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The Landmark Baptist

"MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD."—John 1:23

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THE DEMANDS OF GOD'S HOLINESS

By Pastor Sam Wilson
Grace Baptist Church
Gladwin, Michigan



"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." — 1 Peter 1:15-16

"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy . . ." That is a declaration of the holiness of God and a proclamation to the commandment that men **"be holy in all manner of conversation."** The word "conversation" here does not refer to our talking, but refers to the manner of your life. In other words he is saying, "in every aspect of your life—your home life, your work life, your play life, your private life—you are to be holy therein. **"Because it is written (Lev. 11:44), Be ye holy: for I am holy."**

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." (1 Pet. 1:17).

Peter goes on to talk about our redemption and how that we are

redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without spot or blemish, or a Holy Lord Jesus Christ; and how that He was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but has been manifest. I hope and pray that this morning you can say that the redeeming blood of Christ has been made manifest to you by the Holy Spirit of God.

Now, Leviticus 19:2 tells us, **"Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy."**

Holiness has always been an attribute of God, and has always been a requirement of God for His people. Holiness is not just a New Testament teaching, but it has always been a requirement in reality, (I emphasize this to we who are saved), God has demanded that all men everywhere be holy. He has demanded that they are obedient to the commandments and the law of God. More than anything else,

(continued page 2)

as you read the Old Testament, understand how that everything there manifests and declares the holiness of God: the sacrifices, the work of the priests; they all declare that God is holy and requires holy service unto Him.

Let us make a few observations before we look into the demands of God's holiness.

The Bible says in Revelation 15:4, **“Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: (I don't refer to men as being “reverend”, don't refer to any man as being our “holy father”, for they are not. Only God is holy!) for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.”** This verse teaches us that fearing God, glorifying God and worshipping God has always revolved around the holiness of God. He is the only true Holy Being and we should seek to be like Him.

If someone mentions God to you and they ask you to “Define Him in one word; give me an attribute of God”, many would say *love*, and indeed He is a loving and a great God. Some would say *power*. He is omnipotent, and indeed He is. Some would say His *knowledge*, the omniscience of God; there is no doubt on how He knows everything. Some might speak about His mercy, His grace or His endurance. But He is called *Holy* more than anything else in the Word of God.

Stephen Charnock said, (and he does have the best book on the Attributes of God. **“Power is God's arm, omniscience is God's eyes, mercy is God's delight, eternity is**

God's duration, but holiness is God's beauty!”

In Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8 we find that there are those who do nothing but sing and declare, “Holy, holy, holy, art thou Lord God Almighty.” They do not sing of any other attribute of God. Let us understand that every attribute of God are all great, they are all perfect, but they all bow down to the holiness of God. God's love is great, but God's love bows down to God's holiness. God's love does not love anything that is not holy.

Every work of God manifests His holiness. Psalm 145:17, **“The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”** Everything that is associated with God should be holy: saints, we read from the Holy Bible, we should have a holy church and we should have a holy conversation.

Now because God is perfectly holy and there is no sin in Him, He has absolute perfection and there are things that His holiness *demands* take place.

I

First of all, the holiness of God *demands punishment* for the sins of the unsaved. Hab. 1:13 tells us, **“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.”**

Psalm 5:5 says, **“Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.”** The Bible resounds over and over again the fact that because God is holy He hates sin. It doesn't matter if it is His people or the heathen, God hates sin! The Word of God is full with case after case—whether they were saved or lost—where God punishes sin. When sin entered into this

world via Adam and Eve what did God do? He punished sin. Why? Because God hates sin.

The reason that there is a Hell is because of the holiness of God. Noel Smith says, "Hell stands as a monument to the failure of the Triune God to save those who are there." No, Hell stands as a monument to the fact that God is holy. Every scream that goes forth and every torment for all eternity in Hell declares that God is holy. Hell is the place not of the Devil's ambition, but the place of God's wrath!

God is angry because His holiness has been violated. People have scoffed at the holiness of God. God is so holy that if a man lived all the days of his life and only committed one sin, he would have to spend eternity in hell for that sin. I urge you to take account of the holiness of God. If you are listening and you do not know for positive that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Saviour, and you have not trusted in *His* holiness to save you from your sins, I urge you to depend and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. I urge you to consider the reality of dying not believing in the holiness of God, not recognizing the holiness of God. Thinking about the horrors of hell should cause we who are saved to love Him more because a holy God paid our sin debt.

II

Secondly, the holiness of God demanded the death of Jesus Christ for God's elect. Why was it that God the Father forsook His Son? It was because my sins and your sins were upon Him. Remem-

ber what Habakkuk said: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil." (Hab. 1:13). And as Christ hung on that cross and cried out, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" He gives the answer, because He had our sins upon him.

The holiness of God left God with no choice: He could not look upon His Son, and had to wake up the sword of justice and wrath to smite His Only-begotten Son. God cannot act contrary to His nature. God cannot just forgive sin because God is holy.

There are basically two theories concerning the Atonement. There is the *Consequential Necessity Theory* which more or less says that the consequences of sin made it necessary for Jesus to die only because it was God's will. They believe that God could have done it a different way. I don't believe that, I believe in the *Absolute Necessity Theory* of the atonement: that because of the holiness of God and the fact that Christ had our sins upon Him that the substitutionary death of Christ was necessary for our salvation. Christ suffered for our sins, He paid my sin debt.

I believe in *double imputation*. First of all, that my sins were imputed or put upon Jesus Christ. After He paid for those sins His righteousness was imputed to me. I tell you, the fact that God is holy demands suffering for every sin of the elect of God. Since those things that happened on the cross there have been millions who have suffered horrible, horrible, deaths that saved no one. When we think about those three hours of

darkness, I believe the Father turned out the lights of this world that Jesus Christ might suffer the equivalent of the hell of all the elect of God. I believe the holiness of God demanded that. It cannot be any other way! Don't cheapen the sufferings of Christ because if you do you cheapen the holiness of our God.

God loved the people. They were sinners in need of a Substitute. The Substitute was the Lord Jesus Christ and He took our sins. Our sins were cast on the Lamb of God by God the Father, and then God the Father punished Jesus Christ the equivalent of all the sins of the elect of God. I believe that and no one is going to change that belief. No one is going to tell me that it was just Christ dying on the cross that saved me from my sins, but Christ suffered my hell because the holiness of God demanded it. God cannot just overlook sin. His character says sin must be punished! Therefore, Christ was made sin and had to be punished for that sin. My sin and God's holiness made His death and His suffering necessary. May we think about it and meditate upon how our sins caused the Father to turn His back on His only begotten Son and punished Him with a hell we deserved. Meditate upon that, and may we love Jesus more.

III

Thirdly, God's holiness *demands the salvation* for every single person for whom Christ died. If there is one that perishes and goes to hell for whom Christ died then God is unjust. An unjust God cannot be a holy God.

The holiness of God is seen in His righteous treatment of all things, including the atonement. How could God be "holy and just in all his ways" if there is one for whom Christ died, for whom Jesus paid the sin debt, for whom He suffered an impunity of His righteousness, if they go to hell? (The doctrine of) a "universal atonement" abases the work of Jesus Christ. It belittles it, it cheapens it and makes it non-effectual unless it is added to the will of man. Let me remind you if you believe in a universal atonement or a limited atonement, the same people are saved. You know the Arminian says that "Christ died for everybody (universal atonement) but only those who believe will be saved. The same number of people are saved, (i.e.,) the exact people who are saved are those who believe. No one will ever be in hell for whom Christ died.

You know it is a shame that there are people (and some of them would dare to wear the name Baptist) who believe that today there are people in hell for whom Christ died. That is blasphemous doctrine. There is a great slighting to the blood of Jesus Christ. That is a declaration that God failed. That is denouncing the holiness of God. The holiness of God says, if their sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ there's nothing to go to hell for. If Christ paid the sin debt on the cross then there is nothing to go to hell for, for those for whom the debt was paid. Jesus Christ paid the sin debt, and if God goes back and demands payment again in hell then God is not just

and holy. Everyone for whom Christ died the holiness of God demands that for all whom Christ died, they *shall be* saved.

IV

Lastly, God's holiness *demand*s *holy living* by we who are saved. God saved us that we might **"be holy and without blame before him in love"** (Eph. 1:4). If you are listening and saved, that salvation was that you might be holy here, and certainly perfect in eternity. Your salvation was that your life here upon this earth might give glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you giving honor to the name of Jesus Christ? How important is holiness? The Bible says, **"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"** (Heb. 12:14).

You say, "How can I know I am saved?" Are you living a holy life? Are you separated unto God (and) the things of God? In the life of the saved there is an *imputed* holiness that is given to us by Jesus Christ, but there must also be a *practical* holiness. We are to live as children of God. There is a great need in this day and time for holy living. There are so many out there who claim to be saved and live like the devil. It is important that we leave the example that Christ paid for my sins and I am going to live a holy life because I have been changed, I have been converted, the **"old things are passed away; . . . all things are become new."** (2 Cor. 5:17). Holiness gives accreditation to Christianity above. More than anything else in this world, holy and righteous liv-

ing gives accreditation to the saving power of God; let us be examples. Holiness will help others and I make you this promise: holiness shall make you happier person even in the midst of persecution.

Let me close in mentioning some characteristics of holy people.

J. C. Ryle in his sermon—the greatest sermon I have ever read on holiness—said, **"Holiness is an inward attitude that produces outward manifestation."** Holiness is not from the outside in; it is from the inside out. Holiness is not just what we do on the outside, but it is what we do on the outside that spring's forth from the inside. One comes to church because he has an inward attitude of holiness and righteousness, a desire to please God.

A holy person is meek and humble. How can we not be if we are holy people? We have to understand, I have nothing in which to be proud, nothing to brag about. There is nothing worse or more offensive to God than a saved person bragging about how they got saved or what *they did* in their salvation. That is an insult to God.

A holy person will practice self-denial. You will not put yourself first; you will put God and serving Him first. A holy person will practice charity; they will be a loving person. A holy person will manifest kindness. If you want to destroy your testimony go out in this world and do not be kind to others. Speak kindly to people and be nice to them because that is Christian character; that's what holy people do.

Holy people will be merciful and helpful to others. A holy person will have a true heart. A holy person will fear God because we recognize the holiness of God. A holy person seeks the will of God. A holy person will follow after the duties of the child of God. If you do not read the Book, pray, witness and go to God's house you are not holy; it's plain and simple.

A holy person will be spiritually minded, not swept up by the things of this world. A holy person will share Jesus Christ with their life and with their lips. Are you a holy person? The holiness of God demands that we be holy.

In closing may we ask God to help us to meditate on how holy He is. He is today **"The Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up"** (Isa. 6:1). May we recognize His holiness. Let us rejoice and give praise that our holy God is a merciful God. Let it be thankful that He took our sins, punishing the Just for the unjust and suffered our hell that we may go to heaven. Let us live holy lives to the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ω

THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONG US

(A Biblical Baptist Brief)

Pastor Andy Proctor
Grace Baptist Church
Stanleyville, N. C.

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us."

Luke 1:1



We must understand from the beginning that we only believe what we believe because the sovereign grace of God has so worked in us to believe on God our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Moreover, this grace of God works in us to repent of our sins and believe the gospel and thus, live the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit in living a holy life.

God has impressed upon me to deal with this text with the goal in mind to first and foremost give glory to God and to edify the saints by this stirring up of remembrance of those things most surely believed among us to even have it condensed to go over during devotions or listen to while traveling to keep us sharp on those things that distinguish us in what we believe.

In dealing with this abbreviated sermon, it is obvious that all the scriptures that could be given, cannot be given due to the time, but our prayer and hope is that it will generate interest and be a means

whereby souls would be converted and we can hear the things most surely believed among us and more easily hide them in our hearts. This provides what we believe in a nutshell, in a single message for those who may be interested in church membership.

We will introduce this message with the foundational doctrine of *Bibliology*, by saying that the Lord's churches believe that the Bible is God's inspired, infallible, eternal Word. **"All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The other foundation of doctrine is the *Doctrine of the Godhead*, in other words, we believe that God is the Trinitarian God of the Holy Scriptures, one God in three Entities or Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all Persons having attributes only God could have and each Member of the Godhead are addressed as Deity in the Holy Scriptures: **"The LORD our God is one LORD"** (Deut. 6:4); the Father's deity, Rom. 1:7; the Son's deity, 2 Pet. 1:1; and the Holy Spirit's deity, Acts 5:3-4.

The Bible also declares God's attributes or characteristics as being sovereign, holy, loving, gracious, merciful, just and righteous, only to name a few.

Another foundational doctrine is *Creation*, the Bible reveals that God created the heavens and the earth and all that is therein, in six days (Gen. Chaps. 1-2).

To believe in an evolutionary accident is beyond ridiculous and is absurdly unscientific.

In consideration of *Things Most Surely Believed Among Us: A Biblical Baptist Brief*, we will examine, first, Soteriology; second, Ecclesiology; third, Eschatology (as follows):

1. Soteriology

A. Soteriology is defined as the study of the doctrine of salvation.

B. We will deal with what is known as the Doctrines of Grace in the realm of Soteriology.

Salvation from sin is by grace alone, through Christ alone, not of works lest any man should boast (John 14:6; Eph. 2:8-9).

C. Total Depravity:

1. Because man is totally depraved salvation must be by grace for he is **"dead in trespasses and sins"** (Eph. 2:1). Roman 3 is also a good reference to this truth, **"there is none that doeth good, no not one . . . All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:12, 23).

2. Such depravity in nature and in action brings all unto the condemnation of eternal punishment (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14-15).

3. This teaching of total depravity, when truly understood, makes the other five points of sovereign grace easily understood.

D. Unconditional Election: God has chosen, elected, selected, predestinated a people unto salvation from sin (Eph. 1:3-12). **". . . Being not yet born, neither had done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth"** (Rom. 9:11).

E. Limited Atonement: Jesus made effectual atonement for and died only for His sheep, His elect (John 10:11, 26).

F. Irresistible Grace: God's elect, His people, "**Thy people shall be willing**" in the day of God's power to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior through His saving work at Calvary (Psa. 65:4; 110:3).

G. Perseverance and Preservation of the Saints:

1. Those who are truly saved never apostatize nor abandon the faith and show forth the evidence or fruit of the Holy Spirit that they have been born again of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor.5:17; Gal. 2:20; John 3:3-8; Gal. 5:22-23).

2. "**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand**" (John 10:27-28).

3. "**He that endureth to the end shall be saved**" (Matt. 10:22).

4. "**. . . Kept by the power of God**" (1 Pet. 1:5)

II. Ecclesiology

A. Ecclesiology is defined as the study of the church. Ecclesia is the Greek word for a local, visible assembly.

B. The Church Defined: in the context of the Scriptures a church is a local, visible assembly of Scripturally baptized believers. There is no such thing as a Universal, Invisible church that includes all believers, for that would be the

Family of God.

C. The New Testament usage of that word, *ecclesia* was well known as a local, visible assembly, so when Jesus used it, He didn't coin a new word without explaining it, because He used the well-known word in accordance with its common usage in that day.

D. The promise of perpetuity given to Christ's church" (In the following verse the word is used generically, or as an institution, such as the sentence: "A boy grows up to be a man." this does not refer to a universal, invisible boy or man, but using the term generically and thus, still retaining the local, visible nature of a boy or a man): "**And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it**" (Matt. 16:18). The Lord's churches have been called Donatists, Waldenses, Anabaptists, and other names that their enemies gave them, and are now called Baptists. Either way, they were, are and always will be Biblical and Baptist. Thus, there will always be Scriptural churches around till Christ returns.

E. The church is autonomous and independent from any human, earthly organizations, taking orders from no one but God, but obeying government as long as they make laws that are not contrary to the Word of God. Jesus is the Head of His churches, not man (Eph. 1:22).

F. Ordinances given to the church:

1. **Baptism:**

a) **Candidate:** saved with fruit to show it. In Acts 8:12 those who believed were baptized, that is the divine order, the picture of death, burial and resurrection means nothing to the unsaved (Rom. 6:1-4); Matt. 3:8).

b) **Motive:** not for salvation, for salvation is by grace, not works (Titus 3:5).

c) **Mode:** immersion; the Greek word *baptizo*, means to *immerse*, to submerge. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch went down in the water and out of the water for baptism (Acts 8: 38-39).

d) **Administrator:** God's church, known as Baptists today, though some have lost their candlestick and do not have the authority to baptize (Matt. 28:19-20).

e) Biblical baptism is the gateway for the person baptized, into the church that baptized that person (Acts 2:41).

2. **The Lord's Supper**

a) Administrator—God's church, keep ordinances pure as delivered by Christ and the Apostles (1 Cor. 11:2, the chapter that deals with the Lord's supper in much detail).

b) Participants, the church membership only who are in proper fellowship with God.

(1) In Acts 2:42, "**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.**"

(2) Best way to fence the table with a local assembly close only to them, not open to all, lest leaven effect the whole church (1 Cor. 5:6-7) and her purity is tarnished (1 Cor. 5:11, "**But now I have written**

unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous or in idolatry, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one not to eat.;" thus, we see the scriptural practice of church discipline for the sake of a pure church that would best represent God).

C) **Elements:**

(1) Unleavened bread: the bread is that which was used in the Passover which was to be unleavened bread (Ex. 12:8). Leaven represents sin (Gal. 5:9) which would misrepresent the body of Christ.

(2) Wine is unleavened grape juice, it has no leaven for it is killed in the fermentation process, some drunk at the church at Corinth, rebuked not for the wine, but, for divisive nature of their partaking of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:21).

G. **Two Officers in the Church:**

1. Pastor—1 Tim. 3:2-7
2. Deacon—1 Tim. 3:8-13

H. **The Great Commission Given to the Church** (Matt. 28:18-20).

1. Evangelism: Preach the gospel to the lost (Mark 16:15).

2. Baptism: Baptize the believer's.

3. Whatsoever the Lord commands, Lord's Supper, Lord's day, love, holiness, prayer, Bible study.

III **Eschatology**

A. Eschatology is defined as the study of last things, and times. (Dan. 2, 7-12; Matt. 24; 1 Thess. 4; 2 Thess. 2; Rev. 5-22).

B. *The coming Antichrist and the Lamb where the Bridegroom, the Temporary New World Order:* the Lord Jesus Christ and His

1. Like the tower of Babel, the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, Antichrist will be the embodiment of Satan, the fallen angel who shall be cast into the lake of fire along with all those who reject Christ as their Lord and Savior.

2. Ironically, the world leaders are fulfilling the very Word of God that they don't believe in!

C. *The Return of Christ and Eternal New World Order:*

1. Pre-Tribulational: Christ's return is imminent, or could occur at any time, cannot know the day, nor the hour (Matt. 24:36; 1 Thess. 4:17).

a) If Christ came after the Tribulation you could count down the years from when the Tribulation came.

b) Thus, Christ's return shall be before the Thousand Year Reign of Christ; so, Christ's return will be Pre-Millennial.

c) Between the Rapture or the first phase of Christ's return and the second phase of Christ's return after the Great Tribulation shall be:

(1) ***The Judgment Seat of Christ for believers*** where rewards will be given to the saints (1 Cor. 11:11-14), one of which will be whether one would be in the Bride of Christ which is for the faithful, pure baptized believers in a true church (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7).

(2) ***The Marriage Supper of***

2. ***The Final Judgment:*** The unbelievers shall be judged in the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:10-15).

3. ***The Eternal Ages*** (Rev. 21-22)

May we hide these precious infallible truths in our hearts that we may do according to 1 Pet. 3:15, **"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."**

Let us promote the glory of God in that we **"adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things"** (Titus 2:10) by a graciousness, love and biblical holiness till Christ returns to take us to our heavenly home He has prepared for us for all eternity.

For those of you who have never heard some of these teachings, may you come to embrace them as your own as we do, and even become a good and faithful member of one of the Lord's churches.

We invite you to contact us in regards to your soul's salvation as well as if you have questions about this message. **Ω**

"Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof." — Job 24:2

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN AMERICA

By O. E. Ridenour
From *The Baptist Examiner*
(February 1, 1932)
(February 15, 1932)

The first Baptist Church of America was not founded by Roger Williams in Providence, R. I., as most historians have written, and the majority of people think. *The first Baptist Church in this country was founded by John Clarke in Newport, R. I.* Both churches have claimed this distinction, and the only way to settle this claim and give the honor to the right Church is to examine the records which now exist; although many records were lost when the members of these churches were driven southward by the British soldiers during the war.



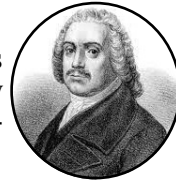
FBC as seen in 1906

Roger Williams seems to have been providentially raised up as "a herald," "a voice," to proclaim the eternal divorcement of Church and State and the absolute freedom of man to worship according to his understanding of His Word; thus to prepare the way for

the coming of His Kingdom into New England and America.

Little is known of the early life of young Roger. The place of his birth is not recorded. This much is known, that Roger Williams, son of William Williams, was baptized on the 24th day of July, 1600, in the Parish church of Guinness, Cornwall, England. His family, being members of the Episcopal Church, he, therefore, was made a member of it in unconscious infancy. Early in life he was brought by God's grace to know "Christ as his personal Savior," to realize that his Savior was also his Lord, and entitled, not only to the supreme love of his heart, but to the supreme service-obedience of his life, and to see that Caesar had no right to come between his soul and his Savior.

These Puritan ideas doubtless account for the opposition of his father and his leaving home for London. His persecution commenced in his father's house, and followed him until the day of his death. These persecutions caused him to flee to the New World in the hope of finding "Freedom to worship God."



Roger Williams
(1603-1683)

After a tempestuous voyage of ten weeks he landed with his young wife, Mary, off Nantasket, February 5, 1631.

He soon received a call to settle over an Episcopal Church in Boston, but declined because, as he wrote to Cotton, he "durst not officiate to an unseparated people"; so thoroughly had he become imbued with that great Baptist's doctrine of religious freedom set forth in their "Confession of Faith", published in London in 1611, viz: "***The magistrate is not to meddle with religion or matters of conscience, nor to compel men to this or that form of religion, because Christ is King and Lawgiver of Church and conscience.***" It was from this pure fountain that Williams drank in the sentiment and principle of soul freedom, which animated and influenced his whole life.

Owing to the opposition of the magistrates, Mr. Williams soon removed to Salem, Mass., and became connected with the church in that place, which was a separated, independent body, answering to the Congregational Church of today. On the 12th day of April, 1634, he was regularly ordained as its pastor.

From this period dates the controversies he had with the court and clergy (of the Episcopal Church, which was the state church of Massachusetts Bay at that time), which disputes, and his unyielding opposition to edicts of the magistrates, resulted in his banishment by the court from the colony. There are opposing views as to his banishment, the clergy

and court aver that it was solely his opposition to the civil government and gross "contempt of court", which is in England and this country today a very grave offense; while his friends say that it was solely for his "religious opinions." That it was for both causes is clearly seen from the charges themselves, which Mr. Williams admits are truly drawn.

The sentence of the court was for Williams to leave the colony in six weeks. He did not leave and the officers waited on him for twelve weeks! He fled westward during midwinter. Had he left when he was first notified, he would not have had to suffer so many hardships, because of the extreme cold weather. The Indians were all very friendly, their chiefs being his particular friends, and the woods quite familiar. Five months later he came to where Providence now stands. He gave it this name in gratitude to the goodness that it had so well provided for him. Others came from Massachusetts, and they entered into a compact, "only in civil things," and thus became a "town fellowship," and soon—March 4, 1644—he obtained a charter from the commissioners appointed by Parliament for the control of colonial affairs, under which the town became a colony under the title of "Rhode Island and Providence Plantations." Thus was founded a small new society in Rhode Island on the principle of entire liberty of conscience, and the uncontrolled power of the majority in secular concerns.

This compact did not give much liberty of conscience to the colonists. **First**—it defined the boundaries of the state, and that so blindly as to entail a half century of quarrels. **Second**—it included Providence, Newport, and Portsmouth, under the name of "The Providence Plantations," in one government, *in which the majority should rule*. **Third**—it gave liberty to make and execute laws; provided "that *said laws and constitution and punishments be conformable to the laws of England*, so far as the nature and constitution of the place will admit."

"But," says Professor Clark, "The laws of England sanctioned imprisonments, hangings and burning for religious opinions, and, under this charter, a majority could enact those in Rhode Island!" *We can plainly see that Roger Williams did not secure the full and free enjoyment of religious liberty for his people, or Baptists, or anyone else.*

Williams believed that the "gates of hell" had, indeed, prevailed against the church and Kingdom of God, and that their continuity had been lost, and consequently, all authority derived from a Gospel Church to administer the ordinances had been lost; therefore, if the visible church and its ordinances were to be perpetuated on earth, they must be recommenced by someone under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Believing that the Spirit moved upon him to do this work, he, in the year 1639, influenced a company of his followers (eleven in number) to engage with him in this undertak-

ing. This was the manner of it: One of these, Ezekiel Holliman, immersed Mr. Williams, and he (Mr. Williams) returned the kind office and immersed Mr. Holliman and eleven others—all of these had been excluded from the Salem church, not on any charge of immorality but for their Anabaptist opinions. This church at Salem was a Pedobaptist (Protestant) Church.

So far as we can learn, this was all Roger Williams, or the immersed persons, did to effect the setting up or constituting a visible church. Eld. E. Brown, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Providence, in the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary sermon, April 28, 1889, said: "Our fathers founded and the centuries have handed down to us, a church without a written creed." He could have added, covenant, constitution, or organization! History gives us no intimation that Mr. Williams even statedly preached, or presumed to administer the Lord's Supper, or immerse another person in this group. *He soon repudiated his work as unscriptural and null, and deserted the company—we cannot call it a church—and in four months" Cotton Mather, an eminent Pedobaptist minister and historian, says, 'it came to nothing.' This is his statement: "One Roger Williams, a preacher, arrived in New England about the year 1630; was first an assistant in the church at Salem and afterwards its pastor. This man—a difference happening between the government and him—caused a great deal of trouble and*

vexation. At length the magistrates passed the sentence of banishment upon him; upon which he removed with a few of his own sect and settled at a place called Providence. There they proceed not only unto the gathering of a thing like a church, but unto the renouncing of their infant baptism. After this he turned Seeker and Familist, and the church came to nothing."

All authentic records fix the utter extinction of this company at four months. It was gathered in March, and came to nothing in July. *Therefore, Williams' baptism originated and died with him.*

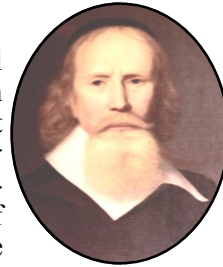
He lived for forty years after this, and it is a well-established fact that he never united or communed or affiliated with any Baptist church, either in Newport or Providence. He was not the first, by a large part of a century, to assert by pen or voice the doctrine of religious liberty. He caught his inspiration from the Articles of Faith of the Old Baptist churches in England, and was educated in the doctrine by the writings of Busher and other suffering Baptists in England.

He never, by any legal document that has been discovered, embodied the doctrine of free and full freedom of conscience for Baptists, or any other denomination. He did not insert one provision for the enjoyment of free and full religious liberty in the character he obtained from England—to secure which the colonists afterwards sent Mr. John Clark. *Roger Williams was never a Baptist one hour in his life. No authentic doc-*

ument sustains the claim that he was ever the member of, or communed or affiliated with, any Baptist Church. The claim is utterly absurd, since in less than four months after he was immersed by Holliman he repudiated the act as null, and turned Seeker and Familist, denying that Christ had a visible church on earth, or that there were "any scriptural church, state or ordinances extant."

II

Now we will turn to John Clarke, the first Baptist preacher of the First Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island.



**John Clarke
(1609-1676)**

The Colony of Massachusetts, or The Bay, having its center at Boston, was in 1637 in a hot fermentation, being full of restless spirits, eager for and yet afraid of all novelties in church and state. They were fearful of being in minorities, and equally afraid of organizing their majorities. Church and state had been united in 1631 by laws which made church members alone eligible to citizenship, and consequently the larger part of the colonists were neither church members nor citizens. Satisfied, however, with their new liberties the people disputed little about politics or government, but much about religion.

The crystallization of religious opinions almost immediately exhibited in Boston the three great phases of Protestant Christianity:

First, the host of people which attaches itself to church organizations and ordinances, entering by infant baptism, so called. Second, the doctrinal phase called Arminianism. Third, the doctrinal phase which bears in a restricted sense the name of Calvinism. A sweeping law of exclusion was passed, forbidding strangers to even remain in the territory of the Bay more than three weeks without a government Permit. This was the first time that there was direct issue raised between parties in respect to "liberty of conscience," although these three words had for many years been on every tongue and men's peculiar conscience had involved them in many difficulties. At this time, Boston produced no competent leader for the despairing "antinomians." Sir Henry Vane returned to England. Several others, who had been high in office, in more tranquil days, now showed no genius for leadership.

In this juncture, in November, 1637, John Clark, just turned twenty-eight years of age, arrived in Boston. Immediately he counselled the "antinomians" to unite in a movement to other territory, and his advice was adopted.

Who was this young man, so promptly accepted as a leader?

In Westhorpe, Suffolk, which was, in the sixteenth century, the seat of the Duke of Suffolk, but now is an insignificant hamlet, John Clarke was born, and here is registered in the parish house as having been baptized October 8, 1609. He was well educated, a learned physician and one of the ablest men of the seventeenth cen-

ture. He was an advanced student of Greek and Hebrew, and at his death, he had nearly ready for publication a "Biblical Concordance and Lexicon."

In his own narrative. Clark says: ***"I was no sooner on shore, than there appeared to me differences among them touching the covenants; and in point of evidencing a man's good estate, some pressed hard for the covenant of works, and for sanctification to be the first and chief evidence: others pressed as hard for the covenant of grace that was established upon better promises, and for the evidence of the Spirit, whereupon I moved the latter for peace sake, to turn aside to the right hand or to the left. The motion was readily accepted, and I was requested, with some others, to seek out a place."***

Clark visited New Hampshire, but returned and advised a more southern location of a colony. In Boston in the first week of March, 1638, the colony was fully organized for emigration. The first instrument in the series is one of the most remarkable documents in political literature, as a terse enactment of law and liberty, recognized as necessarily united in a government subordinated to Christ. It was signed March 7, 1638 and it is as follows:

"We whose names are underwritten, do here solemnly, in the presence of Jehovah, incorporate ourselves into a Bodie Politich, and as He shall help, will submit our persons, lives and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and to

all those perfect and most absolute laws of His, given us in His Holy Word of Truth, to be guided and judged thereby." Ex. 24:3; 2 Chron. 11:3, 4; 2 Kings 11:17.

The scripture references, attached to this document are necessary to its interpretation.

Here is, in fact, the first constitution of Rhode Island, and the first in the world, which guaranteed religious liberty. There is scarcely a possibility of doubt that Mr. Clark was the writer of this constitution. William Coddington was, indeed, the first signer as the elected President and Judge of the Colony, but John Clarke's name is the second. The evidence of his authorship is conspicuous in the fact that it is an epitome of those writings from his pen which display him as the unique and almost ideal champion of liberty of conscience in the seventeenth century.

Clark, when in prison in Boston, for religious acts done by him as a Baptist minister, while visiting in Lynn, challenged the governmental offices, and the preachers of the colony, to a debate on four theses. The next year, in London, he published a book in which he three times stated those propositions, each time with increased elaboration, until the last statement fills forty-four octavo pages. His propositions briefly condensed, declare: **First**, Christ is King. **Second**, baptism is dipping, and only baptized believers may join in the order of the church. **Third**, every believer ought to use his gifts. **Fourth**, no servant of Christ has authority over other persons in matters of conscience.

These are good evidences of the authorship of the covenant, but there are better ones in its correspondence, with the words, which, in 1662, Clark addressed to a king: *"A flourishing civil state may best be maintained with full liberty in religious concernment; and true piety, rightly grounded upon Gospel principles will lay in the hearts of men the strongest obligations to truer loyalty."*

Early in March, 1638, Clark, with a body of the colonists, set out from Boston southward. Following the natural route they found, at the head of Narragansett Bay, Roger Williams, who had come there in the summer of 1636, with two men and two youths. These two men, however, had left him, and three others had joined him in 1637. Some of these were accompanied by their wives. These four men had no land by deed from the Indians, but Roger Williams claimed that the natives had promised to him personally the territory now occupied by the city of Providence. The men were all at variance in their religious and irreligious views. One, soon after, left Providence, but was during all his life a bitter enemy of Roger Williams. One was married to the undivorced wife of another man, and did not stay long at Providence. These five men, and their successors, had no law, nor an officer, nor an organization of any kind until 1647.

Roger Williams gave John Clark no invitation to stay with him, He waived thereon further south, even off the land, to the island of Aquedneck. Coddington obtained, by payment of a large price, a deed

from the Indians. Roger Williams accompanied Mr. Coddington in the negotiation, and on the same day obtained for himself the first deed that he ever had from the natives. From Mr. Williams' own letter it is shown that Providence and Newport lands were acquired on the same day; but the island lands were bought by a colony, and Providence lands by an individual.

Among the first acts of the colony was the erection of a meeting house, but the cardinal principle of religious freedom, viz; absolute separation of church and state was maintained. Governor Winthrop records that Mr. Clark was a preacher on the island in 1638, and elsewhere calls him "their minister." The records of the island tell a story of perpetual harmony and peace.

In contrast with the history thus recorded we notice the correspondent features of the Providence Colony. Roger Williams kept the lands at Providence and Pawtucket as his private property until October 8, 1638, six months after the island lands were partitioned.

In 1639 he confessed that his mind was all unsettled about church organization and ordinances. The world was ringing with the protests and appeals of Anabaptists and of the General Baptists, but the persons of Baptist sentiments were still mostly members of other churches. Baptist Churches were few. The first church of the Particular Baptists was formed after Mr. Williams left England. In 1639 Roger Williams caused himself to be immersed by Ezekiel Holli-

man, and then himself immersed eleven others. There is no evidence, nor even tradition, that by this act these persons constituted a church. Even the members of the first of Particular Baptists in London — Mr. Spilsbury's — remained in their membership in the Pedobaptist Church till 1633. In 1639 a minister of Mr. Spilsbury's church, Hanser Knollys (Knowles), was in New England preaching. Mr. Clark was also probably from Mr. Spilsbury's church. But Roger Williams summoned neither of these to baptize him and sought no affiliation with recognized Baptists. Who the persons were whom he immersed is entirely unknown. Mr. Benedict gave a list of names, but they were only names of some land owners, copied out of a deed. Some of these were not professing Christians, and some were never Baptists! Some names of known or supposed Baptists are omitted by Mr. Benedict. The company that was immersed thus was soon after scattered. Mr. Holliman and others went to Warwick, others to Pawtucket and Newport.

Even this baptism, and his associates in it, Mr. Williams renounced in three or four months, and repudiated all ministries and church organizations.

Clark's leadership continued preeminent on the island. So rapid was the growth that the new town of Newport was established in 1639. Mr. Clark and most of the leading men of Portsmouth removed thither.

Clark was a delegate from Newport in every assembly until he was sent to England in 1631. In 1649,

1650 and part of 1651, he also held the offices of general treasurer, and of "assistant" magistrates, but it is worthy of note that these three years were those in which his active Christian ministry is best known.

One of the recorded evidences of this is noteworthy. Roger Williams wrote in 1649:

"At Seekonk a great many have lately concurred the point of a new baptism, and the new manner by dipping. And Mr. John Clark hath been there lately, and Mr. Lucas (an elder in Mr. Clark's church), and hath dipped them. I believe their practice comes nearer the first practice of our Great Founder, Christ Jesus, than other practices of religion do, and yet I have not satisfaction, neither in the authority by which it is done, nor in the manner."

In the summer of 1651, the religious ministry of Dr. Clark was interrupted by great political movements. Mr. Coddington, who had gone to England in 1649 to secure a repeal or modification of the patent for the colony, obtained in 1651 a commission for himself as Governor of the island for life. This practically abrogated the charter, which probably was Governor Coddington's chief desire, and opened the way for reorganization. In this crisis Clark was the soul hope of the islanders. One hundred and six citizens presented to him a written request that he would go to England to remedy the existing evils. He consented and sailed in November, 1651. As soon as it was known that Clark was going to England, the towns of

Providence and Warwick commissioned Roger Williams to go also and watch over their interests. They sailed together, and Clark's greatest success was due to the capture of Williams, who thenceforward for several years seems to have heartily co-operated with Clark's friends on the Island. The result of this union was that the two envoys obtained, October 2, 1652, from the council of state a revocation of the commission of Mr. Coddington, and a renewal of the patent. Clark, after this, remained in England, but Roger Williams returned home. Of his welcome at Providence he said:

"I am like a man in a great fog. It hath been told me that I labored for a licentious and contentious people. At present, I am called a traitor by one party, and, it is said, that I am as good as banished by yourselves, and that both sides wished that I might never have landed, that the fire of contention might have had no stop in burning."

Mr. Clark in 1654, sent home a statement of his plans, and requested that they should be approved by the state government. His plans were formally approved without an amendment, and he was appointed sole agent of the state to represent it in England.

At length, July 9, 1663, the royal seal was affixed to the charter of Rhode Island, and it was a document so extraordinary that no words of praise can be extravagant. Let the reader mark an unparalleled fact. This charter was the constitution of Rhode Island, and although formulated amid the

convulsions of the seventeenth century, it continued to be the constitution of the State through all the period of growth: through the war of independence; and through the formulating of state constitutions all around it, and of the national constitution—even one hundred and seventy-nine years—till 1842.

Its preamble quoted from Clark's second address to the king, is thus:

“Our royal will and pleasure is, That no person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be anywise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any differences in opinion in matters of religion, who do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony; but that all and every person and persons may, from time to time, and all times hereafter, freely and fully, have and enjoy his own and their judgments and consciences, in matters of religious concerns, throughout the tract of land hereafter mentioned, they behaving themselves peaceably and quietly, and not using this liberty to licentiousness and profaneness, nor to civil injury or outward disturbances of others; any law, statute, or clause therein contained, or to be contained usage or custom of this realm, to the contrary hereof, in anywise notwithstanding.”

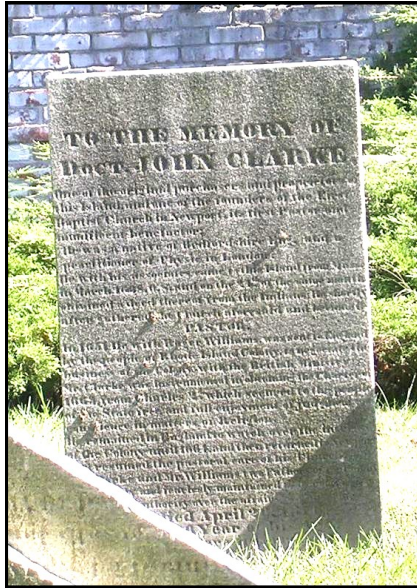
Clark returned home in 1664. The charter was received with universal joy. The government was immediately organized. The legislature opened its records with this entry: *“The Present assembly, now by God's gracious providence en-*

joying the helpful presence of our much honored and beloved Mr. John Clark, doth declare,” etc.

Clark was a member of the government every year after his return until 1672. In 1666 he was appointed alone to make a digest of the laws, “leaving out what may be superfluous, and adding what may appear unto him necessary.” For two years he was deputy governor. Three times he was appointed to go to England under certain contingencies, but did not go.

From 1664 till his death, April 20, 1676, Clark held the place of first elder in his church. It was a time of difficulties. In their anxiety to be scriptural, many persons were becoming strenuous about laying on of hands, and kindred points, and a seventh day Sabbath. These disagreements penetrated the First Church in Newport, and soon after Clark's death produced divisions, but his influence helped, in the providences of God, to hold this first of Baptist churches in America faithful to its early principles, and to preserve it a foster mother and teacher of a great denomination.

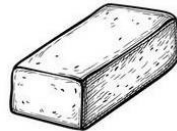
The last act of his life was in keeping with the whole. On the day of his death he made a will by which a considerable portion of his estate was placed in the hands of trustees as a perpetual fund, of which the rents and profits are to be used “for the relief of the poor, and the bringing up of children unto learning.” This, fund, of which a portion was then appraised at five hundred and twenty pounds, is still performing its beneficent work, and in it John Clarke lives.



Resting place of Dr. John Clarke
Newport, Rhode Island

No posterity of John Clark survived him. It is better so. Let the name belong to no unworthy child. It belongs to the ages, and to the world. Its record belongs in a sense to the best chapters of Baptist history; but far more it belongs to the history of civilization and of Christian statesmanship. Let it be said of him as a man, a Christian, and as a statesman, that in an age when all men blundered, and most men conspicuously sinned, he so lived that Mr. Backus wrote: *"I have not met a single reflection cast on him by anyone."* And Governor Arnold wrote: *"His character and talents appear more exalted the more closely they are examined, and his blameless, self-sacrificing life left him without any enemy."* Mr. Bancroft says: *"He left a name without a spot."* Ω

ARE YOU A ?



I know there are some who say, "Well, I have given myself to the Lord, just as good a brick while it is kicking about on the ground as to give myself to any church."

Now, why not? *Because I can be a Christian without it.*

Are you quite clear about that? You can be as good a Christian by disobedience to your Lord's commands as being obedient? There is a brick.

What is it made for? To help build a house. It is of no use for that brick to tell you that it is just a good a brick while it is kicking about on the ground as it would be in the house. It is a good-for-nothing brick. So you rolling-stone Christians, I do not believe that you are answering your purpose. You are living contrary to the life which Christ would have you live, and you are much to blame for the injury you do.

C. H. Spurgeon

Sovereign Grace

Pastor Chris Burke
Sovereign Grace Landmark
Missionary Baptist Church
Catlettsburg Kentucky



“But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.” — Psalm 115:3

To be sovereign is to have absolute authority and power to do whatever one wills, whenever he wills, and with whomever he wills. Earthly kings strive for sovereignty over their kingdoms, but because they are mere men, their rule and reign is short lived.

Unlike men who fail and die, God is all powerful and all wise, and He is everywhere present to execute His divine, sovereign will, **“and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”** (Dan. 4:35). Unlike men, God is eternal and immutable, He reigns as Sovereign Lord forever! God does whatsoever He pleases; both in saving sinners by His grace, and in executing judgment upon the lost. As weak and sinful creatures, we stand in desperate need of His sovereign grace and tender mercies.

1. Lost Sinners Need Sovereign Grace.

The Scriptures declare just how deplorable that all men are in their natural state. We all are declared unrighteous, unholy, unprofitable, no good, deceitful, liars, wicked,

and proud. We do not understand spiritual things, we do not seek after God, we do not know the way of peace but only war, violence, and hatred. We don't fear and reverence God our Creator, but rather turn His glory into shame. All our righteousness is as filthy rags in His sight! We are all dead in trespasses and sins, enemies of God, and we are all by nature the children of wrath. No man can or will come to God for salvation. Yes, we are all in desperate need of His sovereign grace! (Rom. 1:18-32, 3:10-18, 5:6-12).

2. God Provided Grace For His People.

Foreknowing the sinful condition of all men, God chose to save a people out of the mass of lost humanity. Unlike men, God chose to save the foolish, the weak, the base, and the despised things to be heirs of His salvation. He chose to save harlots and drunkards and all manner of sinners. As for the “wise and noble” that are saved, they too are brought to see their sinful condition and their desperate need for His mercy and grace.

1 Cor. 1:26-29, **“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many**

mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

Why God chose to save some people and not others is a mystery, as all men are unworthy of the least of His favor. We only know that it was **"according to the good pleasure of His will"** and **"to the praise of the glory of His grace"** (Eph. 1:5-6). It is certain that salvation is all because of His sovereign grace, and not at all because of our own goodness; for **"there is none that doeth good, no, not one"** (Rom. 3:12).

The human response to sovereign election is to accuse God of being unjust and unfair for not giving all men an equal "chance". What we need to realize is that God is not obligated to His creatures, **but we are obligated to Him**. We are not in a position to judge God, but He is our judge! (Rom. 9:14,18-20; Job 9:14-15, 40:2, 8; Matt. 20:15).

The Scriptures do provide some answers to these human objections. Although God is not obligated by His creatures to give them anything, He sees fit to bestow many common graces upon all men. (Ps. 104:10-24). He causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon the just and the unjust (Matt 5:45). He freely gives life, health, and earthly provisions to all (Acts 17:25).

He gives men the light of creation and of conscience (Rom. 1:20, 2:15, Rom. 2:4) He gave mankind His Holy Word and sends His messengers to preach the Gospel unto all without distinction (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 17:30). After doing them only good, God then is patient and longsuffering toward the same rebellious sinners who hate Him!

For all these things that God has done, men despise His goodness and reject His counsel! They blaspheme His Holy Name, trample on His goodness, and refuse to thank Him for their lives and all His provisions. Worst of all, they reject the precious Gospel of God's beloved Son! ***Who are men to say that God is unfair?***

3. God Provided a Sacrifice For His People

God must punish sin. His Holiness demands that every sin receives a just recompense of reward. Before the foundation of the world God knew that His people would need a sacrifice for their sins to make them fit for heaven. To secure their salvation and satisfy His Holiness, God purposed to send His Son Jesus, the Lamb of God, to die for the sins of His people.

Nah. 1:3, **"The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked."**

Rev. 13:8, **"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."**

1 Pet. 3:18, **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to**

God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” (See also Titus. 1:9; 2 Th. 2:14)

God’s sacrifice was the work of His sovereign grace. No one ascended up to heaven to bring Christ down, or descended into the grave to raise Christ up...The sinner’s only contribution was to provide the sins for which Christ must shed His blood! The all-important question is, did Jesus die for your sins? If you are not brought to believe that He did, then you must pay for your sins in everlasting punishment.

4. God Calls His People.

Sinners hear the Gospel with no effect until the Holy Spirit begins a work of grace in their heart. When the Spirit calls, suddenly the sinner finds himself under deep conviction of sin and terrified at the very real consequences of dying in that state. He finds himself miserable, knowing that He might die at any moment and perish eternally in hell. He cries out to God for mercy, acknowledging that he is wicked and undone, and worthy of God’s righteous judgment. God then reveals to the sinner the meaning of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection for his sins. Thus, the penitent sinner responds to God’s grace from a new heart of faith, praising and thanking God for His wonderful salvation, knowing that he is forgiven of all his sins.

This is the effectual call of sovereign grace—a call not produced by any earthly means, but by the Holy Spirit of God...

Psa. 110:3, **“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy pow-**

er...” (See also Titus. 1:9; 2 Th. 2:14)

The call of the Spirit is a very mysterious thing. It causes a man who could not understand the simplicity of the Gospel, to truly believe that Jesus died for his sins. It causes a man who once hated God, and hid from God, and took pleasure in every imaginable sin, to love God, and cling to God, and to hate sin with a godly hatred! This effectual call is the work of God’s Holy Spirit and sovereign grace giving new life to a dead sinner.

5. God Preserves His People

God chose a people, Christ died for their sins, the Holy Spirit called them in time, and they are kept secure by the mighty power of God. It is not possible for a man to save himself, nor is it possible for a man to keep himself saved. **Salvation is by the sovereign grace of God from start to finish.** Jonah. 2:9, **“Salvation is of the Lord”**. We want to notice this evening just four of the many ways that God preserves His people.

First, it is the power of God within every believer that keeps him secure. Believers have the Holy Spirit within Who enables them to endure temptations and the onslaughts of Satan and the world. Christians would be foolish to suppose that we could endure such enemies in our own strength. (Phil. 1:6, 2:12-13, 1Pet. 1:3-5).

Secondly, Jesus intercedes for His people. Christ died for all the sins of His people – past, present, and future. Now He sits at the Father’s right hand in heaven making intercession for us. The Christian

can never pay for a single sin—either before or after he is saved. It is Jesus who must make atonement for our sins and not us! (Heb. 7:25, 1 John 1:5-10).

Thirdly, the providence of God causes all things to work together for the good of His people. Even those things that appear to be evil or harmful to us are working together for our good. We may not always see the good in God's providential dealings, but we can be sure they are for our good. (Rom. 8:28, Heb. 12:6-12).

Fourthly, God is faithful to His promises. God has promised to keep His people secure, and He never breaks His promises. God even made an oath that He would keep His Word to His people.

Lam. 3:22-23, **"It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."**

Heb. 6:17-20, **"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:"** (confirmed...: Gr. interposed himself by) **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: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Mal. 3:6, **"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."**

Concluding Thoughts

Saved sinners and lost sinners alike need to see that salvation is not by our "good works", but by God's grace. We have no righteousness of our own, but we need His righteousness. We can't boast in anything that we have done to merit salvation, but we boast only in Jesus who **"saves his people from their sins."** (Matt. 1:21). God will not share His glory with another! Are you saved by God's grace? Do you know Jesus as your own personal Savior? If not, repent of your sins and trust Jesus now. May God bless you! **Ω**

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Romans 2:4

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares

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Scripture Reading: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

“I’m not going to some church and sit there with a bunch of hypocrites,” he barked.

To which I gently but, boldly replied, “But you are content to stay home, ignore the Gospel, and spend eternity in hell with those same hypocrites?”

You should have seen the look on his face. It was as if it was the first time the thought had occurred to him.

This is a portion of a conversation I had with a co-worker some years ago. It wasn’t as bad as it sounds, honest it wasn’t.

We had become friends in the short time I had worked there and I felt comfortable enough to be that straightforward with him.

All I did was invite him to church and stated that we would love to have him visit sometime. But it provoked a strong and animated reaction. Sadly, I soon learned that my friend/co-worker had (along with many others) been enduring the shameful conduct of another employee who also claimed to be a Christian. This man alleged to be very active in his local church, yet his behavior in the workplace was often distasteful and dishonoring to God.

My friend said quite frankly, “If that is what a Christian is, then I don’t want to be one.” Unfortunately, after working there for only a few weeks, I understood what he meant. And even more disturbing, it didn’t take me long to realize that he had some justification for feeling that way.

Undeniably, not everyone who confesses to be a disciple of Christ is truly saved. There are many who “talk the talk,” but do not “walk the walk.” Not that any of us are perfect or sinless, but tragically there are multitudes who claim the name of Christ but are merely imposters.

Jesus affirms this truth by the use of a familiar example. He knew that within this world there would be those who are truly born-again converts, and those who just “look the part.”

In Matthew 13:24-30 and verses 36-43, we learn that there is indeed an adversary of all that is good and holy and he yearns to inflict harm on the kingdom of Christ. One means by which the wicked one does this is by sowing tares among the wheat.

In an agrarian society, one depending upon farming and agriculture for its livelihood, this parable would have been easily understood. For someone to sow tares

(or weeds) among wheat was an act of agro-terrorism. It was a blatant assault against the future well-being of a people. There were even laws forbidding such.

In the parable Christ shares, there was a man out sowing good seed in his field anxiously anticipating a bountiful harvest, but unbeknownst to him, an enemy also comes and sows tares in the field.

The Greek word that Christ uses for tares is the word “darnels.” A common but inedible weed that was prevalent in Palestine. These darnels were also called “bastard wheat” because they look so much like the real thing. In fact, it isn’t until they began to bloom, or until the head appears that they can be distinguished from actual wheat.

Later learning that the field had been sabotaged, the field workers ask the owner if they should try to separate the tares from the wheat. He replies by telling them no, instead allow both to continue to grow, and at harvest time the reapers will separate them. Then the bundles of weeds will be burned while the sheaves of wheat stored in the barn.

Christ uses this earthly story to teach a heavenly lesson.

From Christ’s own interpretation we learn that God sovereignly allows tares to grow among His wheat. Unlike the land-owner, Jesus is aware of their presence. Yet He also realizes that, given time, their true nature will be made manifest. Time will bear out whether they are useful wheat or useless tares.

At the appointed time, when the harvest comes, He will send His holy angels to separate them and the tares will be cast into the lake of fire.

Readers, this world is made up of believers, unbelievers and make-believers. Which are you?

Yes, it is true that there are many hypocrites around and unfortunately some of them are sitting on church pews. And yes, they do damage to the cause of Christ. But don’t let the hypocrisy of some keep you from trusting in Christ.

Being too virtuous to sit beside hypocrites at church, the ballfield, a restaurant, or anywhere else will not garner you favor with God.

Ultimately, we will only give an account for ourselves.

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The King Is Coming

(Part 3)

By Pastor D. Samuel Wilson
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Turn your Bible to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. I continue on the subject, *The King is Coming*. Reading in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3: “**Now I beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...**” . I want to add here that as you read through the epistles of the apostle Paul, pay particular attention as to how many times he refers to Jesus as the *Lord* Jesus Christ. He always recognized the Lordship of Christ and bowed to the Lordship of Christ. He had absolutely no problem having Him as his Lord. He wanted Him to be his Master, the One that he would answer to and the One who had authority over him. I am greatly concerned about those who say they are saved, but they do not want the Lordship of Christ; they want to do their own thing. They do not want to have any rules and regulations. They think you can have Christ as Savior and live any way you want to without having him as Lord. Paul usually always refers to Him as the Lord Jesus Christ.

“**And by our gathering together**” For some reason the phrase, “When all God's children get home” seems to come into my mind a lot lately. There will come a day when all God's children will



be home: all of those Bible saints, all of the saints of the dark ages, all those who lived in our generation that have died and gone before; we ourselves, and those that will be saved after us—the time when all God's children will be gathered together.

“**Unto him**”..... Let me reiterate the importance of when you read the Word of God. For example, as we read in Ephesians chapters 1 and 2, pay particular attention to the usage of the word “him” and how often that the blessings of God have a direct reference back to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are chosen *in Him*, according to Ephesians. Everything we have, we have in Christ because of what He did for us.

2 Thess. 2:2, “**That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.**” Evidently someone had written to them, telling them that Christ had already come and they had missed it. Paul informs them in verse 3, “**Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first....**” Now, I use this as a text that I might explain that there is nothing that has to take place before Jesus Christ

returns. For many years people would preach, “We live in a generation that has fallen away from God.” But I strongly believe that the words, “falling away” is the Greek word *apostasia*. It is the word that the vast majority of time is translated as “departure”. I believe he is saying that that day will not come except there is a departure first. That word departure in the Greek almost always means to go from one place to another place. I believe he is saying, “Except there be a rapture first, except we depart from this Earth, except the saints of God are gathered together unto Christ and we depart this world into the presence of God.

“Except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” The “son of perdition” is a reference to the Antichrist. Every now and then you will have people come up and they will predict that so-and-so is the Antichrist. Some have said Obama is antichrist, but I don't think he is *the* Antichrist. I leave that in the hands of God. But here in 2 Thessalonians the apostle Paul is comforting the Thessalonian saints with the reality of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The King is coming. He has not come since I preached this morning, but He may come before I am finished preaching this afternoon. We all must live our lives with the awareness that Jesus Christ could come at any time. We should live our lives knowing that this is my opportunity to give honor and glory to God, to live a life that resounds to the glory of His Son because He may come or I

may go, but either way, we must realize that *now* is the day to serve God.

I will repeat my three main points:

1. The *saving Christ* who is coming
2. The *signs that are characteristic* of His coming.
3. *Special conditions* at the time of the return.

I began our study with *The Saving Christ Who is Coming* by talking about the fact that He is the Savior who died for our sins. None other could have died. This morning I mentioned the virgin birth and I concluded with His virtuous life: had Jesus Christ committed one sin, we would all perish. If He ever told a lie, had ever had a wrong thought, had He ever gotten wrongfully angry, we would all perish. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life that He might take His perfections and His righteousness and put them upon us. We, by Him, therefore are made accessible to the beloved and acceptable unto God. Apart from Christ I am not acceptable to God. When God looks at me He sees a creature that was deserving of the wrath of God; but He views me—He sees me *in* Christ. Christ took my sins upon Himself and suffered the penalty for them.

Thirdly, He was virgin born, He lived a *virtuous* life, and He suffered a *voluntary death*. No one killed Jesus Christ. Don't ever think that He was overtaken by the power of Roman soldiers. Don't ever think He could not have exercised His power. He could have called, as we sing, 10,000 angels,

He could have done anything He desired and went free. He could have just said, "I'm going to condemn this world to hell and I will create a new world, and I will start all over again". But He tells us over and over again that He came to do the will of the Father. The will of the Father was, that He might redeem, that He might pay the sin price of all those who were given Him. I love it when Jesus Christ said, "**All that the Father giveth me.... I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day**" (John 6:37 & 39). And He *will* raise them up at the last day. Every single person for whom the Lord Jesus Christ died, for whom He voluntarily took their sins upon Himself, voluntarily subjected Himself to all sorts of cruelty and voluntarily died on that cross; He did so that we might have salvation.

In the next place, He suffered a *violent and vicious* death. When we come to the human aspect of what humanity did to Christ, there have been others who were probably served equally, if you want to talk about just what man did to Jesus. I am not slighting at all the terrible pain that Jesus Christ suffered at the hands of men. People talk about free will; free will is on display at Calvary's cross, is it not? Man had a free choice: "Do you want me to release to you Barabbas, this known criminal, this hardened offender, this man who has spent his life breaking the law of God? Or do you want me to release to you, Jesus, who has done absolutely nothing wrong and has done nothing but good during His

earthly ministry?" The free will of man says, "Release Barabbas and crucify the Lord Jesus Christ." When we are left to our own choices, we will always choose darkness rather than light.

The body of Jesus Christ was marred by the cruelty and the depravity of man. And as they laid their stripes upon Him, and as the Bible describes His back as a plowed field, blood pouring from the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. As they stripped Him of his garments and as they spat in His face, and as they slapped Him and beat Him, pushed a crown of thorns upon His head, Jesus Christ suffered a vicious death, voluntarily at the hands of men.

But that wasn't the worst of His suffering, was it? That wasn't the worst of what He endured. Many of our forefathers, in the dark ages also endured crucifixion. Some of the disciples endured crucifixion. Our forefathers were sometimes skinned alive, burned alive, millstones were chained around them, and they were cast into a lake; they died vicious deaths. But none of them went to hell like Jesus did. The true violent and vicious suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ came at the hands of His own Father, when He turned His back on His Son, because His Son had my sins and your sins upon Him. As God the Father looked down from heaven and saw His Son there on that old rugged cross, He saw blood pouring from His head, from His back and His hands and feet. He watched the crowd as they mocked and ridiculed. The Bible says, "**And sitting down they**

watched him there” (Matt. 27:36). Now the Arminian’s should never use that word vicarious. They should never talk about the death of Christ being substitutionary, because to them it is not. The word *vicarious* means to be a substitute. It means “to take the place of.” Now there are many who insist that when Jesus went to the cross and when God the Father sent Him to hell, He took the sins of *every-one* who has ever lived and punished them in Christ. Why then, is there a hell? I am waiting for someone to explain to me that if Jesus paid for all the sins of *all* the people, what is hell for? I was reading an article the other day and the author began by talking about man's depravity and how that man is spiritually dead, that man will not and cannot come to Christ. These were beautiful words, but then he ended it with the idea that everybody can be saved. I will say this; anyone who wants to be saved can be saved. Everyone who has a desire to be saved can be saved. Anyone that comes to the Lord Jesus Christ He in no wise will cast them out (John 6:37), but He will receive them. But their ability to come and their willingness to come comes about by the working and the power of the Holy Spirit of God. I challenge every person who has ever been saved to question yourself. How was it with you? Did you come to Christ or did He bring you to Himself? Were you not brought by the power of God? Substitute! That's what He was as He took my place. It is blasphemy against the character of God, blasphemy against the blood

He suffered a *vicarious* death.

of the Lamb of God to say that He died for someone who is suffering in the flames of hell. He paid for their sins but they still had to go to hell? No. Not so my friend, not so: **“He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied”** (Isa. 53:11) with those for whom He died.

Now what is important? Let me get away from the theology of it for a moment. I have no problem with the theology of a limited atonement. But let me get to the practical aspect of it. The practical aspect of it is, do you know He died for you? That’s what is important. You know there are many people who may be able to expound the doctrines but do not know the Redeemer. What’s important is, do you know? I’ll tell you, the devil has saturated this world with so much “God loves you ism” and universal atonementism, that nobody fears God. The Bible says that the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge (Pr. 1:7). I tell you one thing, I fear Him. I fear Him, I’m still afraid of Him. I have a reverential fear for our God. Oh, how I should love my Redeemer and how I should look for my Redeemer because He took my place.

Lastly, He suffered a *victorious death* and had a victorious resurrection. The grave could not hold Him. They put a big stone upon His grave and placed guards around it. These guards are watching, for it is not possible that He is going to rise up again in three

days. They didn’t know God very well, did they? You know, I’d like to think that maybe some of those who witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the aftermath of it, maybe God saved them. Remember the Roman centurion had said this is the Son of God. There was an earthquake, the veil of the temple was rent in twain. What a day that must have been! The grave could not hold Him. The women went to find Him and He was not there, was He? He was gone! They met Him on the road.

The grave could not hold Him. Why? If the grave held Jesus Christ, there would be no victory. If He is still dead, then He is still buried somewhere in a tomb. If He has not resurrected from the dead there is no victory. But because Jesus Christ was victorious over death, over hell, over sin and over the grave we can all have the same victory someday. We can have the same victory and the same resurrection. That same power that enabled Jesus to rise from the dead will help me. I like to say, “If I don’t die, I’m going to fly!” May you, by the grace of God, fly with me. We used to sing that old song, “I’ll Fly Away”. I’m not going to do much of the flying. The Lord is just going to come and take us home. I encourage you with the fact that the King is coming. I ask you, are you ready? Are you saved? Are you working for the Lord Jesus Christ? **Ω**

“. . . Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption drawth nigh.” — Luke 21:28