

Voice of Baptists

"The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
Isaiah 40:3

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FORWARD INTO BATTLE

By Kenneth W. Massey

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 3:13, 14)

The wonderful Apostle Paul seems to have sifted the sands of his life or as some would say, "has sorted the pieces," to the extent that he had taken a full scope perceptive of living in the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. The Lord gave a positive command (Matthew 28: 19, 20) to a particular people (Acts 1:8) that they might faithfully and prayerfully approach the battle for the positive purpose of winning victories for our Commander-in-Chief, even Christ Jesus.

-TAKE A LOOK AT YOURSELF-

If the man called Paul could take inventory of himself, and then say, "I count not myself to have apprehended," surely this lesson will teach us to be as honest to ourselves. The Greeks would tell us, "First, Know Thyself Man," and then you may teach others.

This scripture reminds us that none are without sin, yet we may and should rather continually seek to keep our heart with all diligence (a precept of inspiration) so as to maintain an active attitude for work in the Lord's vineyard. Some Christians become so faithless, that before they realize it, they find themselves at rock bottom not knowing what to do nor how to get up. Then, we view the Christian who thinks he has obtained everything, knows it all, and

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GOD COMMANDED REPENTANCE — WHAT DID HE MEAN?

By
Jerry A. Reynolds
Davisville, W. Va.



Surrender is the direct opposite of rebellion. Repentance in its fullness is a complete and unconditional surrender of spirit, soul, and body to the Holy Spirit who is striving with the man. Of course, without the hot pursuit of the enemy (God), the rebel human would never surrender. By awakening the consciousness of man to the threat of God's eternal wrath the Holy Spirit draws men into a trap where the wisely (through fear) surrender. Only at this point can the belief in Christ which has been attempted by the sinner on his own power become complete. This saving faith is accomplished by the Spirit awakening man's consciousness to the reality of Jesus Christ and eternal life. Having already totally surrendered self, sin and all else unconditionally the mourning soul has no where to look but

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A RETURN TO GOD

By
Darrell E. Hicks
Detroit, Mich.



It is a sad truth that the title of this article necessitates an admission that we have left God. With few, if any exceptions, those saints who still desire and seek after intimate fellowship with God, find the going rough in every aspect of Christian life. Even the most dedicated children of God candidly admit that they find their pathways plagued with anxieties, hindrances, and temptations. Many who once stood as shining examples of Christian devotion, are now seldom present when the congregation meets. That something is radically wrong with the spiritual attitude of many of our church members requires no labored arguments to demonstrate. The empty pews found in most all of our churches on Sunday and Wednesday nights will convince the most skeptical individual that the statements are true.

Lost spirituality, lack of zeal, disrupted fellowship, and little concern for the lost, are but a few of our evident ailments. However these are but symptoms of the more serious problem. Our greater concern should be for the disease itself, not the symptoms. Sin has entangled itself in the lives of God's people. If the disease is healed, the symptoms must depart.

Let none think that by this article we attempt to ignore or lessen our own sins of commission and omission, for we openly admit that we often find ourselves perplexed and distressed in spirit for failure to follow the councils of God. Rather, it is our desire that by the return of those who no longer attend

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VOICE OF BAPTISTS

Kenneth W. Massey, Editor

Published monthly by Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
1501 Pleasant Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46203

STAFF WRITERS

James H. Smith
1169 Hunters Lane
Nashville, Tennessee 37207

Charles R. Moore
26210 Janet Court
Roseville, Michigan 48066

John A. Keen, Jr.
1027 White Avenue
Brownsburg, Indiana 46112

Second-Class postage paid at Indpls., Ind.

ONE MAN'S OPINION

By Kenneth W. Massey

QUESTION: "Please explain the passage (2 Cor. 12:1-10) referring to the man caught up to the third heaven. What relationship, if any, does the revelation have to Paul's "thorn in the flesh?"

T.M.B. - Greenwood, Ind.

ANSWER: This passage describes an event which took place while Paul was in Arabia being tutored by God for his life-long work as an apostle of Jesus Christ. The intimate relationship between teacher and student brought them to the third heaven (paradise, verse 4). The first heaven is the place where the birds fly; the second heaven is the home of planets, stars, etc.; the third heaven is that mystic realm of spiritual bliss in God's Home. Paul was the man who heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. God taught this apostle born out of due time by words (revelation) and by sights (visions) everything he needed to know for his mission as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Now, the question comes, "what was the thorn in the flesh?" Did it have any relationship to the revelation? Many answers have been given to this question. The oldest theory is that Paul suffered from severe headaches. Both Tertullian and Jerome believed that. This was believed to be the result of eye damage encountered following the blindness that befell him on the road to Damascus. I do not believe either of these because God restored Paul's sight (Acts 9:18) using Ananias as an instrument. Was Paul's

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GOD COMMANDED REPENTANCE WHAT DID HE MEAN?

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unto the Jesus whom he has been trying unsuccessfully to trust. At this point he finds that he can.

The sinner is thus brought to meet the requirements demanded of him by God by the grace of God. No power of his own was used to save him. At the moment that these are met the new life within is born. This happening is felt within as described by Jesus in St. John 3:8 as God the Holy Spirit performs an eternal and irreversible operation on the man which leaves him with eternal life. This is solely God's work in which man is a passive recipient. Neither can the man ever fully explain the incident because it is incomprehensible but he forever after knows that it happened. After this man can for the first time in his life love God.

Men who are lost must strive to repent because God commanded it. They must strive to believe in Christ for it is also demanded of him. In doing so he not only learns more of what they are all about but if he is honest with himself he discovers experimentally that he cannot fully do either. This realization drives him to seek God for grace with which to do these commands and this is what God wants. Very important is the sinner's need to hear the Gospel preached in "demonstration of the Spirit and power" for it is this which can slay his rebellious spirit. He must go toward that gospel which pains him instead of obeying his natural instinct to run or fight. He must go where that Spirit pains his soul, causing his head to reel and his heart to pound, instead of avoiding it. He must fall down and cry out to God for mercy (with the heart) while the Lord is besieging his soul. If he fights until the Lord withdraws he must wait for another attack. It is not the way of God, although he is omnipotent, to defeat men otherwise in order to save their souls. In short, men must surrender to their own deaths by the gospel sword in order to be saved. Let sinners know that if God does not kill them with the Gospel sword of mercy in his dealings with them now to re-create them a new creature, they must someday be slain with the sword of his wrath. This sword will fall without their surrender and the dying of that death will never end!

RETURN TO GOD

(Continued from page 1)

church, the cause of our Lord may be strengthened.

As long as "that which is flesh" remains flesh, there will be times in the life of every child of God when he will

sin and come short of the glory of God. With all of God's people on earth, the roots of sin lie deep in the human nature, constantly seeking opportunity to break through the surface. A diligent watch must be kept to cut the sprouts low when they appear, for in our flesh dwelleth "no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). We all know that the longer sin is allowed to flourish, the less offensive it seems to appear. The temptations of sin are always appealing to our carnal mind, and our flesh delights in the things that bring it pleasure, no matter how temporal they are. Such momentary pleasures have drawn some Christians into the most degrading conditions. Backslidden Christians can be found in history as well as now.

How does one know he is backslidden? David answers, "I remembered God, and was troubled" (Ps. 77:3). Where once the thoughts of God brought joy and comfort, the saint now feels trouble and fear. There are apprehensions of judgment and affliction. "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments" (Ps. 119:120). The knowledge that God may expose one's sins to his neighbors: or reveal his sins to the reproach of his brethren; or take his life in a moment of wrath, will cause the most stout hearted of men to tremble as David. God sends his secret arrows of disquietness, and the backslider is encouraged to deal with his condition.

Some try to return to their duty without due repentance for past actions. This is seldom successful, and will offer no relief. The deeds of the future will not compensate for past sins.

Others try to ignore their condition by busying themselves in worldly endeavors. To try to fill the void with worldly accomplishments and successes, will only prove the statement of Solomon to the individual. "Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ec. 4:16). No relief can be found on the earth. Do not seek the cure from the same hand that wounded.

Some try the route of the drunkard. Stifle the guilt of one sin, with the pleasure of another. The danger of this reasoning is obvious. A life as useless and miserable as that of the derelict will be the reward of such actions.

The child of God must realize that his only hope of satisfaction and contentment is to be found in God's forgiveness and the restoration of holy fellowship. A great revival is needed among our people and on a mass scale. To see this come about, each individual will find it necessary to begin with his personal return to God. D.H.

FREEDOM

(Continued from May Issue)

By Charles R. Moore
Roseville, Mich.

Jesus said "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32) Jesus was not speaking of political or social freedom, his statement was in regard to the LIBERATION OF THE SOUL. The soul of man has been captured by Satan and is enslaved to sin. The Apostle Paul states that "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23) Jesus says that "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John 8:34) Human beings are helpless within themselves to pay the necessary ransom to liberate their own souls and therefore are dependant upon someone else for redemption. God has provided this for us through his beloved son. "Christ hath REDEEMED us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" (Galatians 3:13) "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, TO REDEEM them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5) The ransom price that Christ paid for the liberation of the souls of men, was the sacrifice of himself on the cross. The benefits of this sacrifice is the ETERNAL FREEDOM of the soul from death, which is simply, eternal union with God.

Contrary to the concept of many, the benefits of the Lord's sacrifice ARE NOT automatically applied to ALL human beings. There are conditions which must be met before any person receives the benefit. This benefit (which is eternal life) is available to all persons, but not until they meet the conditions, which are, repentance and faith. Rather than "accept Christ" as we hear the popular preachers of our day plead, the Bible teaches the unsaved "to repent toward God and have faith in Christ." When a person has repented to the satisfaction of God, God accepts him, and God's grace enables him to trust (or have faith) in Christ. Then the benefit is applied through the administration of the Holy Spirit, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;" (Romans 8:16) The saved person does not have to wait until the judgement before he has the knowledge that he has been born again.

The Spirit of God testifies to this effect with the spirit of the individual. Therefore the soul of the saved person is in possession of ETERNAL LIFE, or ETERNAL FREEDOM FROM SIN. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall NOT come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24) This of course has reference to the inner or spiritual person. The body has not been saved or liberated from sin. It is still subject to sin (Read Romans, chapter seven) but it has been promised liberation, in fact, the body of the saved person has been PREDESTINATED to be conformed to the image of his Son. (Romans 8:19-30, Ephesians 1:3-12)

This wonderful liberation of the soul, which we commonly refer to as salvation, totally frees the spirit from sin. "Whosoever is born of God DOTH NOT commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he CANNOT SIN, because he is born of God." (1st John 3:9)

As wonderful as our civil liberties are, they are meaningless to the person that has lived his life in impenitence and must face death without THE LIBERATION OF HIS ETERNAL SOUL.

ONE MAN'S OPINION

(Continued from last page)

sight just partially recovered? No. Absolutely ridiculous to believe anything other than a complete restoration of sight. What was the "thorn in the flesh?" Notice, Paul had never mentioned one word about this "thorn in the flesh" until after God allowed him to look into heaven and hear the glorious refrains of that land. It was unlawful to utter a word of description about his grandest moment. So the "thorn in the flesh" was God's refusal to permit Paul any room for boasting or being exalted above measure in relating this revelation rather than exalting the Christ of the gospel. So as the law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, this revelation to Paul was a tutor encouraging him to believe in and teach others that God's grace is sufficient for saving, securing, satisfying and even supplied in the sending of this wonderful man named Paul. Read the seventh verse carefully, and the answer is obvious - "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet (hold down) me, lest I should be exalted above measure." You may ask why God allowed John to look and describe his view of heaven. John's work

ended with the writing of Revelation and this also concluded the Scriptures. Paul's work was just beginning, and God had to control Paul and his message in order to carry out His eternal purpose consistent with His predetermined plan and means. That's my opinion! Wish I could hear yours.

REPENT AND BELIEVE

By Riley Copeland

From the time that Adam from the garden
fell
men and women have been condemning
their souls to hell,
and the sin that causes the principle grief
is the common sin of unbelief.

There are many folks with great ability
who will not come to God with great
humility.
Faith and humility will not be denied,
but they are lifted up in pride.

God's spirit will not always strive with
man,
believe in the Lord while yet you can.
The Devil says no, but he is a thief.
He is the father of unbelief.

When in humility, the end of your faith
you reach,
and forgiveness from the Lord you be-
seech.
The Lord is ready for salvation to impart,
when you seek after him with all your
heart.

They have left God out of our schools,
They have forgotten about the golden
rule.
Oh! Wicked and perverse nation,
they need the Lord and his salvation.

There are many who have recently said -
our holy - everlasting God is dead.
But as long as they travel this sinful path,
they are sure, sometime to feel God's
wrath.

God's salvation is full and free,
and whosoever will - includes you and me.
He who allows Christ for his sins atone,
knows in his heart - that God lives and is
on his throne.

Be meek, humble and lowly as the Lord
wants you to be,
don't trust in your works, as the old
Pharisee.
Just trust in the Lord who is tried and
true.
Repent and have faith he'll carry you
through.

My advice to you my deer sinner man,
don't turn a deaf ear to God's saving
plan.
And when he saves you my friend,
you'll be the first to know,
you won't need nobody to tell you it's so.

When you refuse to believe, you will
suffer great loss.
You re-crucify our Christ on the cross.
So sinner don't scoff at being born again,
for that's the only way that you can enter
in.

FORWARD INTO BATTLE (Continued from page 1)

whose own lips praise him. I am not about to condemn that kind of person, but I am willing to censure them from a deep sense of the necessity that they should be censured. Children of God should regard each other with an esteem higher than one has for self. In either of these cases as just mentioned, the child of God should have a soul-searching talk with the Lord, get up or come down to the plane of humility that will best please God for their tour of duty.

-NOT LIVING IN THE PAST-

Did you ever associate with a person who constantly referred to something they had done in early life? This doesn't necessarily have to be a person of many years. I have known a few young people and middle aged people as well whose only ambition in life was relating past experiences rather than looking on the fields which are currently ripe for the harvest. I'm thinking just here of some dear aged saints of God who express gratitude for the sufficiency of grace down thru the years, but whose faith for the present fulfillment of the promises of God is superseded by none.

Paul is not telling us that he has forgotten the sins along his path nor the mercy which followed; far from it. He would always remember them to humble him. We must follow out the figure which he is using and so read him. He was referring to those who ran in the Grecian games. Once I witnessed a track event, with a certain young man a noticeable distance ahead of all the other runners. Suddenly his teammates began to applaud him with great enthusiasm, and while he stopped to take his honors the competitors accelerated past him. My friend lost the race. He should have ignored the praise of winning the distance which he already covered, concentrating wholly upon the space of track between him and the finish line. It must be so with regard to all sins which we have overcome. The very easiest way to resurrect old corruptions is to erect a trophy over their graves; they will at once lift up their heads and howl out, "we are still alive."

-LOOK TO THE PATTERN-

Paul says, "reaching forth unto those things which are before," as though he were describing the runner as he sets his sight on the finish and throws himself almost faster than his legs will carry him. We sing "I want to know more about my Lord", but too many times our eyes fall far short of beholding that life which should be a pattern for us all. Did

you ever hear one Christian say, "Oh, I am as good as so-and-so? We should never attempt to justify our sins by comparing our deeds to other mortals. LOOK! SEE! BEHOLD! The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. If there is one life we should know better than all, it should be the spotless, sinless and undefiled life of Jesus Christ. When temptation comes, ask yourself what would Jesus have me do? As you study the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, let the light of Christ's life beam out an influence upon you. Preacher friend, would you like to pattern your life after a very successful preacher? Do your best to imitate the preacher named, Jesus. Sunday School teachers, would you like to study the life of a great teacher that your teaching might be more effective? This world has never known a teacher like Jesus, who was able to take fishermen and teach them to write books of the Bible which are read more than Greek and Roman philosophers. To be a Christian is to be Christ-like.

-PRESSING FORWARD-

Paul admitted, that after counting down the ledger of his own life, he was not laying claim to the perfection that belongs only to Christ, but he was totally ready to confess one great conclusion. "This one thing I do, I PRESS TOWARD the mark for the prize." Wouldn't it be a glorious thing to view, if all of God's true Baptist Churches began soul-winning (not soul-deceiving) rather than sitting idly around waiting for their promotion in the sky. The Lord said, "Go", and I'll go with you. He also said, "without me ye can do nothing." And then he said, "all things are possible with God." Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13)

May all of God's pastors teach their flocks all things whatsoever the Lord hath commanded us, and to observe those things which we are taught that His holy presence will prevail along our journeys. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalms 126:6)

**I'M JUST A NOBODY
TELLING EVERYBODY
ABOUT SOMEBODY
WHO CAN SAVE ANYBODY!
JESUS CHRIST**

REVIVAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

JUNE 2

FAIRVIEW MEMORIAL MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - Fairview Ave., Bowling Green, Ky. Elder James (Pete) Porter will serve as the evangelist. The pastor, Elder W. T. Russell, extends a welcome for everyone to attend the 7:15 services each evening.

JUNE 4

FAITH MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - Graham Rd., Franklin, Ind. Pastor Lewis Holland will be assisted in the preaching by Elder Mitchell Smith. Services each night at 7:00. A cordial invitation is extended to all.

JUNE 4

McFERRIN AVE. MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - 1208 McFerrin Ave., Nashville, Tenn. Pastor Howard Taylor will be assisted by Elder H. D. Linville. YOU are invited!

JUNE 9

LIBERTY MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - Maco Dr., Norton, Ohio, Pastor Berlon Roy will be assisted by Elder Calvin Perrigo. You are cordially invited to attend the revival. Services at 7:00 each evening.

JUNE 11

MT. ZION MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - Holland, Ky., Pastor F. L. Ray will be assisted by Elder Kenneth Massey. Services each day at 1:30 and 7:30 p.m. A cordial invitation is extended to all.

JUNE 17

FREEDOM MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - 350 N. Fuller Dr., Indpls., Ind. Elder Calvin Perrigo will assist Pastor Odus Cummings in the preaching. All are invited to attend these services at 7 p.m. each evening.

JUNE 25

MT. LEBANON MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - Boyce Rd., Alvaton, Ky. Pastor Don Curtis will be assisted by Elder Kenneth Massey. Everyone is welcome to attend the services beginning at 7:30 each night.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church will have special all-day Memorial Services June 4th. The 10 o'clock Sunday School hour will be followed by Memorial Sermon at the eleventh hour. Gospel singing featuring The Cockriel Family of Bowling Green, Ky. in the afternoon. Everyone is welcome!

"The Bridegroom's Voice" by W. T. Russell will appear in the July issue.