**Exodus 16:19 "And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning."**

You will find in this chapter that Moses is speaking concerning the manna which God would send to them from heaven. Had it not been for this, Israel would have perished in the wilderness. They were in a desert where there was not enough food to sustain them while they were traveling through the wilderness. So out of the kindness of our precious Lord, he sent them bread from heaven. Truly a miraculous gift.

This bread they were to take up was according to what they needed. None was to be left but eaten. But some of them did leave some of the bread and this is the result of their bad choice. **Exodus 16:20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.** When God sends a gift to his children and

leaves instructions how to enjoy this gift, it is not to be taken lightly or disregarded. This bread was prepared by the hand of a holy and just God. They should have shown some respect by following the instructions of the one who was kind enough to feed them. They were to eat up all the bread and not leave it or store it up for the next day, unless it's the Sabbath. They were to be totally dependent on God.

Jesus tells us that he is the Bread of Life. **John 6:48-50 I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.** Bread is a symbol and figure of the many blessings that God showers upon us today. Some of this bread consists of the words that we have in the sixty-six books of the Bible, and the preaching of his precious gospel. It tells of the good news of Jesus Christ and him crucified. Not just the words of the Bible, but anything that is spiritual concerning our Lord. It is not to be taken lightly or for granted. We can see that with God telling them to consume all the bread, it is a figure for us today to spiritually consume the word of God. To not forsake the assembling of ourselves in the gospel church. We need a regular diet preaching of the gospel to help sustain us in our journey here on earth. One good sermon is not meant to completely sustain us. It's okay to remember a good sermon by a preacher but keep up a consistent visit to hear more about the gospel. We are to remember that our God is a sustaining God. He has the power to bless you with another blessing in the house of the Lord. I believe that he will not only bless you with one good sermon but with many more. We are to be totally dependent upon God every day for our spiritual well-being. We understand that Christ has assured us a home in heaven, because of what he did, and not according to our works, which could never get us into heaven. However, we desire to do good works to glorify the name of our precious Savior while here on earth. So if you haven't begun to read your Bible through, start reading it through, relying on God to give you understanding of his precious words. Attend services regularly. Pray that the Lord will bless the pastor to preach the gospel of our Savior. If you haven't joined the church, then ask for a home there. Follow your Lord in baptism and become a part of the local church. As Israel was instructed to not leave a single crumb of bread, so we should not neglect a single blessing God has given us and follow through on the commitment we have made and will make to our Lord while here on earth.

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