

**March 2012**

# THE PREACHER'S FAVORITE PASSAGE

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## MY ROCK AND MY FORTRESS

- LEE SNOW

### Psalm 31:1-5

#### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the daily life of any individual living on earth, there will be times in which he faces circumstances that may be characterized by the statement, "stuck between a rock and a hard place." The psalmist David had many days like this. Throughout his life he faced a king that wanted nothing more than to kill him, the sinful actions in which he took part, the sins of others, the rebellion of his son, the death of a child born to him out of wedlock, and many other difficult times which may have lead a worldly person away from the Lord. However, king David was a man searching to live in accordance with the will of the creator (Acts 13:22). Because of this, David wrote a psalm which should be the prayer of any Christian who is experiencing adversities in his walk with the Lord. Let he who is faced with these times put his trust in the Lord (v. 1).

#### "LET ME NEVER BE ASHAMED"

Because of his trust in the Lord, David asked the most powerful God to never allow his circumstances to make him ashamed. Paul, likewise, stated that in God would he put his trust and that would cause him to continue to preach the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). Imagine, if you will, you were the apostle Paul and were writing a letter to the Christians at Rome in order to prove the statement that justification only comes in Christ. That was a large undertaking in a time when some of the Jews within the church were attempting to

state that justification comes from the New Testament of Jesus Christ and from the Law of Moses (Gal. 1:6-10) and the government of the time would have Christians to forsake the Lord and worship in their pagan ways. Now, look at the world in which we live today. People attempt to convince Christians to forsake the truth of the Bible and believe in false truths like evolution, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, and many other things. The person putting his trust in the Lord may pray this to the Lord and never be ashamed of the truth of God's word.

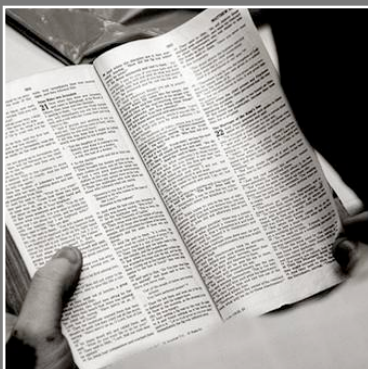
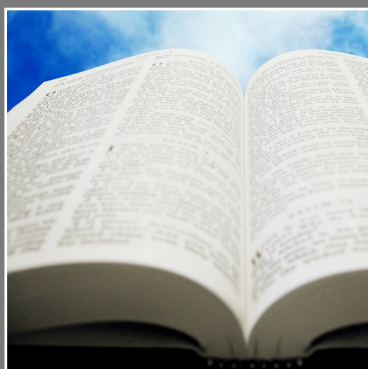
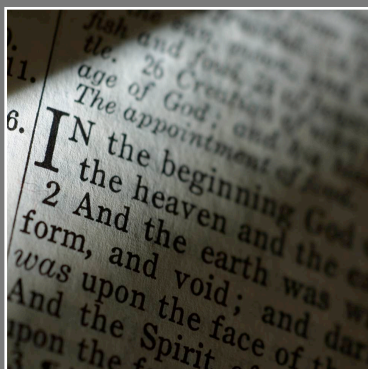
#### "DELIVER ME"

Isn't it the thought of those downtrodden that someone would come and help them come out of their situation? David obviously felt this and expressed it in his cry to the Lord for Him to bring him out with the righteousness of the almighty. If the Lord has the power to create all that is, then He has the power to deliver his creation from the trials of this life. Not only does He have the power to do so, but He possesses the knowledge and willingness to as well. Peter wrote that the Lord will always know the way by which He can deliver the godly out of the temptations, or trials (2 Pet. 2:9). Jesus Christ, the second member of

the Godhead (John 1:1-3,14), stated that the Lord loves His creation so much that He was willing to allow His son to die in order to give mankind the opportunity to be saved from their sins if only they have an obedient faith. If the Lord has the opportunity, ability, and willingness to bring mankind out of his biggest problem, sin, then He has the opportunity, ability, and willingness to bring him out of the trials of life.



# ABOUT PFP



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Since the Bible has so many wonderful passages, some preachers may appear more than once.

## "BOW DOWN YOUR EAR TO ME"

One of the greatest blessings of being a child of God (Eph. 1:3) is the ability to pray to the Lord in petition of things with which we need His help. John wrote that the Christian has the confidence in knowing that if he prays to God, He hears him and He will answer that prayer (1 John 5:14-15). If one were to put themselves in the mindset of David, he would understand the plea to the Lord that the Almighty listen and "bow down" His ear to him. Isn't it the case that during the times of trials in life, a person's prayer life becomes drastically more important to him? James, the writer of a book addressed to brethren who had been scattered throughout the known world because of the persecution of the righteous (Jas. 1:1), recorded that the continuous and needful prayer of a child of God will always work for the better of that Christian and the situation in which he finds himself (Jas. 5:16b).

## "BE MY HOUSE OF DEFENSE"

David pleaded to the Lord that He would be a "strong rock" that would become a house of defense to protect him. The Lord is the strong foundation of a Christian's faith (Mat. 7:24-27), and He will allow him to not worry about the rains of life because the foundation is secure. There are many places in this world in which there are a great number of earthquakes. Those living in those areas are always mindful that the earth may begin to shake, but if their houses are built with adequate foundations then the likelihood of the structure making it through the shake are drastically increased. When our faith is built upon the Lord, there is absolutely no reason to believe that it will fail when our lives are shaken, and that is exactly what David wanted.

## "YOU ARE MY ROCK"

Much like the plea of David for the Lord to be his strong rock on which his defense is founded, he proclaims that the Lord was his rock and his fortress. Many times in the Scripture, the Lord is asked to do something and said to be already doing it. The question arises, "Why did David ask the Lord to be this, and then say He already was?" The reason is because David wanted that to always be the case! A man might have a house which is built upon a rock, but he has the ability to move that house if he so wishes. David understood the Lord's protection was upon him but that may not always be the case if David did not continue to be a child of God. The church of Jesus Christ was founded upon such a rock (Mat. 16:18) and Jesus stated that the church would never be defeated, but what if a specific congregation moves away from the Lord? Will that church continue to be founded upon that rock? The answer to this is obviously, no. And David understood that the Lord was protecting him in all he did, but it was still needful that he pray to the Lord to continue to be that fortress of protection. Christians, likewise, must always remember to allow the Lord to be their fortress during times of distress through faithful obedience to Him.

## "LEAD ME AND GUIDE ME"

The psalmist knew the Lord was the source of his direction. Many in the world today believe that the Lord will speak directly to them and tell them what is to be done, and the psalmist would have experienced this because at that point the Lord was speaking to the people. Today, we understand that to no longer take place because the written word is available (1 Cor. 13:8-10), but the Lord still leads and guides His people today. He has given those living today the inspired word of God, the same word that is said to be able to

## PREACHER'S BIO

Lee Snow is currently a student at the Memphis School of Preaching and is to graduate in June of 2012. He is a 2008 graduate of Arab High School in Arab, Alabama. He attended Jacksonville State University for two years, where his subject of study was Music Education, before enrolling in MSOP. Currently, Lee preaches for the Wilson Church of Christ in Wilson, Arkansas. After graduation, he hopes to continue in the Lord's work as a preacher of the Gospel.



# UPCOMING ISSUES

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make a man complete and give him everything which is to be used in life and godly living (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Phi. 1:3). If a man allows the Lord to lead him through His divine word, there can be nothing which stands in his way (Phi. 4:13). And, much like David, he will know how to escape the problems of life and will have the Lord with him.

## "PULL ME OUT"

Not only will the child of God be able to escape tribulations, the Lord will pull him out of situations laid by others meant to trip him in his walk. If there is one person in the Bible who had these nets laid for him, it is David. It has been mentioned that he experienced his son rebelling, the king of the nation attempting to kill him, and many other situations which were begun by other people for the sole purpose of stopping David. It may be the case that a Christian experiences situations which he has been put into by the unrighteous of this world. The society of America is quickly becoming more and more hostile for the godly, and many are seeking to

stop New Testament Christianity altogether. The words of the psalmist give light to the feeling of many righteous people no matter what dispensation under which they are living. David followed this statement with acknowledging that the Lord was the source of all his strength.

## "I GIVE MYSELF TO YOU"

David's statement that he gave his spirit to the Lord is the basis of this psalm. It is because he gave everything to the Lord that he wants Him to help him, deliver him, listen to him, protect him, lead him and deliver him. When a person recognizes that the Lord is the only one to be followed in this life, he will understand that a prayer like this will be answered by the Lord. This statement shows without a doubt that the psalmist had the

utmost confidence in the creator during all dangers and troubles. It is interesting that the Christ said these words while on the cross of Calvary (Luke 23:46). Some state this to mean that the psalm under consideration was actually a prophecy of the Christ, but it is entirely possible that the statements of David and Jesus were directed to the Lord to denote the great trust given to the Lord by both men in their times of need. It should be the case that the Christian has given his entire being to the Lord, it is this which will give the most assurance in times of need.

## "YOU HAVE REDEEMED ME"

No matter what the circumstance of life, the Christian finds hope, peace and satisfaction in the fact that the Lord has forgiven all the sins which at one point separated him from the Lord. David thought this to be the most important thing in his situation. He understood that no matter what happened in this life, what others did to him for his faith, or what he put himself through by way of his iniquity the Lord is merciful and

forgiving. Christians have that hope as well. Though it may be the case that a Christian stumbles in his walk, whether it be because of the traps laid by others or his own actions, the Lord will always be there to help him back up and continue to be his rock and his fortress in life's horrible situations (1 John 1:7-9, Rev. 1:5).

## CONCLUSION

The words of David, written so long ago in a time much different than our own, were written for a prayer to the Lord in his time of distress. Isn't it wonderful to know that *if* we ever see circumstances like David, or *when* we see problems of our own, the Lord is there to help, hold, head and hedge us from life's problems if we simply give ourselves to Him. Always remember the words of Paul when he said that there is no problem or situation in which we find ourselves that isn't common to man and is above the Lord's help (1 Cor. 10:12-14).

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- Lee Snow (Editor of PFP)

April 2012

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## THE PLEASURES OF ADVERSITIES

2 Cor. 12:10

- SEAN O'BRIEN

After considering passages of scriptures that have been used during difficult moments in my life, I was able to esteem one passage as most favorable based on its meaning, message and might. The scripture chosen is 2 Corinthians 12:10 and it states: "*Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong*" (King James Version). This verse is a powerful passage that, when applied, results in a transformed mind and attitude when faced with adversity.

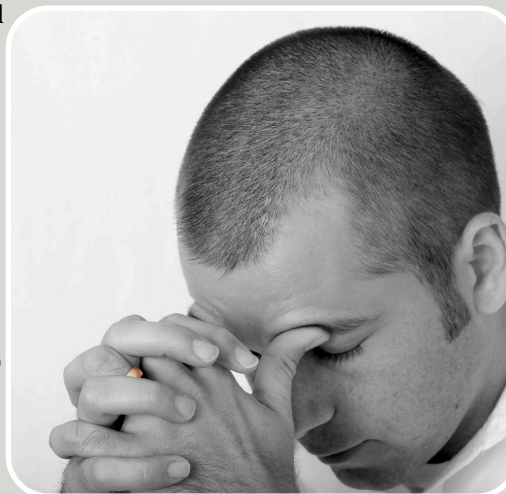
### THE MEANING

*"Therefore, I take pleasure..."*

When Paul references taking pleasure, he is using the language used by God to express satisfaction with His Son (cf. Mat. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; 2 Pet. 1:17) (Rogers, James 1989 *Denton Lectures on 2 Corinthians*, Edited by Dub McClish, pg. 267). In other words, Paul is saying, "I am well

satisfied" (Vine, W.E. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, pg. 871; Mounce, William *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, pg. 519). "Here is a conscious exercise of the will, for there is no sensation in the matter of suffering that gives pleasure" (Jackson, Bill *A Commentary on Second Corinthians*, pg. 108). Unlike certain religious methodologies (ie. Islam), Paul is not seeking martyrdom, but he is rather choosing an attitude of

satisfaction rather than displeasure regardless of the persecution he faces (Robertson, Archibald *Word Pictures in the New Testament: Volume IV (The Epistles of Paul)*, pg. 266). The decisiveness of Paul to choose an attitude of satisfaction in times of suffering is a Biblical concept found throughout the New Testament writings. The Hebrews writer refers to Christ's sacrifice on the cross as an event that the Son of God considered to be one of joy (cf. Heb. 12:2). Likewise, James gives command concerning this concept when he writes, "... count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (Jam. 1:2) (Jackson, Bill, pg. 108). Of necessity, Paul relied on God for wisdom in order to gain a proper perception of his sufferings so that he might see how God would be glorified in his weakness (cf. Jam. 1:5; 2 Cor. 12:9) (Mosher, Keith 2011 *MSOP Class Lecture Notes on James*, May 23<sup>rd</sup>). Such a satisfied and joyful attitude is on display during the persecution Paul and Silas endured while in the Philippi prison after they received many stripes through beatings (cf. Acts 16:22-25).



## PREACHER'S BIO

Sean O'Brien is a graduate of the University of Georgia where he received a degree in finance. He and his wife, Hannah, have three children; Bailey, Shannah, and Murphy. Sean is currently a student at the Memphis School of Preaching and will be working with the Durham congregation in Durham, NC upon graduation.

(Editor's Note: Sean and Hannah are currently seeking financial support for their upcoming work in Durham. If anyone wishes to learn how they can support this work of the Lord, please contact PFP at [thepfp@live.com](mailto:thepfp@live.com))

### "... in infirmities..."

Vine's Expository Dictionary defines infirmities as follows: "want of strength... weakness, indicating inability to produce results" (Vine, W.E., pg. 597). The word refers to one's limitations or inadequacies (Mounce, William, pg. 781-782). Infirmities are weaknesses of the mortal mind and human frailties that are incapable of producing man's spiritual desires and the inner strengths that are essential for joy in this life and salvation in the life to come (Ibid., pg. 782). Blessings of such a spiritual nature can only come when one has been obedient to the gospel (that which is God's power to save man from his sinful, weakened, inadequate state) by being baptized "into Christ" (cf. Eph. 1:3; Rom. 1:16; Gal. 3:27).

### "... in reproaches..."

A different form of this word is used in Acts 27:10 and 27:21 and is rendered as "damage" and "disaster" to describe what occurred to the ship (Rogers, James, pg. 267). Here, Paul is referencing the wrong that has come upon him because of violence, injury and insult (Lipscomb, David A *Commentary on the New Testament Epistles: Volume III*, pg. 161). The word denotes treatment that is willfully harsh and injurious (Jackson, Bill, pg. 108).

### "... in necessities..."

Paul had experienced what it meant to be in need. In 2 Cor. 11:27, he states

that he was often in need of food, drink, sleep, warmth and raiment. However, in Phil. 4:12-13, he states that he had learned to be content both when he abounded and when he was in need. Interestingly (considering the passage of this study) he acknowledges Christ as the source of his strength to find contentment in all circumstances of life (cf. Phil. 4:13).

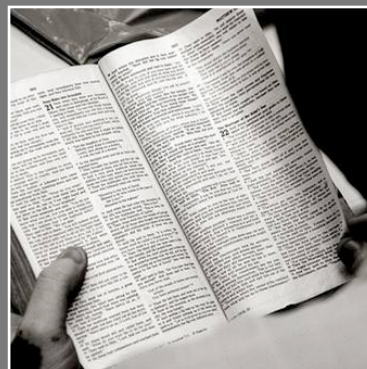
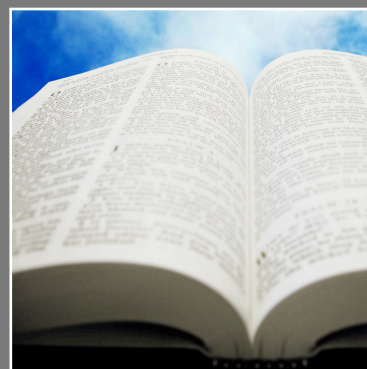
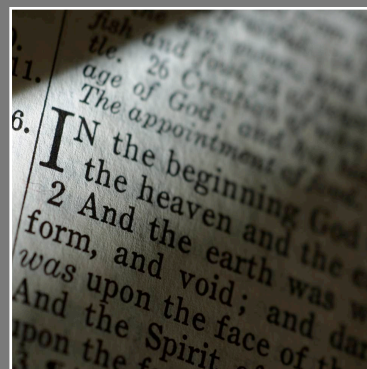
### "... in persecutions..."

The word persecution is derived from a word meaning "pursue, chase" and is literally the result of pursuing one in order to inflict harassment and oppression; hence the word, *pursue*-cution (Mounce, William, pg. 509). A Biblical illustration of one who was *pursue*-cuted is David running for his life while being sought by Saul (cf. 1 Sam. 21-24). Paul would later write the preacher Timothy, that all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer afflictions or persecutions (cf. 2 Tim. 3:12).

### "... in distresses..."

"Distress" in the original literally means "narrowness of space" and defines a state of dire calamity and extreme anguish (Thayer, Joseph *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, pg. 587). It is the condition of one who is in trauma because of affliction (Renn, Stephen *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, pg. 291). This word is definitive of an emotional and mental state that is a result of the outward circumstances that are created by the harmful actions of others who are intentionally seeking to inflict pain.

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*"... for Christ's sake:..."*

Paul acknowledges that Christ is the reason as to why he suffered through all the hardships mentioned. This admission is given to the glory of God and is not stated regrettably or shamefully (cf. Rom. 1:16). The whole passage up to this point is similar to the sentiment of the apostles who rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ (cf. Acts 5:41).

While he was on the earth, Jesus stated that those who keep His commandments are His friends, and that in doing so hatred from the world would be brought upon His disciples for His name's sake (cf. John 15:14-21). Just as Christ promised and just as Paul was experiencing, living a life obedient to the will of Christ always results in one being persecuted in some way (cf. John 15:19; 2 Tim. 3:12). It is important to note that the sufferings that took place in these instances did occur "for Christ's sake" or in His name. Self inflicted persecution or living a life of asceticism does not glorify God; rather, God is glorified in sufferings when such occurs because of one's faithfulness to Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 4:16).

*"... for when I am weak, then I am strong"*

After giving the reason as to why the apostle suffered his afflictions, he now states the way in which he endured such. One might ask: how did you do it Paul? Paul would possibly respond by pointing

the inquirer to a previous chapter in this same letter: 2 Cor. 4:17, which states, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory". It is because of the eternal weight of glory that is available because of a resurrected Savior that Paul had the strength to endure such harsh circumstances.

#### THE MESSAGE

A football coach once told his team, "Men, pain and suffering is temporary, but pride and accomplishment is forever". As Paul "coaches" us today by pleading for our submission and faithfulness to Christ, he is saying, "Pain and suffering is temporary, but **salvation and God's glory is eternal**" (cf. 2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 4:20). Regardless of the type or amount of persecution and suffering we may face upon this earth while living faithfully for Christ, the Christian must always remember that the suffering is only temporary, but the eternal home and glory given to God is eternal. The Christian that adopts such an attitude and transforms his mind through the gospel of Christ will be able to say as Paul did, "I take pleasure" in afflictions for Christ's sake (cf. Rom. 12:1-2).

#### THE MIGHT

In our weakest, lowest, hardest, saddest or loneliest times in life, we must always remember the power of the gospel and the strength of the

resurrection (cf. Rom. 1:16). We have a Lord and Savior who took on the pain, persecution, torture and death we should have suffered, and in doing so went to the cross and died and was buried in a tomb before rising again the third day. Think about that for a moment, the second member of the Godhead, the Christ, the Son of God, the Creator of this world, died and was buried in a tomb (cf. Col. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-5). The God of heaven and earth humbled Himself to the point of death, even the shameful death of a cross used to penalize criminals, to then be buried by men who were created by Him and in His very image (cf. Phil. 2:6-8). The reason and reality of Christ's death, burial and resurrection is the might and strength that Paul accessed when being washed clean from his sins and when he was in desperate need of strength during the weakest moments of his life (cf. Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:1-9).

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# THE PREACHER'S FAVORITE PASSAGE

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## OBEYING THE GOSPEL

Rom. 6:1-4

- TYLER KIRKPATRICK

### INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

Symbolism provides a gateway for better understanding the world. The Bible often uses this medium for illustration purposes. Beautiful images are created in the minds of man with each figurative tie that's made through writing. Paul, the author of much of the New Testament through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, uses this avenue of figurative language in describing our baptism into Christ and its relationship to the actual sacrifice of Christ in his writings to the brethren in Rome.

The book of Romans deals heavily with the theme of justification. Paul introduces this subject by noting that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that that gospel is the power of God unto salvation for every individual (Rom. 1:16). Justification is the process by which God declares man innocent or guiltless. God justifies man through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul's writings are shown to be consistent when at the beginning of his second letter to the brethren in

Thessalonica he notes that all individuals who do not know God and have not obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ will be punished with eternal destruction (2 The. 1:8,9). And yet, this was an encouraging message to the brethren there who were being persecuted vehemently. Paul wanted them to know that God is just and will not overlook the terrible things done to them.

From the book of Romans and 2 Thessalonians we know that it is the gospel that makes man righteous and that it must be obeyed if one is to be in a right relationship with God. What is the Gospel and how can it be obeyed?

Paul would write in his letter to the Corinthians that the gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:3,4). Understanding that the word 'gospel' means literally the 'good news' or 'good message' one can see clearly just what Paul meant in describing the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That death and resurrection was the good news for

mankind! It was for this purpose that Jesus came to earth! If the gospel is the good news concerning Jesus Christ and his death, burial and resurrection, then what did Paul mean when he said that those who do not obey the gospel would be punished by Jesus himself as was mentioned above (2 The. 1:8,9)?

This question shows the importance of the statements made by Paul to the brethren at Rome. The main passage that is under consideration in this article is that of Romans 6:3,4. Knowing that Romans deals heavily with the theme of justification and that it is essential for one to 'obey the gospel' to be in a right relationship with him the aforementioned verse of Romans 6:3,4 is considered.

To better understand Romans chapter six, one must understand why Paul asks the question that he does in verse one. Verse one of chapter six is essentially asking what is their response supposed to be considering the aforementioned facts. These facts consist of the message found at the end of Romans chapter five; mainly that through one man came sin and death

# PREACHER'S BIO

Tyler Kirkpatrick is the associate preacher at the West Visalia Church of Christ. He is a 2011 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching.

into the world, namely Adam. But, just as through this one man came sin and death there is also life through one man, that of Jesus Christ. Paul extends this thought even further by noting that the superiority of grace over sin is shown within this discussion. If Jesus has given man salvation through the grace of God and Adam brought sin into this world through his actions then grace is greater than sin. It overcomes the problem that man has with sin.

With these thoughts in mind Paul asks the question, 'What shall we say then?'. What was the response of the Romans to these great truths set forth? The answer was shocking. To show what their response is Paul asks another question. He asks, 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?'. Some of the Roman Christians actually had the idea that if the power of grace was exemplified in its overcoming of sin then they should sin more so that grace was put forth in an even greater light.

## TEXT

All of this has brought the reader of the book to this one central point and the main focus of this article. Paul's answer to their ignorant line of thinking is essentially this: An individual that obeys the gospel cannot live a life of sin. Paul here will describe what it means to obey the gospel by showing the correlation between an individuals baptism and the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

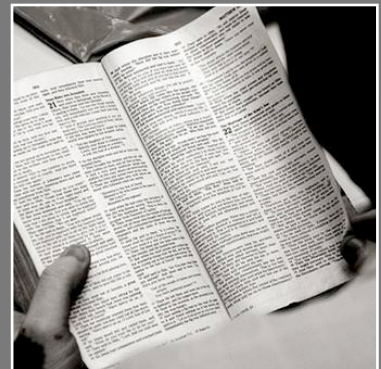
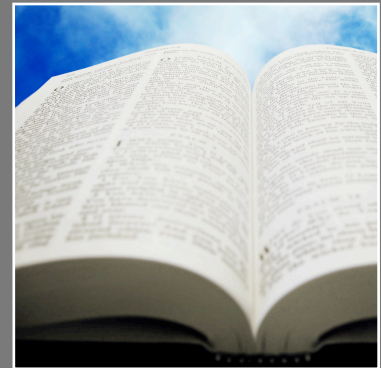
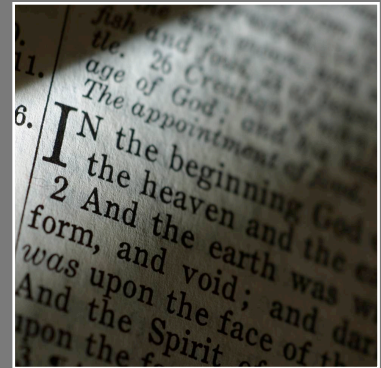
Verse 2: Can an individual sin to exemplify the grace of God? Paul answers with a resounding no. Some versions say, 'God forbid' here in verse two. The message to the Romans was simple: Sin is never permissible in the eyes of God. His follow up question

clears this up even more when begins to explain why this is the case. He continues by asking, 'We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?'. Paul is inherently is insinuating that they should have understood this concept. Later in chapter six Paul will elaborate even more on this concept of being 'dead to sin'. From this verse the implication however is that they have died to the practice of sin at one point. They no longer supposed to be living a life identified by ungodliness. If they had died to sin, then how could they live any longer in that state?

Verse 3: Explaining his answer even further he looks to a special event in the life of a Christian. In verse three he asks if they are ignorant concerning their own baptism. These questions are rhetorical in that Paul thought that they should already know the answer. In this Paul affirms that all individuals that have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into his death. There is a special tie here that should not be missed. An individual dies to sin when they become a Christian. When? The connection is made when they are baptized. This thought will be strengthened when Paul comments further on the concept of baptism and Christ.

Verse 4: In the process of baptism a further connecting point is made. Not only was their baptism connected to the death of Christ but Paul adds that all they who had been baptized were also buried with Christ. It should be noted that this is further evidence of what baptism meant to the disciples of Jesus Christ. They were actually buried in water just as Christ was buried in his tomb. Baptism was not a sprinkling, pouring, or act of the mind.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

### THERE ARE PEOPLE EVERYWHERE!

One year ago this month a funny thing happened in Peru. A clan of isolated Amazon Indians began appearing on the banks of a jungle river popular with environmental tourists. The Mashco-Piro Indians have been blamed for two bow-and-arrow attacks on people near the riverbank in Madre de Dios. Some scientists say that the clan members' appearance last year may have been because they are losing land to loggers and they may have been pushed out after seeing low-flying aircraft from a nearby natural gas and oil exploration. These sightings of the very isolated people have been called, "the most detailed sightings of un-contacted Indians ever recorded on camera." Isn't it interesting that there are people all over the world today that have never been contacted by what we would call civilization? It makes Jesus' words all the more meaningful when He told His people to, "Go and teach all nations (Mat. 28:19)." With the knowledge of these people, Christians' minds go to the overwhelming responsibility that we hold in taking the Gospel to the world and preaching it to every human being under Heaven (Mark 16:15-16). But, WE CAN DO IT!

Another thing of some importance is the simple observation concerning death and burials. Namely, that the only people that are buried are those that have died. This perfectly ties into the previous verse in that a person dies to sin and is baptized into Christ's death when they are actually baptized. Paul perfects these comments on their response to sin and grace by making the connection between baptism and the resurrection. Paul and the individuals he is writing to were all baptized. In this baptism they had symbolized Christ's death and burial. Bringing all of this together Paul states that all of them were in like manner raised with Christ as a new creature just as he was raised from the dead after his crucifixion. Paul will elaborate more on this idea in the verses to follow.

### IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

When an individual is baptized into Jesus Christ they symbolize and declare the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus are the centerpiece to the gospel itself as we noted in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul is thus describing the proper obedience to the death, burial and resurrection of our Master. Jesus expects us to die to sin in baptism, be buried with Him in our baptism where we essentially contact the blood of Christ, and be raised to live a new life being a new creature before God. In Jesus' death we find his blood shed. We access that redeeming blood that frees from our sin (Rev. 1:5) when we are baptized.

Baptism is not an option if one wants to be obedient to God. Paul told the Thessalonians that all those that did not show obedience to the gospel or good news of God's Son would be punished by His Son. Baptism is the centerpiece then of the new life that is found in Christ. As a side note to this issue one must also recognize that it is in baptism that ones sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38) and that it is in Christ Jesus that all spiritual blessings are found (Eph. 1:3). Within these verses considered one sees that it is through their baptism that they are put into Christ and thus have access to those spiritual blessings.

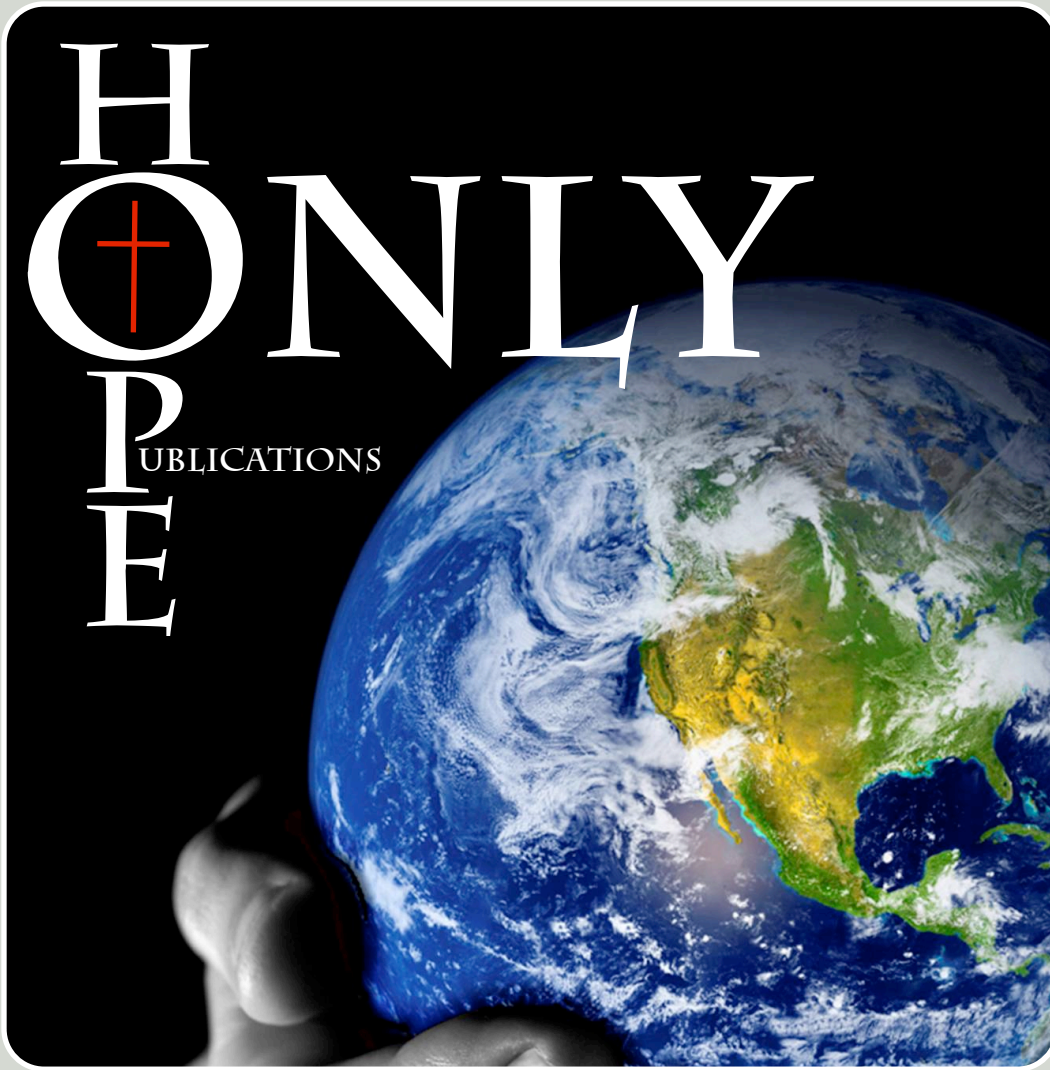
In our world that promotes skepticism and uncertainty we must all take comfort in witnessing the simple message of Christ with our own eyes as we examine the sacred test. If you are reading this article and have not been baptized into Christ then you need to do whatever it takes to ensure that that takes place. Brethren, may we always remember the great sacrifice and resurrection of our Lord and Master.



# H O P E

ONLY

PUBLICATIONS



## **What if there were a group of Christians devoted to addressing the world's religions?**

With the number of world religions growing, and their adherents becoming more and more vigilant, there is a need for Christians to stand against the false religions and practices of this world. Thanks to the vision of a great brother in Christ, Fred Bogel, four men will be doing just that. Will Anderson, Shawn Bogeman, Sean O'Brien (featured last month in the PFP) and I, Lee Snow, will be undertaking the task of

helping God's people to know about these religions and how to defend the Truth against their onslaughts. This work will be daunting, but very rewarding to those who are involved. The goal of Only Hope Publications will be to publish videos, articles, books, and any other media for the edification of the church and the escalation of the Lord's truth.

While this is still in the early stages, we are very excited about this work and wish to ask for your prayers and thoughts as we begin to learn more and delve deep into the beliefs and teachings of the world. Brother Bogel has seen the great need for such a group of brethren, and because of his love for the Lord and His church he has started us on this journey. It is because of his foresight and because of all he does for the truth that we ask for you to not only pray for us, but for him as well.

- Lee Snow, Will Anderson, Sean O'Brien,  
Shawn Bogeman

June 2012

# THE PREACHER'S FAVORITE PASSAGE

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## BLESSED ASSURANCE

- CLIFTON ANGEL

Rom. 8:1

Hearing produces faith (Rom. 10:17). Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Repentance, a decision made within the mind to change the direction of your life, is required for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Confessing with the mouth leads to salvation (Rom. 10:10). And the culmination of all these actions occurs when one is baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3, 4). It is at this point that a person puts on Christ (Gal. 3:27). It is at this point that a person's sins are washed away (Acts 22:16). It is at this point that a person is saved (Mark 16:16). It is at this point that a person has access to all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).

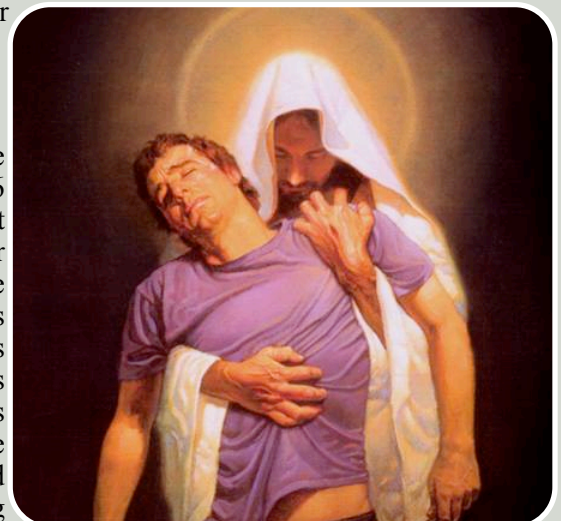
Yet, after this point, it is still possible for a person to sin (1 John 1:8). Even so, it is possible for a person to so sin as to be lost eternally (1 John 5:16; 2 Pet. 2:20-22). With this fact in mind, it is often the case that Christians find themselves "walking on eggshells" in fear of so sinning. Furthermore, they will sin,

and then become discouraged, begin to doubt their salvation, forgetting the power of the blood of Christ, and live in misery, wondering why such misery can be found in those that are to be most happy of all. Dear friends and brethren, such doubt should not be found in a Christian, for we have **blessed assurance!** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus* (Rom. 8:1a). Will you consider with me the power preserved in this pithy passage?

### NOW

In the King James Version, the third word is a word found 1,236 other times in the same Bible, yet a word that cries out for further study at every mention. The word: *therefore*. What is *therefore* there for? Or for what is *therefore* there? Paul is concluding something. He has just been explaining the discouragement, heartache, and struggle that came with living

under the old law (c.f. Rom. 7:5-25). Paul begins such a discussion with the phrase, *for when we were in the flesh* (Rom. 7:5). *Flesh* was a symbolic term that Paul sometimes used to refer to the temporary old law (c.f. Gal. 3:1-3). What was wrong with the old law, Paul? Nothing! *The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good* (Rom. 7:12). It served exactly the purpose God intended for it (c.f. Gal.



# PREACHER'S BIO

Clifton is the preacher of the Coldwater Church of Christ in Coldwater, MS.  
He is a 2011 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching.

3:19-27). Then, what is the problem? With a paraphrase of Romans 7 and evident events in Paul's life, consider what he might say: Me! I'm the problem; I have sinned! Let me explain. It's the yearly Passover Feast. I have my beautiful young lamb. Many friends and family will be there. I take my lamb to the priest. I smell the burning flesh. I see blood all over the place. I tell him my sin, and just for a moment I hoped...I thought that maybe...but he said, "Remember, you're still a sinner." *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* (Rom. 7:24).

But **now**. *There is therefore now*. Can you try to picture Paul's face as this was being written? I wonder if his eyes lit up with joy? Perhaps a smile came across his face and tears began to roll down his cheeks? **Now**. Paul was a man that knew what it was like to live under the old law and under the new law--the Gospel! Do we ever stop and thank God that we live **now** in the course of time?

## NO CONDEMNATION

The original word here translated *condemnation* literally means "down judgment". When we think of heaven, we think "up". When we think of hell, we think "down". To be condemned would mean that at the judgment, one would be going "down" to hell.

However, we are talking about **no condemnation**. When a house is condemned, it is declared "unfit for use". There is no life in that house. Likewise, there is no life in a condemned person. But in Christ, there is *no condemnation*, and His life is in you (c.f. Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 2:20).

Consider the end of the chapter in which our text of focus is found:

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 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 is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Rom. 8:35-39).

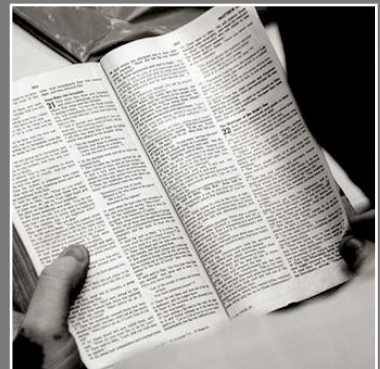
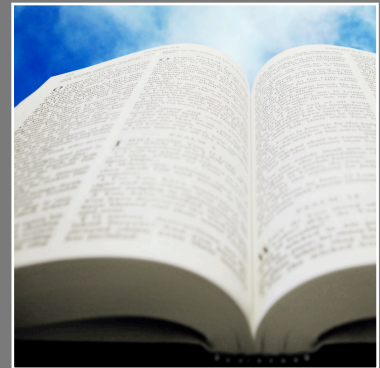
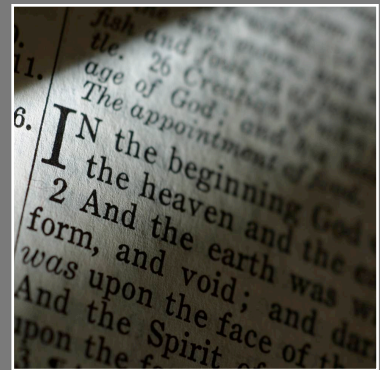
O, the **blessed assurance** of *no condemnation*! Who can separate me from the love of Christ? Only I can separate myself from the love of Christ. The Apostle Paul knew this, for he said, *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway* (1 Cor. 9:27).

## IN CHRIST

The phrase *in Christ* occurs some 77 times in the New Testament. *In the Lord* can be found some 111 times throughout the Bible. The Bible gives definite importance to one being *in Christ*.

What is so great about one being *in Christ*? It is *in Christ* that the fulfillment of prophecies and eternal plans are found (Eph. 1:10). It was *in Christ* that God's eternal purpose was accomplished (Eph. 3:11). It is *in Christ* that all spiritual blessings are found (Eph. 1:3). Think about the blessing of approaching our

# ABOUT PFP



*The Preacher's Favorite Passage* is a monthly electronic bulletin written by various preachers of the Gospel and compiled by Lee Snow. Each preacher is asked to write an article about his favorite passage of the Bible in an exegetical format for the edification of the Lord's church and education of the lost.

Since the Bible has so many wonderful passages, some preachers may appear more than once.

# UPCOMING WRITERS

JULY - DON GAREY

AUGUST - NATHANIEL FERGUSON

SEPTEMBER - TRENT CHILDERS

OCTOBER - WILL ANDERSON

NOVEMBER - SHAWN BOGEMAN

DECEMBER - NORMAN SPANN

## FROM THE EDITOR

### MR. SPEWER 2000

Many may have heard of the recent recall of millions of coffee makers which were spewing hot, liquid coffee and grounds on the nearest person. More than 5.7 million of these makers were called back because no one could stop their harmful actions. The interesting thing about this happening is that the makers weren't the old fashioned, filter and carafe, multi-cup style, but the single-cup makers. Many people don't think of a single cup of coffee being as dangerous, or more dangerous, than a hot carafe full of the extremely hot liquid. But, 160 people were injured. Like these coffee makers, we have something that has the potential of being very harmful, though it seems so innocent. That being the tongue. James wrote that not many people should take on the role of being preachers and teachers of the Word of God, because the tongue can get us into hotter water than any dysfunctional coffee maker (Jas. 3:1-6). But, that concept applies to anyone with a tongue. Let's not allow our tongues to harm ourselves or others! Maybe it's time we had a personal recall on our tongues? - Lee Snow

Father in prayer. Think about the blessing of forgiveness of sins. Think about the blessing of offering up spiritual sacrifices in spirit and truth on the first day of the week. Think about the blessing of walking *in the light*.

*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...If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:7-9).

Jesus is *the light of the world* (John 8:12). If we are walking in the Light, it is the same as saying we are walking *in Christ*! Sometimes we do not realize how saved we are! God is not like human beings in that He is not watching our every move with intentions of catching us in a fault. He does not want to condemn us! He wants to save us (1 Tim. 2:4)!

*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,*

*whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things* (Phil. 4:4-8).

These latter words are quoted from a man that was in prison when he wrote them. They are quoted from a man that received 195 stripes from the Jews, had been stoned and left for dead, was beaten with rods on three occasions (no telling how many times they hit him), was shipwrecked on three different occasions (could you imagine being in the deep?). No one could stop a man like Paul because he had **blessed assurance**. It has been said that if you let Paul free, he would convert the world, if you put him in prison, he would write the Bible, and if you kill him, you will put him right where he wants to be--with Christ. He said, *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me* (Gal. 2:20).

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long."

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus* (Rom. 8:1a).



July 2012

# THE PREACHER'S FAVORITE PASSAGE

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## THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

John 15:1-8

- DON GAREY

A question I once asked myself that I am sure many have asked themselves is: “what is the purpose of life?” Before I became a Christian, I could not answer that question. Life was meaningless and I lived that way. The Bible has the answer. In fact, this question cannot be answered without the Bible. Thus, this brings us to our text, and this preacher’s favorite passage:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 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. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them

into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:1–8 KJV).

It is plainly provided by this passage that our purpose is to glorify God, verse 8. What greater thing could a servant do than bring honor to his master? The creation owes something to its creator. The way to glorify the Father is by bearing fruit, this is the work of a disciple (follower) of Christ. Thus we see our relationship as Christians to the Father and the Christ. In addressing this passage we will notice the relationships between the Christ, the Father, and the Christians.

### THE CHRIST

Christ has provided us with a concise description of Himself (John 15:1a). The fact that He is the ‘true’ vine implies there are other vines that are not true.

# GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN

The most important question that can ever be discussed is,

"What must I do to be saved from my sins?" It is the only question that really matters in life. But, in order to answer such a question, one must go to the entirety of the New Testament for the true, complete, answer. Why?

Because the New Testament is the source of divine instruction for the man living today (Gal. 3:15-25, John 12:48). So, what is the answer? Here it is...

Hear the Word of God -  
Romans 10:17

Believe Jesus is the Son of  
God - John 8:34

Repent of your past sins  
and vow to never live a life  
lead by sin - Acts 2:38

Confess the Christ as the  
Savior of mankind - Rom.  
10:14-15

Be baptized, immersed in  
water, for the forgiveness  
of your past sins, knowing  
that you will be added to  
the Lord's Church - Acts  
2:38, 42

# PREACHER'S BIO

Don Garey and his wife Caiti have one daughter, Kynslee. Don is currently in his second year at the Memphis School of Preaching and will complete his studies in January 2013. He is presently preaching at the Hughes church of Christ in Hughes, AR.

This statement was a fact when it was written and it remains a fact today. There are several religious bodies in the world, but only one has been proven against all manners of trial. It is the shroud of numerous denominations whose doctrines contradict themselves that have failed trials of logical and historical natures which has led to the confusion as to whether Christianity has truly passed the test or not. Christ is the one and only "true vine."

The vine has a direct relationship with the branches that grow from it. The branch must be a part of the correct vine. What good is the branch of a pumpkin vine to someone who specializes in growing grapes? It is worthless. Unless the branch is apart of the correct vine, it is not deemed worthy of further examination.

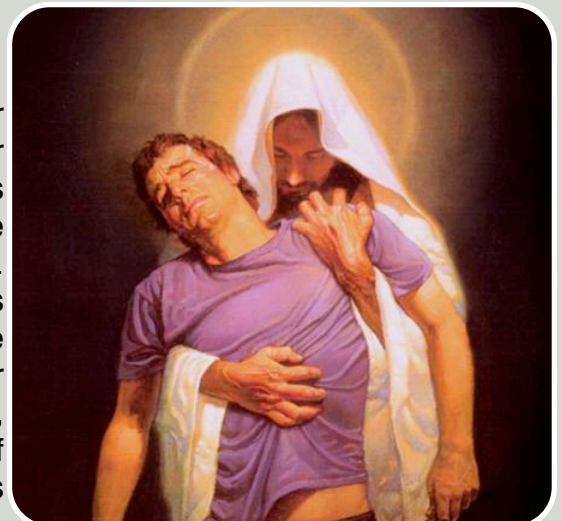
## THE FATHER

The identity of the Father relative to the other components of the parable is given. The Father is the "husbandman" (John 15:1b). He is the farmer; notice that as such He tends to all of the branches, both those that bear fruit and those that do not, (John 15:2). One nature of God is often overlooked; He is

of a 'just' nature. Many are led to believe that God's love is greater than His 'justness.' However, God cannot violate any of His natures. God is just in that He cannot condemn a just man, nor can He condone an evil man. Each branch will be dealt with accordingly.

Each branch referred to in this passage are apart of 'the' vine. Notice in John 15:2a, "every branch in me." Christ is speaking, these are apart of the "true vine." Observe the following verse, "Now ye are clean..." The greek term translated now here is ἤδη, phonetically: ay-day, meaning: even now, already, or by this time (John 15:3, Strong's). These were branches already made clean by the "word."

There are numerous



# UPCOMING WRITERS

AUGUST - NATHANIEL FERGUSON

SEPTEMBER - TRENT CHILDERS

OCTOBER - WILL ANDERSON

NOVEMBER - SHAWN BOGEMAN

DECEMBER - NORMAN SPANN

JANUARY - LEE SNOW

verses in the Bible which contradict the doctrine of 'once saved, always saved.' The truth set forth in this passage is undeniable. Those branches that "**beareth not fruit**" are taken away (John 15:2a). As long as the branches bear fruit, they are purged, "**that they may bring forth more fruit.**"

## THE CHRISTIANS

In John 15:4-6 Christ reveals to us who the branches are. As disciples, it is the responsibility of the branches to bear fruit. In order for this to be possible, the branches must abide in the vine. A branch without a vine cannot bear fruit, verse 4.

John 15:5a, "**ye are the branches**;" we, as disciples of Christ, as New Testament Christians, are the branches. Christ reiterates for emphasis that the branches are to abide in the vine. We cannot bear fruit without Christ!

Verse 6 reveals the end of Christians who do not bear fruit.

-They are "**cast forth as a branch**," separated from the Christ.

-They are "**withered**," spiritually.

-They are "**gathered by men**," led astray by the

doctrines of men.

-They are "**cast... into the fire**," led to condemnation by these men.

-Lastly, "**they are burned**," by the Father, the Husbandman, as punishment.

The gravity and greatness of this lesson given by Christ is culminated in verses 7 and 8. If we abide in Christ and His words abide in us... Give this some thought. To abide means to obey, to comply with, to conform to (Apple Oxford English Dictionary). This is a conditional statement, a prerequisite of the following: "**ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.**" If my goal is to fulfill my purpose in life, to glorify God, then I can accomplish that goal through Christ, for "**Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples**" (John 15:8).

Christ is our vine, the life of the branches. As fruitful Christians, the Father, our husbandman, purges us by providing us with more opportunities to bear fruit. Without Christ: we cannot bear fruit, we cannot glorify God, we cannot fulfill our purpose in life.

## FROM THE EDITOR

### WHAT ARE PEOPLE THINKING?

A few weeks ago, I was scrolling through my Facebook statuses seeing what interesting things were going on in my friends lives and I happened upon a posting from an acquaintance of mine who was on a long trip all around the country. His post was about an incident that happened in Canada with a woman from Albania. Apparently, she asked him how Americans were responding to the fact that our government is beginning to openly support homosexuality as an overall stance. She spoke of her father, who was still in Albania and had "literally cried" over the announcement about the leader of this country's support of homosexuality. She then said that her father went on for more than a few minutes about how upset and saddened he was about the fall of the once great United States of America. Isn't it interesting that people the world over are seeing the happenings here as the falling of a country, when the majority of the country under consideration is blinded to the facts? But, that is exactly what happened in the minds of the 1st Century world (Rom. 1:22-32). What was the God given way of fixing the problem? Let's let the Christ speak about this; "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel..." (Mark 16:15-16). A country will only be changed by the changing of the minds of the citizens. While the world loves the idea of the humanistic mindset, there are still those who understand the sinful ways of these actions. Nonetheless, those who hold to these actions and those who commit them still need to be taught the love of God and His divine way of life. - Lee Snow



August 2012

# THE PREACHER'S FAVORITE PASSAGE

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There once was a great king who ruled in the east. He spent much of his time fighting evil, heathen nations that tried to take the land that God had given his people. While encamped in a cave called Adullam this king became thirsty, and he wanted something to drink. He desired greatly the waters of a well in Bethlehem where the army of this heathen nation was camped. So three of his strongest men fought tooth and nail through the encampment of the enemy, known as the Philistines, to go to that specific well and bring the water from it. After receiving the water, the King would not drink it but poured it out to God because the men who brought to him jeopardized their lives just so he could have water from that particular well. This King was none other than King David of Israel and this is no fictional story. The account of these events can be found in 2 Samuel 23:13-17. In this chapter, beginning in verse one King David delivers his last speech as king. It reads, **“Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel...”** This king was the sweet psalmist, writer of most of the book of Psalms, who was raised up by the God of Israel and also spoke by the inspiration of God according to 2 Samuel 23:2, **“The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.”** He was a great king who fought in many battles, winning many victories for the Lord. It is in this farewell speech of this inspired warrior-king that he relates this story and reveals the names of these three mighty men. In 2 Samuel 23:8 David talks about these men and what made them so powerful and brave.

Christians also are in a spiritual battle according to Ephesians 6:12, **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against**

**principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”** Here Paul, the apostle, tells the Church in Ephesus that the spiritual battle is not physical but against sin and wickedness that causes spiritual death. In 1 Peter 5:8 the apostle, Peter writes, **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”.** He is telling Christians that the Devil is everywhere looking for ways to enticing everyone into his trap of sin. Christians are in a battle for the soul, and they must be strong if they wish to oppose so great an enemy. They need to be like those three mighty men in their spiritual battle. Therefore let's consider physical traits these three mighty warriors possessed to see how they can be applied to Christians.

## DINO THE EZNITE: PREPARATION

2 Samuel 2:8 reads, **“These be the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite; he lift up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.”** The first mighty man David discusses is Tachmonite Adino who was the leader of the captains. This alone would be evidence that Adino was a very powerful man. He had the strength and the knowledge to lead this great army in battle, but the scripture says more about Adino. He killed eight hundred men at one time! Now keep in mind that during this time the most sophisticated weapon in the world was the bow and arrow. There were no jet

Continued on page 3



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SEPTEMBER - TRENT CHILDERS

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planes, tanks, grenades, bombs, or guns. Adino killed eight hundred people without these devices! The scripture does not say how, but one can know that it took great strength and preparation to accomplish such a great feat. He had to be sure his weapon was sharp and ready and that he had the proper protection. To lead others into battle, the chief of the captains had to be prepared.

We must also be ready, but how does a Christian prepare for a spiritual battle? 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 states, **“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”**

To be prepared Christians need the proper equipment. The battle that Christians face is spiritual so the weapons they use are not physical. In Ephesians 6:11 Paul speaks of the protective covering for Christians. **“Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”** Christian have a defense provided by God. It is His armor. Ephesians 6:14-17 Paul then goes through the different pieces of armor. The one where we will focus can be found in verse seventeen. Paul writes, **“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”**

All the armor is important but for this article there is a concentration on the weapon. Adino killed the eight hundred with some weapon that he prepared to fight with and to defend himself. For the Christian the weapon is the *Sword of the Spirit*, the Word of God. The Bible is the sword that fights Satan

and sin. Hebrews 4:12 states that the word of God is the spiritual sword that is sharper than any real sword, more powerful, dividing even the marrow from the bones and discerns hearts.

Adino prepared himself by acquiring a proper weapon for defeating eight hundred men. A Christian must acquire the proper weapon to defeat Satan which is the *Sword of the Spirit*, the Word of God. A Christian must prepare as Adino prepared himself by acquiring a proper weapon for defeating eight hundred men. A Christian must acquire the proper weapon to defeat Satan which is the *Sword of the Spirit*, the Word of God. A Christian must prepare as Adino prepared.

## ELEAZAR THE AHOHITE: COURAGE

Next, in 2 Samuel 23:9-10 King David discusses the second mighty man, Eleazar the Ahohite. David says, **“And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil.”** Eleazar was also a great man who was very brave and full of courage. He fought so long past the point of weariness even until his hand stuck to the hilt of the sword. Now this is possible in two ways. One, Eleazar killed so many men that the blood on the sword dried sticking Eleazar’s hand to the hilt like a glue, or he fought so hard for so long that his hand became stiff and he could not release his grasp

## FROM THE EDITOR

### A LITTLE AT A TIME

“I would say to set short term goals that can be reached, not just long term goals. If you only set long-term goals, it will take forever for you to feel like you’ve done anything. Short term goals give you little successes that can keep you moving.”

That’s the advice given by someone I have never met, but have a connection to, to people looking to do what she will be doing this Friday. Janet Cherobon-Bawcon goes to Jacksonville State University, where I attended two years, she also is a graduate of Harding University in Searcy, AR, which you may know is associated with the Lord’s church. Janet is an athlete of the highest caliber. You see, she is going to be running the 10,000 meter this Friday in a place where the whole world has their eyes set to... London. That’s right, Janet, a girl from rural Kenya who got a brake and made it through college, graduate work and starting a family, will be running in the biggest arena to ever hit the world, The Olympics. If you want a little more about Janet’s life you can visit the link at the bottom.

But, what can Janet teach Christians all over the world by her advice she would give Olympic hopefuls? You may remember that we are commanded to preach the Gospel to EVERY PERSON on earth (Mark 16:15-16, Mat. 28:19-20). But, that task seems pretty daunting. So, let’s take Janet’s advice and set small, short-term goals like evangelizing our town, or our state, or even smaller... our families. I know Janet’s short-term goal setting has worked, and I know our’s will too if we just get to work. - Lee Snow

Janet’s Story - [click here](#)



# GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN

The most important question that can ever be discussed is,

"What must I do to be saved from my sins?" It is the only question that really matters in life. But, in order to answer such a question, one must go to the entirety of the New Testament for the true, complete, answer. Why?

Because the New Testament is the source of divine instruction for the man living today (Gal. 3:15-25, John 12:48). So, what is the answer? Here it is...

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Romans 10:17

Believe Jesus is the Son of  
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Repent of your past sins  
and vow to never live a  
life lead by sin - Acts 2:38

Confess the Christ as the  
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Rom. 10:14-15

Be baptized, immersed in  
water, for the forgiveness  
of your past  
sins, knowing that you  
will be added to the  
Lord's Church - Acts  
2:38, 42

# PREACHER'S BIO

Nathaniel Ferguson is a 2012 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching. He recently returned from a trip to the Pacific Islands to teach in the Pacific Islands Bible College.

on the sword. Either of these two situations show Eleazar's great courage in battle! 1 Corinthians 9:24 reads, **"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain."** Christians run the race of life and at the end there is the prize of eternal life. Paul expounds further in verse 17, **"But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."** Eleazar must have fought long past physical exhaustion but he kept his body under control and had courage. When Christians run this spiritual race and fight this spiritual battle they must put their bodies into subjection and keep running. Galatians 6:9 states that Christians will become weary in doing the work of the Lord but should not grow faint. In time they will reap the reward. A Christian must have courage to keep fighting! Hebrews 12:1-2 the Hebrew writer tells the Christians to lay aside every sin that weighs the runner down and to run with patience. The Christian cannot give up but have courage to keep pushing forward, and they must look to Jesus who endured the same hardships and finished the race. For a Christian to fight the spiritual battle, to run the spiritual race they must have courage like Eleazar.

## SHAMAH SON OF AGEE: STEADFAST

Third, King David discusses Shamah. In 2 Samuel 23:11-12 David states, **"And after him was Shamah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together in to a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentils: and the people fled from the philistines. But He stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the Lord wrought a great victory."** This man is the last of the three but not to be ignored. In the midst of a battle when all other soldiers had fled he stood his ground and continued to fight. He stood for the Lord and won a great victory for the All

Mighty that day. For the Christian they also must be steadfast. 1 Corinthians 15:58 it reads, **"Therefore, my beloved brethren be ye steadfast unmovable, always abounding the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."** The Christian cannot quit! They must be as steadfast as a rock! They cannot move from the right path but always working for the Lord. Why? They know their work is not vain in God. The Christian must be grounded in the truth. For example Colossians 2:5, **"For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."** The Church in Colossi did not stop standing for the Lord even when Paul was not physically present with them. The Christian must be the same way. They cannot run away even when all others have fled. Shamah did not retreat with his fellow soldier but he kept fighting. What came from his steadfastness? He won a great victory for the Lord. Christians that are steadfast in the work of the Lord can also win a great victory for Him.

## CONCLUSION

In 2 Samuel 23:8-12 the Bible tells of three mighty men who fought for King David and the Lord. Each of them possessed the proper characteristics to make them great soldiers. Adino prepared for his battle. Eleazar was great in courage. Shamah was steadfast. These men demonstrated on the battlefield three things that Christians should demonstrate in their spiritual warfare. They must prepare by using the Word of God as their sword. They must have courage in fighting against Satan and sin. They must be immovable, working diligently in the Church. These three characteristics will make Christians a mighty people for the Lord the King of Kings.

September 2012

# THE PREACHER'S FAVORITE PASSAGE

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TRENT CHILDERS

## A PRISONER ON CONTENTMENT

PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13

### INTRODUCTION

Contentment...everyone wants it, right? As for where contentment is found, well it depends upon who is asked. What if a prisoner were asked? That is right, a prisoner, but not a modern day prisoner. This article will ponder the words of one imprisoned around A.D. 63, and that for defending the Gospel of Christ. While a prisoner, he wrote letters to Christians, and yes, he wrote about contentment while imprisoned. There was even an occasion when this individual sang praises and prayed in prison after being beaten, and he even converted the jailer to Christ (Acts 16:16-33)! His name is Paul.

Before delving into verses 11-13 of Philippians 4, notice the temperament of this epistle. This can suitably be labeled an epistle of joy. Music wrote,

The word translated *joy* is found seven times in three chapters (Phil. 1:4, 25; 2:2, 17, 18, 29; 4:1), and the word translated *rejoice* is found nine times in four chapters (Phil. 1:18; 2:17-18, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10). Therefore, in this book of four chapters, the words *joy* and *rejoice* are found a total of sixteen times. These sixteen times refer both to the *joy* of Paul, as well as to the *joy* that he would inspire and inspire in the hearts and souls of his readers (Goebel Music, "PAUL'S THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR SUPPORT" in *STUDIES IN PHILIPPIANS AND COLOSSIANS*, ed.

Dub McClish, (Denton, TX: Valid Publications, Inc., 2000), 105).

There is an undeniable emphasis upon joy, and there is hardly any rebuke contained within this letter. Paul knew the source of joy, and being in bonds did not rob him of his joy (Php. 1:7, 13, 16). With the previous thoughts in mind, contemplate verses 11-13.

### DECLARATION (v. 11)

Verse 10 prompts Paul to make the daring declaration found within verse 11. Paul rejoiced that the brethren were again supporting his ministry financially, however he needed to clarify. Paul's contentment was not dependent upon their financial support, "Not that I speak in respect of want." He explains why: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." This writer chose to use the word *daring* to describe this declaration because it is quite bold to affirm that one's contentment is not based upon certain earthly conditions. How common is the mindset, "If.....then I would be happy?" It is significant that Paul does not only say, "In whatsoever state I am, I am content," but rather "I have learned...." Paul did not begin with this disposition. Jackson noted, "Note that Paul had not always known how to be content! It was something that he had *learned*" (Wayne Jackson, *Rejoice With Me, Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, (Stockton, CA: Christian Courier Publications, 2007), 151). The Christian today has to put

Continued on page 3

# iSHARPEN



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# UPCOMING WRITERS

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MARCH - TONY CLAY

forth the proper effort to display such a disposition.

To truly grasp the gravity of this declaration, one needs to consider the person who stated it. It is impressive for anyone to have this attitude, but in light of what Paul experienced, calling this statement impressive is an understatement. In defending his apostleship, Paul wrote about the suffering he had experienced:

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches (2 Cor. 11:23-28).

Earlier in the same letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" (2 Cor. 4:17). Paul said "light affliction!" Why would

he say "light affliction" in light of what he endured? Keep that question in mind. Can a man who endured such really be content? Think about that.

## SITUATION (v. 12).

After making the bold declaration, Paul lists different situations in which he has learned to be content. Whether he is brought low or abounding, full or hungry, Paul knows how to be content, and he shares why. The *King James Version* contains the phrase, "in all things I am instructed..." but notice the *American Standard Version* rendering, "in all things have I learned the secret..." The word translated "I am instructed" or "have I learned the secret" is intriguing. It carries a definition of "to initiate into the mysteries" (*Thayer's - Greek English Lexicon, Online Bible Version 4.1.1, 2009 Cross Country Software*). Jackson wrote concerning this word:

The verb is *memuetai*, the perfect tense, passive voice form of *mueo*. This term has an interesting background. Many scholars believe it has a pagan history, being used of the initiation rites into the ancient "mystery religions." It thus may suggest that which is not commonly known (how few know *real* contentment); possibly it implies that a difficult process has been endured. Hendriksen notes, however, that it is not necessary to suppose that Paul borrowed the word from the "mystery cults." To the apostle "a mystery is truth which, had it not been for special divine revelation, would not have been known. The passive voice of the verb would suggest that the "learning" or "instruction" came from a source outside of Paul

# EDITORIAL

## Building up the Body

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Dear reader,

We are greatly encouraged by the continued support that is shown for this publication. We thank God for loving brethren who are constantly giving us the encouragement and strength to keep on pursuing His favor through this work. Paul's words in the explanation of the foundation and building that is the church is a beautiful picture of what we are together: stones built upon each other, leaning on one another for support, stability, and balance. One stone by itself is vulnerable. It can be pushed and pulled, and moved around. A structure with many stones leaves each individual stone protected and supported on all sides by every stone. Let's vow to be committed to His church that we will endeavor to build one another up; that we don't do anything that will break down or tarnish His household and building. We pray that this issue and those in the future, as well as the weekly blog articles will prove useful to you in your continued walk with God. That you will be strengthened, encouraged and built up for His glory. - Tony Clay



# GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN

The most important question that can ever be discussed is,

"What must I do to be saved from my sins?" It is the only question that really matters in life. But, in order to answer such a question, one must go to the entirety of the New Testament for the true, complete, answer. Why?

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water, for the forgiveness  
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Lord's Church - Acts  
2:38, 42

# PREACHER'S BIO

Trent Childers is the preacher for the Roger Springs Church of Christ (Middleton, TN). He is married to Kelley (Harrison). Trent obtained an associate degree from Northeast Community College, is a 2011 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching and is set to complete a BS in ministry from Amridge University later this year.

(namely the Providential events that had shaped his ministry) (Jackson, 152).

The *secret* is revealed in the following verse.

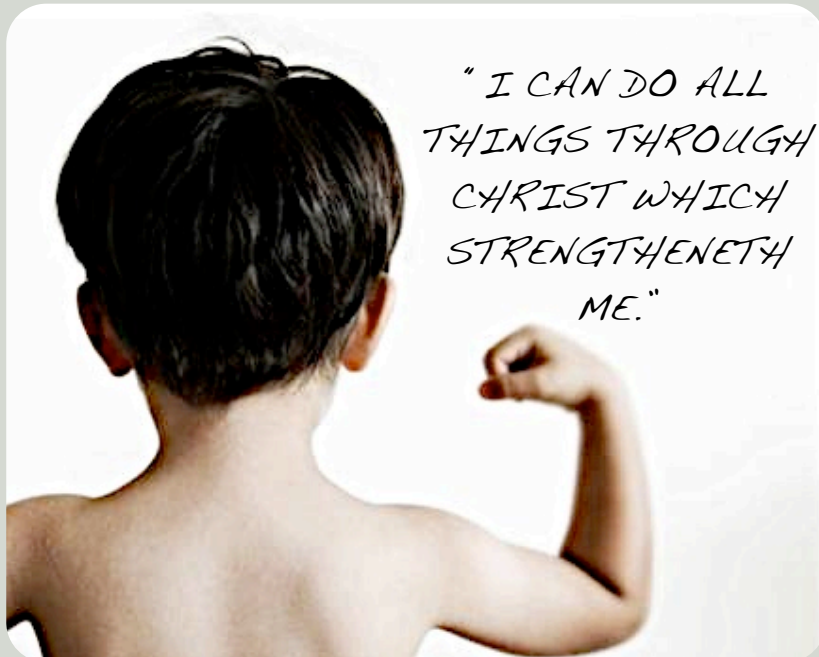
## REASON (v. 13)

Why is Paul able to do what seems to be so difficult and seemingly impossible to many? He gives the answer: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." It was Christ who chose Paul to be in the ministry (Acts 9:15). It was the blood of Christ which washed away the sins of Paul (Acts 22:16; see Rom. 6:1-4). Paul knew his eternal destination (Php. 1:21-26), and it was "through Christ" that he knew such. He realized the grace which had been shed upon him (1 Tim. 1:12-17), and so he "learned...to be content." Without such confidence in one's eternal destination, one's contentment will be limited to carnal conditions. Paul could experience agony upon earth, and still have hope of eternal salvation, but the happiness of a humanist (atheist) is confined to situations upon earth. Therefore suffering upon earth will rob such a person of contentment, but not Paul. The apostles rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). Faithful Christians can be content even through suffering. This is not to say that one enjoys the suffering, or that

one should seek it out, but rather that one can still be in a state of contentment because of hope in Christ.

## CONCLUSION

Paul made the declaration that he had learned to be content in any situation because of the Reason, Jesus Christ. It is true Christians are to live a certain way, but it is not about what Christians in and of themselves do, but rather it is about what Christ has done for them. Such hope as Paul exhibited is found only in Christ. Christians live for Christ to glorify Him (2 Pet. 3:18). Why can the Christian be content, even in the midst of tribulation? The Christian can because Christ has cleansed him with His blood, and assured him of a heavenly home. The strength for the Christian comes not from himself, but from hope in Christ, and for that reason, he can learn to be content, in whatsoever state he is in.



October 2012

# THE PREACHER'S FAVORITE PASSAGE

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WILL ANDERSON



## THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

MATTHEW 13:45-46

### Introduction

Jesus has been rightly described by many as the master teacher. Any good educator will recognize that, for one to be a master teacher, one must become a master in various styles of teaching. Jesus used various styles to teach the good news which He came to bring. Likely, Jesus' most memorable style of teaching was His use of parables. The word parable comes from the Greek παραβολή (παρά- beside, βάλλω- to cast/throw). Jesus, in essence, cast spiritual teachings beside earthly examples.

The parable of the Pearl of Great Price is one of the "kingdom parables" which describes some aspect of the coming kingdom which was prophesied of old (Is. 2:2, 3; Dan. 2:44, 45), and its coming was preached by John the Baptizer (Mat. 3:2) and Jesus (Mat. 4:17, 10:7). The preaching of the coming kingdom was fulfilled in the establishment of the church (Mat. 16:17-19; Acts 2:47), making the kingdom and the church equivalent to one another. The parable of the Pearl of Great Price only encompasses two verses (Mat. 13:45-46), but contains a great deal of meaning which is applicable to all of mankind today.

### The Background of the Parable

The only way for this parable to have its intended meaning is for there to be recognition of the lasting,

intrinsic value of pearls. Pearls are held in high esteem today as heirlooms and are generally worn by those considered in the upper echelon of society. They were not an item of limited value for a limited time, nor were they a passing fad. Lightfoot writes briefly about the value of pearls through the eyes of the ancients.

The Pearl in ancient times was a gem of great delight. Pearls had a high value in terms of dollars and cents. It is reported that Cleopatra had two precious pearls, worth \$400,000 apiece. Beyond their money value, pearls were desired in themselves. They held a fascination for the Oriental mind. Simply to look at a pearl, to hold it, to turn it through the fingers, was considered a source of great satisfaction. Pearl merchants looked far and wide for new pearls (*Lessons from the Parables*, 41).

### The Theme of the Parable

Much care must be taken by the Bible student to recognize that parables have one main point, or one central theme. Many try to break down each particular detail and apply some meaning to it, yet every detail of a parable does not necessarily have a spiritual

Continued on page 3

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application. Though several lessons may be learned, the key idea must be sought out first. The central theme of the parable of the Pearl of Great Price is the great value of the kingdom of God.

## **The Application of the Parable**

There is value in the kingdom. - There was an intrinsic value within the pearl which the merchant sought. One today must recognize the value of the kingdom/church, and if he does, he will be much more likely to seek it. God gave up His son for the church (Jn. 3:16). Jesus left heaven and took on the form of man, so He could die for the church (Php. 2:5-8). Christ blood was required to purchase the church (Acts 20:28). Christ gave Himself for the church (Eph. 5:25). There is value in the church because it is the totality of the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:25).

Denominations and religious groups outside of the church which belongs to Christ might seem to have value, but in the end, they fall short of that which is most important, obedience which leads to salvation (Heb. 5:9). Many have wasted great amounts of money for fool's gold and fake pearls, just as many have put all of their spiritual hopes in a religion from which they will gain no spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). We must seek after the true church of Christ, just as the merchant sought after the true costly pearl.

There is value in seeking for the kingdom. - The merchant took it upon

himself to search diligently for the precious pearl. There is no doubt that a merchant on such a search would find pearls of varying degrees, but there was only one pearl which could satisfy his desire. He would continue searching until he found that one precious pearl.

While it is possible for one who is not seeking the kingdom to find it (Mat. 13:44), it is much more likely for one to find the kingdom who has sought after it diligently. Jesus taught the importance of seeking the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God (Mat. 6:33). All of the worries of life can be overcome by recognizing the blessings of placing the kingdom of God first.

Many aver that man cannot seek God, but that it is only God who can seek us. Lockyer states as much in his book, *All of the Parables of the Bible* (200-201). Using that idea, many twist this parable to fit their Calvinistic bias. While it is true that God sought us first (Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:19), mankind is commanded to seek God (Mat. 7:7; Heb 11:6). If one does not seek God, he could never be saved by God, nor could he ever be pleasing to God.

There is value in sacrificing for the kingdom. - When the merchant found the precious pearl, he gave up all he had to obtain it. He must have seen enough worth within that pearl to be willing to sacrifice all that he had. The church is an organization of great value, and one should be willing to give up anything to be a part of it (Mat. 16:26). The apostle Paul is a great example of sacrificing for the kingdom. Although he excelled in the Jewish religion far beyond many of

## EDITORIAL

**This month I want to take a minute to simply thank all those that read the PFP! We have reached almost 100 subscriptions and the website is averaging about 30-40 hits a day! It has grown bigger than I really ever thought it would when I decided to start something around the beginning of this year.**

**It is because of you and those that are suggesting people go to the website that the PFP is growing exponentially and getting the word of God to hundreds of people each week and even more when the actual issues are released.**

**Thank you very much for your continued interest in things pertaining to the word of God!**

**To God be the glory!!!**





# My Desk HIS GLORY

New blog updates everyday, Monday-Friday

<http://mydeskhisglory.blogspot.com>

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# PREACHER'S BIO

Will Anderson is from Oxford, MS, and is married to the former Erika Brewer of Courtland, MS. They have one daughter, Kayla Ann, who is currently five years old. Will obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from the University of Mississippi in 2005, and the equivalent of a Bachelors Degree in Bible from the Memphis School of Preaching in 2012. Will is currently preaching for the Bawcomville Church of Christ in West Monroe, LA.

his own age (Gal. 1:14), he counted all he gave up as nothing so he could gain Christ (Eph. 3:8).

Jesus teaches about some of the things one may have to give up to follow Him. Those who would come after Him must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him (Lk. 9:23). One must give up His life for Christ (Lk. 9:24; Gal. 2:20). Some might have to give up family (Mat. 10:37). One must be willing to lay himself on the figurative altar as a living sacrifice to follow Him (Rom. 12:2). Although great sacrifice is necessary to be a follower of Christ, no price would be too much to pay to be able to take part in the riches of Christ.

There is value in securing a place in the kingdom. - The reason the merchant was willing to give all that he had was because that was what was necessary to secure the precious pearl. It is incumbent upon us to do whatever is necessary to secure a place in the kingdom. If one recognizes the great value of the kingdom of God, no price would be too great to gain and maintain a place within it.

Jesus taught that one must be born of water and the Spirit to enter into the kingdom (Jn.

3:3-5). That was the message which Peter preached to the Pentecostians (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). Having believed that Jesus was the Son of God, those present on Pentecost asked what was necessary for them to be back in a right relationship with God. Peter explained to them that it was necessary for them to repent and be baptized. Peter explained that continued spiritual growth was necessary to have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom (2 Pet. 1:5-11). Jesus, through the pen of John, explained to the church at Smyrna that continued faithfulness was necessary to maintain their saved state (Rev. 2:10). May we be diligent to recognize the value of the kingdom, sacrifice for the kingdom, and do whatever is necessary to secure a place in the kingdom.



November 2012

# THE PREACHER'S FAVORITE PASSAGE

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## WHAT CHRISTIANS HAVE IN CHRIST (HEBREWS)

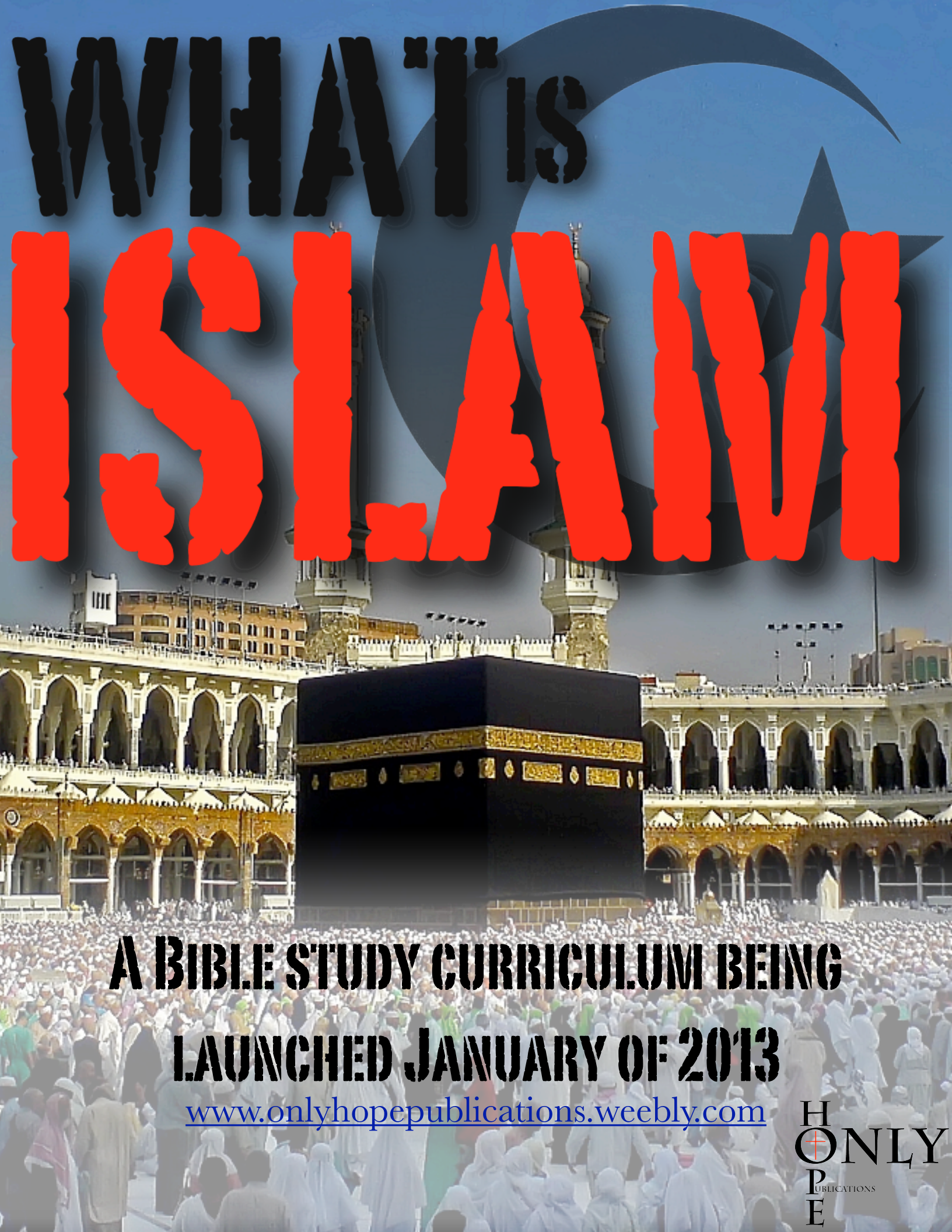
SHAWN BOGEMAN

As Christians we are different from those of the world in that we have specific promises of blessings in Christ. Many people today claim to be Christians, and expect to obtain those promises which have been given for the faithful saints in the church. However, the majority of these sincere people have been sincerely taught wrong and are not in a position to receive these blessings. God has given us the promise of many blessings as we see recorded in 2 Peter 1:4 which states "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." From this verse alone, we learn that God's promises are great, that they are precious, and that only through these promises do we become partakers of the divine nature.

In this article, I will address a few of those blessings which, if we keep in our remembrance, will help us to stay strong in our faith, as we are surrounded by those who reject both the Gospel and those promised blessings.

**Hebrews 4:3 (KJV) For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.**

Christians have rest in Christ. "For we which have believed do enter into rest..." As Christians we have the assurance of entering into God's promised rest. In the first verse of chapter 4 of Hebrews, the author speaks of a promise being left to believers. However, this promise of rest which was preached in Hebrews 4:2 is entered into by the conditions given in that "Gospel" which was preached. Many believe God gave us His Son and desire the rest He offers, and will often recite John 3:16 (KJV) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Notice also, that in Hebrews 4:3 that this rest is given only to those who believe, as opposed to those who do not believe, keeping in mind that "belief" is always a combination of trust and



# WHAT IS ISLAM

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and obedience. Therefore, those who trust and obey will enter into God's promised rest.

**Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.**

Christians have a great High Priest in Christ. The first time the title "High Priest" is used in sin Leviticus 21:10 for Aaron and his successors. It is important to realize the similarities in Aaron and Christ in regard to this title. Neither Aaron, nor Christ was self-appointed (Heb. 5:4-5). Both Aaron and Christ were to offer sacrifice as the High Priest (Heb. 5:1; 5:7). However, even though there are similarities, Christ was the "Great High Priest" after the order of Melchisedec, which was superior to the levitical priesthood (Heb. 6:20 – 7:7). Christ was also superior, in that being fully God, he also was an understanding High Priest to our physical earthly struggles, and tempted in all points as we are (Heb. 4:15) yet was without sin (2 Cor. 5:21). What a comfort to know we have a Savior who honestly knows what we go through on a daily basis.

**Hebrews 6:18 That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:**

Christians have consolation (comfort) in Christ if we "lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18). We, because of the promises of God and Christ, can have comfort in knowing that if we remain faithful to the end, we will receive a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8).

**Hebrews 6:19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;**

Christians have hope in Christ. An anchor makes a boat unmovable in even the most severe storm. The hope which Christian's have is much like that anchor. Our hope makes us unmovable when the storms of life hit us. As long as our hope is "sure and steadfast" we will remain secure in Christ, yet if hope is lost we will surely be pushed in all directions. One can only travel in two directions in regards to their salvation. Either we are traveling towards and with Christ, or we are traveling apart and away from Christ.

God gave Christians the hope of an

## EDITORIAL

Today is one of great grief for me. I will, in about three hours from writing this, be present at the funeral of an 8 month old boy who choked to death. Times like these often remind us of our humanity and the fact that each one of us are on this earth for what amounts to a very, very short time compared to the time which will be spent apart from this earth (cf. 2 Cor. 5:1). The family has asked me to read a passage of Scripture during the funeral, and for that I am extremely honored. When attempting to determine which passage would best console the family and give hope to all those present I was reminded by a friend of 2 Samuel 12:15-23. You may know the passage of which I speak. It is the account of the death of David's son who he conceived in sin with the woman Bathsheba and how the Lord required the life of that son, not to punish the son, but to punish the father, David. Verse 23 gives everyone who lives faithfully to the Lord hope in the death of any one, but especially children. It is absolutely true that, in the words of David, we may go to them, but they may not come again to us. And, while this is an extremely upsetting time, we find comfort and joy in that. I mean, why would we want anyone who lived faithfully to the Lord during this life to come back to us and return to this life? Like Paul said, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

I hope that I get to gain the opportunity to meet Davion in Heaven one day, and even though I know of none of our readers who knows the family or the situation everyone has someone who has become a child of God in this life, or in the case of Davion has not yet reached the time at which he/she is subject unto the repercussions of their sins, and while it is extremely hard to get through this life without individuals who might very well have shaped our lives into what they are today we know that if one is a Christian, that is to say a baptized believer and faithful individual to God Almighty, there is absolutely no question of their eternal abode and if we will do just as the Lord said, there will be no question of ours either. The question is, however, are WE Christians? If not... why not?



# GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN

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"What must I do to be saved from my sins?" It is the only question that really matters in life. But, in order to answer such a question, one must go to the entirety of the New Testament for the true, complete, answer. Why?

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# PREACHER'S BIO

Shawn Bogemann has been married to Samantha Bogemann for sixteen years. They have beautiful daughters and one son (Bryn, Reese, Avery, and Alec). Shawn is a recent graduate from the Memphis School of Preaching and preaches for the Waynedale Church of Christ in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Shawn is one of the writers for Only Hope Publications the publishers of the study on Islam featured on page 2.

eternity in heaven. Titus 1:2 (KJV) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." 1 John 2:29 also records that God has promised eternal life for all faithful Christians: "And this is the promise that He has promised us eternal life." This hope we have of heaven, is only available to those who have been added to the church by God's pre-ordained method of salvation, and have remained faithful to His Gospel.

**Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar,  
whereof they have no right to eat  
which serve the tabernacle.**

Christians have an "altar", which is only open to those who have been obedient to the faith and have been "added to the church". The "altar" in which the Hebrews writer mentions, is Christ himself. Christ died for all men, but is only accessible to those who partake of this sacrifice according to the conditions He has given. It is clear from this verse that those "which serve the tabernacle" were the Jews still practicing the law of Moses. Obviously, these Jews did not believe in Jesus, and thus only those who believed in Jesus, and demonstrated that belief through the commands He set forth, can access this sacrificial altar (John 6:47). As Christians we both realize and have access to Christ, who was the only sacrifice which could remove the sin of the world (John 1:29).

This altar is only approachable by those in His church, and the church was blood bought. Acts 20:28 (KJV) "Take

heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The church has been promised many blessings, one of which is to be delivered to God at the end of time. Notice 1 Corinthians 15:23-26 (KJV) <sup>23</sup> "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. <sup>24</sup> Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death."


It is my hope that looking at just a few of the blessings which we have in Christ will bring you hope and confidence to continue to abide in him as described in Colossians 3:16-17 (KJV) "<sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. <sup>17</sup> And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Doing all in His Name (by his authority) will result in the faithful Christian having access to all of the blessing which have been mentioned above.

December 2012

# THE PREACHER'S FAVORITE PASSAGE

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NORMAN SPANN



## PETER FOR WHOM JESUS PRAYED (LUKE 22:31-34)

Peter, a man chosen by Jesus Christ himself to follow after him and to become a fisher of men is the topic of our study. But, there was a problem. Peter was a rough individual, so-to-speak. He was quick tempered, quick to speak before thinking and did not take into consideration the consequences of his actions! My wife says that she knows someone like that for whom she prays that he will learn through life's experiences and stop getting himself into trouble, but that is another discussion altogether.

Let us notice a few things about Peter:

1. His intentions were pure. - One would be hard pressed to find any ungodly principle in the heart of Peter when he said that he was ready to go with the Lord, whether it be to prison or death (Luke 22:33).
2. His betrayal was real. - He actually denied the Lord and I could imagine how it must have felt when Jesus told him, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that you shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me (Luke 22:34)." Imagine the look from the Lord that came after

this denial. Imagine the guilt that fell over the disciple after seeing that look. This guilt was so powerful, in fact, that it caused the grown, rough, man to weep bitterly (Luke 22:54-62).

3. His repentance was genuine. - By example we know that Peter repented, because later Jesus would give Peter the keys to the Kingdom. Peter would also be one of the twelve inspired men that would stand on the day of Pentecost and usher into existence the church of Christ.

Our Lord knew Peter's intentions, He knew about the betrayal before it ever happened and He knew that Peter would genuinely repent for his actions. Knowing all of this, He tells Peter, "Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat (Luke 22:32)." In other words, Satan's desire for Peter was if he could, he would take him and scatter to the wind everything that caused him to stand for God.

This prompted the Lord's prayer for Peter. A prayer which holds within its words three very important things.

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JUNE - TRAVIS BYARS

## THAT THOU FAITH FAIL NOT

against by the Christ (Mat. 10:28).

Our Lord Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail. Faith is something that seems to be a difficult thing on which to hold when there is a challenge we are facing. But, what is this *faith*?

Paul said, "It is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1)." In the 6th verse of the very same chapter he writes "it is impossible to please Him" without this faith (Heb. 11:6). It is that on which our hope stands and our evidence which is not from tangible things. Jesus told His disciples "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; nothing shall be impossible unto you."

But faith is not inherited, it is learned. The book of Romans contains a verse which reads, "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17)."

It is the word of God which develops within an individual this faith in God. And, Peter found himself trusting in what man could do unto him, as he witnessed Jesus being taken away, something that had already been warned

## THAT THOU BECOME CONVERTED

It does not always mean that one who has failed in their faith has never been converted to God. But to become converted means to learn to trust in God and in the heat of the moment turn to God instead of our own devices (Jer. 10:23, Pro. 14:12, 3:5-6). We are told over and over again throughout God's Word to rely on him, because he cares for us. The word converted literally means to be changed, switched, convinced, or to transform one's character and function. It is just this that the Christ prayed would happen in the life of Peter. He said, "When thou become converted." Therefore showing His desire for Peter, but also for every individual, to be changed through the word so as to help others.

It is this same sentiment which resounds in the writing of Paul when one reads the book written to the Galatians which contains, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20). It is this idea of change and complete submission to the will of God that Jesus was wanting for Peter, and what He wants for every individual who walks this earth. After all, as Jesus once said, you can confess

## EDITORIAL

God is faithful! There is much strength and comfort that can be ours if we will simply place this Truth in the front of our minds. With this timeless truth, none of the things that bother us really matter. How much money we have, or notoriety in education or anything like that becomes transparent in light of the perfect peace found in God's promises. It was the Hebrews writer, of whom this writer asserts as Paul, who wrote: *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)* (Heb. 10:23).

Because God is faithful and will keep His promises, let us hold fast or literally to grip onto as if life depended on it! Let us grab hold of what we confessed; the acknowledgment that Christ is Lord and that we were going to surrender to His authority.

We are delighted that you would read this month's issue of the PFP. We pray that as you read this issue and those in the future you will be encouraged and strengthened so that you may grab hold of your great confession and that you will never lose your grip on it! God bless you and To Him be the glory in every thing.

- Tony Clay



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# PREACHER'S BIO

Norman Spann is a second year student at Memphis School of Preaching and will finish his studies in January of 2013. He and his wife have three children and upon leaving Memphis School of Preaching will be working alongside the church in Jerusalem, Arkansas.

Him now, that is to say live a life characterized by Him and His teachings, or you can deny to do so, but the same will be done by Him with regard to us (Mat. 10:32).

## **THAT THOU STRENGTHEN THY BRETHREN**

The entire mission of our Lord and Savior was to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). It is because of this that Jesus commanded His followers to, "Go...therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mat. 28:19)." In other words, as many have often said, "Go ye, means go me!" Jesus was telling Peter that he would be responsible for strengthening the other brethren after the Lord's departure from this earth and that all Christians throughout history would be charged with the responsibility of spreading the Gospel to their brethren in the world as well.

Paul wrote to Timothy that he was to, "take heed unto [himself], and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee (1 Tim. 4:16)." Why, though? Because it is the Word that strengthens an individual in the faith and allows him to be able to stand before God as a man who is not ashamed of his actions (2 Tim. 3:16-17,

2:15). And, the Word of the Almighty allows him to be equipped to do as Paul encouraged Timothy, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine... (2 Tim. 4:2)"

The Lord prayed for Peter to have these things and concepts present in his life, and we would do well to take note of this prayer and establish the same in our lives.