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# The Landmark Baptist

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

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*Praising the Lord as we enter our 25th year of service !*

## A FAMINE OF THE WORD OF GOD

By Joseph M. Wilson  
(1927-2004)



**"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it."** - Amos 8:11-12

What a sad prophecy that surely has come to pass today. Not only has the day come, but the day has now come that there is a famine of the hearing of the Word of God.

I preach to you on the subject *A Famine of the Word of God*.

Now a famine of bread and water would be a terrible thing. If it lasted long enough it would destroy the physical lives of those living upon the earth. How we need to thank God for the water we have to drink in the food we have to eat. I was taken to a restaurant for breakfast and there

was a man sitting at a table away from us and he bowed his head and prayed before he ate. I got up and went over to him and said, "Sir that was a blessing to me. I delight to see people manifest their gratitude to God for the blessings He gives them. You know there are many people that just eat and never stop to thank God for it", and we chatted for a moment. It would be a terrible thing if God would send a famine upon us. He sent a 3 ½ year famine in the days of Elijah upon the land of Israel, and it was a terrible thing upon them at that time.

*(continued page 2)*

Now my dear friends, a famine of the Word of God is much more terrible than a famine of bread and water. In fact the most terrible thing that can happen to a land and to a people is a famine of the Word of God. You know that many a heathen lands had not heard the Word of God until some few years in the past. There was a time when there was no Word of God on the continent of America, and so missionaries have gone out and God has blessed them and sent the Word of God to heathen lands around the world. What a blessing it has proven as many multiplied thousands of people have been saved because God relieved the famine of the Word of God.

The Word of God is very precious to a land and to a people. The Word of God teaches us things we can learn nowhere else. There are many things that if you learn you will have to learn them from the Word of God. It is of the utmost stupidity and wickedness what the American education system has done as to teaching the Word of God. Surely no one is properly educated and ready to face life that is not educated in the Word of God. Our forefathers established the school system in order that their children might learn reading, writing, arithmetic and the things of the Word of God, i.e., Christian doctrine, Christian conduct, Christian ethics. *Schools were established for that purpose by Christian people and Christian parents in America.* But now they say, "Put out the

word of God; leave out the word of God. You are not to teach the Word of God." Beloved friends, we need to know the Word of God—the Bible—more than we need to know anything else in the world. More than you need an education and more than you need to know how to read and write or add and subtract, you need to know the Word of God. It is true that without an education men may not get along as well in this life, but without a knowledge of the Word of God men will not get along in this life and certainly not get along well in the life to come. So we need the blessed Word of God. It teaches us such things that we can learn nowhere else and teaches us what we need to know more than anything else.

The word of God does much for a land and even for those who are not saved. How many of the laws on the statute books of civilized nations come from the Word of God? How many civilizations have been taught some sort of decency, respect for law and order, and respect for womanhood? How many of these things come from the Word of God? Where the Word of God has not gone there are no hospitals, schools, and no respect for women, the aged, and there are no charity programs. The Word of God has done much even for those who are not saved.

The Word of God has brought about mercy and help to others. The Word of God has brought about respect for others, their rights and their

property. The Word of God has brought about high moral standards that have improved life wherever it has gone, *and it is a curse to a people when they forget this and begin to do away with the Word of God.* For example, it is a curse when the government says that the Ohio motto ("**With God all things are possible.**")- Matt. 19:26—as suggested by a 10 year old child.



—Ed.) is unconstitutional. Why in the name of common sense is it unconstitutional for a state to use the name of God in its motto, in its banner as a part of what that state stands for? Beloved friends, the Word of God has made America the great nation that it is, and America's departure from the Word of God has well-nigh destroyed this country and, if the Lord tarries, will destroy it.

And then the Word of God is used *in salvation*. More important than all else that the Word of God does is that it is the instrument that the Holy Spirit uses in the salvation of men and women. No one is

ever saved apart from the message of the Word of God. So, it is of the utmost importance that we have the Word of God. Oh, what a famine that is which is a famine of the Word; and God said the days *will come* when I will send a famine in the land, a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord.

The Word of God is used *in sanctification* and growth in the Christian life. As we read the Word of God, pray over the Word of God, study the Word of God and are influenced and live by it we grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We grow in purity, cleanness and holiness. We grow in usefulness and in being a blessing to those about us. Oh, beloved friends how important it is that we have the Word of God! Such a famine is a terrible famine indeed.

Now I want to emphasize to you that such a famine may well exist in the midst of a multitude of so-called churches and so-called preachers. I want you to understand that. But because we have many churches and many preachers in the land does not mean that we do not have a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord. Only true churches are the "**pillar and ground of the truth.**" Only true churches have been given the truth and are commissioned by the Lord to preach that truth. The vast majority of so-called churches are not teaching the truths of the Word of God. So understand that because you can take the Yellow Pages of a

telephone directory and find a multitude of churches, or find whatever you want of religious fair or whatever doctrine, whatever practice, whatever religious activity or a religious smorgasbord of whatever you want. But I want you to understand that with all these churches, and different religious organizations, all these television programs and all these different things that go by the name of church, or the name of religion, or the name of Christianity does not mean that we are not in a famine of hearing the Word of God.

Beloved friends, there are many things that are taught in the Word of God; they are taught plainly, clearly and repeatedly in the Word of God. Many churches in this city can be attended in every service and listened carefully to everything that is said and you will go away with a famine of hearing of the Word of the Lord. You can go to many churches in every service they have and there are many things taught in the word of God that you will never hear, mentioned or taught in those churches. Not only that, you will hear many things taught *contrary* to the Word of God. You will hear the true doctrines of the Word of God put down. You will hear people laugh at the Word of God, mock and blaspheme the Word of God. Yes, in the very churches and by the very preachers in our city. So you understand that because I can go around the city and I can see church after church, does not mean that there is not in

Tulsa, in Oklahoma, in the United States of America a famine for hearing of the word of God.

Again, I say to you that only true churches are the "pillars and ground of the truth." I say to you that only true churches have been given the commission to teach the truth. I say to you tonight that the vast overwhelming majority of so-called churches are not true churches and are not preaching the truth of the Word of God. You must understand that, know that, and must realize that. You must understand that because a man is a deacon or a preacher in a church, or because your neighbor attends the church regularly and faithfully, does not mean that they're being fed on the Word of God. It does not mean that they are not in the very midst of a great famine of the Word of God.

Again, I say to you that the vast majority of so-called churches are not true churches of Jesus Christ. And I say unto you that false churches do not have the total truth of the Word of God. You understand that there is *some* truth in most false churches. I am not saying that you can't hear any truth, but I am saying that there is much truth that you cannot hear except in a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am saying that the truth that false churches have, they have because of true churches, because true churches have stood for the truth, have stood by the truth, have been the "pillar and ground of

the truth", have preached the truth of the word of God. And because of that, because of little churches like this, that have stood true to the Word of God down through the years. because of that, in these false churches there is some truth. Understand then that the truth that other so-called churches have they got from Baptist churches. Baptist churches have stood for the truth. False churches have invented error and introduced error into the world, and what truth they do have they have because Baptist churches have maintained a truth of the word of God. And listen to this, the truth they do have is mingled with much error.

Now beloved friends if I were going to give the devil a plan as to how to defeat the truth of God I would plan that you have a lot of false churches and give them a little truth and much error, and let them major on false doctrine that has a little truth to deceive people. If false churches did not preach any truth at all they would not have the money they have, they would not have the programs they have, and would not have the people they have. The devil has moved upon his churches to preach a *little* of the truths of the Word of God in order to deceive people, to blind people and to make people think "See, we read and preach out of the Bible", and then they deceive people in just that way. They preach more error than they do truth and become worse and worse in this matter.

I learned last week that Bishop Jakes is a "oneness" man; that is, that he denies the Trinity of God. Many of these "faith healers" are absolutely heretical—not in the things we usually think of—but in the very fundamental truths of the Word of God, many are very heretical. In the Unitarian Church it is utterly impossible for anybody to be a Unitarian and be a saved person, or to be in this United Pentecostal movement that denies the doctrine of the Trinity. So you understand that these churches may call themselves churches and give a little truth and shine a little light but the devil is behind that for the purpose of deceiving people as to the truth of the Word of God. These churches preach a little truth, but they preach more error than they do truth, and the truth they preach is contaminated, corrupted and perverted by the error that they do preach. So I am telling you that we are in the midst of a famine of hearing of the Word of the Lord.

Beloved friends, you might as well face up to it that there are many places where you cannot find a sound church that is close enough to attend that teaches the truth of the Word of God, and if you cannot find one, don't go to any of them. People say, "It would be better to go to a false church than not to go to church at all." My dear friends, that is not true. It would be better to sit home and read the Bible, pray and get tapes from some sound preacher, and maybe try to get a few

friends, neighbors or relatives to come and have a service there in the home, or have nothing if need be than it is to go to a church that is not teaching the truth of the Word of God.

Now I want you to understand this: God is in control of the truth and does with it as He pleases. Where did the truth come from? The truth came from God, He gave the truth. He established the true church. He gave that church the truth. He gave that church a commission to preach that truth of the Word of God. God sends the truth where it pleases Him to do so, and He withdraws it when He sees fit. Understand that there are many, many people who do not have a church that preaches the truth that they can attend. You would be surprised how many cities there are in this land where there is not a church that is teaching the truth of the Word of God. There is a famine of hearing of the Word of God. God gives the truth, God sends the truth where it pleases Him and when it pleases Him, He withdraws the truth from that place.

Furthermore, God must give the power to understand the truth of the Word of God. Now why is there in our day such a terrible famine of hearing of the Word of the Lord? Well, because preachers will not preach the truth. Many preachers do not know the truth. Many preachers have gone to Bible school; they have gone to seminaries and are taught in these schools of

men. Most of the preacher schools in America—preachers go to those schools and they graduate and it takes them longer to unlearn the false things they learned in those schools and start preaching the truth that did for them to have gone to the school. I say without apology, we would be far better off if most preacher schools were closed down. People wrote to me when I was with the *Examiner* and wanted me to recommend a good preacher school. I told them, over and over again, that the best school for preachers is a sound church. You get in a true church, a sound church under a sound preacher and listen to him, work with him and you become educated about observing and working with and in a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who in the world wants a preacher coming out of a seminary where they question the Word of God, where they are A-millennial or post-millennial, where they are Arminian? What in the world is a church going to do if that is the kind of pastor they are going to have? There is a famine for hearing of the Word of God because preachers will not preach the Word of God, and the reason many of them do not preach the Word of God is because they do not know the Word of God. I would be ashamed of any member in this church if you are not able to set forth more truth than most of the preachers in this city. If you could not go to many a church in this city and explain why the preacher is

wrong, what he is wrong in and what the truth of the matter is, I would be ashamed of you and I would consider that I have failed to do the job God gave me to do.

Preachers don't know the truth, and then many of them who know some truth will not preach it. I spoke to the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Appalachia about the doctrine of election. He said, "I believe in the Doctrine of Election." I asked him "Do you preach it?" He answered, "No, I can't preach it in this church." I knew he didn't preach it in that church. I knew that he couldn't preach it in that church. I knew they would get rid of him and he was there to preach that doctrine in that church. There are a multitude of churches in Tulsa that if I would go and preach to them for just a month I would tell them of the truth and they would most likely run me off, and many preachers do not want to be run off. The greatest fear many preachers have is the fear of the moving van. They are not willing to stand up and preach the truth of the Word of God because the people do not want that preached. They are afraid to preach the truth of the Word of God.

There is a famine for hearing the Word of God because people *will not listen* to it. The Bible says that in the last days men will "**heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears**" (2 Tim. 4:3). Their ears itch and the preacher has got to scratch their ears for them. "**The time will come**

**when they will not endure sound doctrine,**" You say, "Oh, if I preach it in the power of the Spirit, if I preach gently, and if I preach it in love they will hear it." The Bible says, the time will come when they *will not* endure sound doctrine, they will not put up with it. You will close your mouth or you will be on your way somewhere else. And there are many preachers who shut their mouths rather than preach the truth of the Word of God because the people will not hear it.

And then there is a famine of hearing the Word of God because of improper response to it. People do not respond to the Word of God; they do not say, "Amen, Praise the Lord. I like that." People rise up in rebellion and become stiff necked and bullheaded when you preach to them the truth and they will not respond in love and eagerness and respond in obedience to the Word of God, and therefore there is a famine of hearing the Word of God.

There is a famine of hearing the Word of God *because of sin*. The preaching of the true Word of God saves people from sin and teaches people against sin. But people love their sin and will not hear the Word of God because of their sin.

And then beloved friends I will say this reluctantly, sadly and with a grieving heart. There is a famine of hearing of the Word of God because God is withdrawing His Word as a punishment upon man's sin. I believe there was a day when



much truth was preached in America and England and other places in the world. People stood up for the truth and there were multitudes that preached and listened to the truths of the Word of God, but men began to rebel, sin began to abound and because sin and rebellion has abounded God has withdrawn the truth from our land. God in His sovereignty has withdrawn, and only here and there—a few places—in small groups is there a man who will preach the whole counsel of God. This is a judgment of God. There was a time when a man could preach the truth and have a few hundred people listening. Spurgeon preached much truth and had a few thousand people listening. But he didn't preach all the truth that you are used to hearing from this pulpit. So there is a famine of hearing the Word of God.

Now what should we do in a time of famine? When there is a famine for hearing of the Word of God what should we

do? First of all, thank God that the Word of God is not completely withdrawn, that there are still some true churches around that are preaching the truth and they will be around until Jesus comes. God will not withdraw totally His truth from the Word of God. There will be true churches who will be preaching the truth until the Lord Jesus comes again.

What are we to do? We are to do our best to be where the Word of God is preached and to get all of it that we can. I would advise people to give serious thought, as they are planning to settle for their lives, to look around to see if there is a church that is preaching the truth of the Word of God. You need to be where a true church is, be faithful to that church in listening to the Word of God and then you need to give forth the Word of God that you have to others. Ω

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**Amos 8:11-12**

"A famine in the land. "The most grievous of all famines, a famine of the words of Jehovah; a time in which no prophet should appear, no spiritual counsellor, no faithful reprover, none any longer who would point out the way of salvation, or would assure them of the mercy of God on their repentance and return to him. *This is the severest of God's judgments on this side the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched.*

They shall wander front sea to sea; From the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea or from west to east, and from north to south, to seek the word of the Lord; to find a prophet, or any person authorized by God to show them the end of their calamities. *In this state they shall continue, because they have rejected Him who is the bread of life.*" —Adam Clarke

## **THE HORRORS OF HELL**

**Hell, the prison house of despair;  
Here are some things that won't be there:  
No flowers will bloom on the banks of hell  
No beauties of nature we love so well.  
No comforts of home, music or song;  
No friendship or joy will be in that throng.  
No children to brighten the long weary night;  
No love, nor peace, nor one ray of light.  
No mercy nor pity, pardon nor grace;  
No water, O God, what a terrible place!  
The pangs of the lost no human can tell;  
No moment of ease — there's no rest in Hell.**

**Hell, the prison house of despair;  
Here are some things that will be there:  
Fire and brimstone are there we know;  
For God in His word has told us so.  
Memory, remorse, suffering and pain;  
Weeping and wailing, but all in vain.  
Blasphemers, swearers, haters of God,  
Sinners who refused to be washed in the blood.  
Christ-rejecters while on earth they trod;  
Murderers, gamblers, drunkards and liars,  
Will have their part in the lake of fire.  
The filthy, the vile, the cruel and mean;  
What a terrible mob in hell will be seen.  
Yes, more than humans on earth can tell  
Are the torments and woes of Eternal Hell.**

-Author Unknown.

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

by T. P. Simmons  
(1898-1969)



When one is saved the next consideration that should claim his attention is the church. Gratitude to God for salvation should make him as conscientious about church affiliation as matters pertaining to

salvation. are in direct and constant communion with the Sovereign Pontiff, that is, the trunk, or stem, of the entire tree." Sometimes Roman Catholics expand their conception of the church so as to make it include "all the faithful who have existed from Adam up to the present day, or who shall exist to the end of time" (Catechism of the Council, as put forth in 1566).

### I.

#### THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

##### 1. VARIOUS FALSE CONCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH

(1) The Roman Catholic Conception. Roman Catholics believe that the church is a world-wide, hierarchal organization under the visible headship of the pope at Rome.

J. F. Noll, editor of "Our Sunday Visitor," of Huntington, Indiana, in "The Fairest Argument," likens the church to a tree, and says: "The leaves represent the Catholic laity throughout the entire world. They are in direct communion with their respective parish priests (the smaller branches of the mystic tree). The priests, in their turn, are in direct communion with their bishops, that is, the larger branches. And all the bishops

(2) The National Conception.

This is exemplified in the "Church of England," a national institution with the King of England as its head.

(3) The Denominational Conception.

We hear of the "Methodist Episcopal Church," Then there is the "Presbyterian Church in the United States." And some people, ignorant of Baptist polity, speak of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention as the "Southern Baptist Church."

(4) The Universal Conception.

A very popular notion is that the church is composed of all the saved throughout the world at any given time or of all saved people that have

ever lived, whether now living or dead. Thus the church is conceived of as being universal and invisible.

(5) The Aggregate Conception. All churches and religious groups, taken in the aggregate, are sometimes spoken of as "the church" in distinction from the world.

## 2.

### THE SCRIPTURAL CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH

All the foregoing conceptions of the church **are false and unscriptural**. The scriptural conception of the church may be seen by noting

1. The Meaning of "Ekklesia." The Greek word for "church" is "ekklesia." The English word "church" is not a translation of the Greek word; it is a substitution. "Ekklesia" comes from "ekkletos" and this latter word comes from "ekkaleo," to call out or forth. But "ekklesia" does not mean "the called out." Let this statement be pondered well. Usage, not etymology, determines the meaning of words. For instance, "prevent," by etymology, means to anticipate or precede. But usage has made that meaning archaic. By usage, "prevent" means forestall, frustrate, circumvent, hinder. "Ekklesia" *had its original application to "a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place* (Thayer). Then it came to mean *any assembly of people or gathering or throng of men, even when gathered by chance or tumultuously*. See Acts 19:32, 39, 41. The re-

sultant meaning is "assembly." The word never did mean simply "the called out." It always implied that the called out ones would gather or assemble. Thus, according to culmination, the word always did mean "assembly," and later came to mean this alone. In this sense, after Aristotle's day, according to Hatch, in *Organization of the Early Churches*, it came to be applied to local, self-governing secular clubs and associations. Nor is the simple meaning of "assembly" contradicted by the use of "ekklesia" in the Septuagint. Sometimes in the LXX "ekklesia" is used to translate the Hebrew "qahal." From this fact some have "inversely and most illogically inferred that, since *qahal* sometimes means the whole Israelitish people and is sometimes translated by *ekklesia*, therefore *ekklesia* must always take on a like breadth of meaning. Reference to the LXX, however, will show that the Greek translators of the Old Testament, so far from encouraging such an implication, have carefully precluded it. For when *qahal* has the broad sense it is never translated by *ekklesia*, but by another Greek word" (Thomas, *The Church and the Kingdom*, p. 200). This fact is borne out by B. H. Carroll, who made a collation of all the occurrences of *ekklesia* in the LXX, finding them to be ninety-two; and finding that in not a single case was there given to *ekklesia* a broader meaning than *an actual, literal, bonafide assembly*.

2. The Distinction Between the Church and the Kingdom. as we shall presently note; the kingdom is a monarchy.

Those who believe the theory of the existence of a universal, invisible church, for all practical purposes confuse the church and the Kingdom. But the Bible never confuses the terms or uses them interchangeably. "It will be readily inferred ... that the word ekklesia would call up, in the mind of an ordinary Greek, or Greek-speaking person, a conception not only not identical with, but in every particular the antithesis of, that suggested by basilica" (Thomas, *The Church and the Kingdom*, p. 213). That this distinction is maintained in the New Testament is manifest from the following contrasts between the church and the kingdom:

(7) Therefore the church has organic character, being visible and having officers (1 Cor. 12:28); the kingdom is neither organic or visible (Luke 17:20).

(8) Church membership is subject to the democratic action of the body (Rom. 14:1; Acts 9:26; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:6); while God, purely independent of church action, puts men in His kingdom by the new birth (John 3:5; Col. 1:13).

(9) The kingdom was preached and, at one time, was announced as at hand (Acts 20:25; 28:31; Mark 1:15); but such language is never used with reference to the church.

(1) The church is an assembly; the kingdom is the domain of the King.

(2) The church as an assembly is necessarily local; the kingdom is universal.

(3) The church is spoken of as that which was to be built (Matt. 16:18); the kingdom is never thus spoken of.

(4) Christ said: "Tell it to the church" (Matt. 18: 17); no such command is ever given concerning the kingdom.

(5) The church is called a body (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1: 18; 1 Cor. 12:27); the kingdom is never thus spoken of.

(6) The church is a democracy under the headship of Christ,

(10) We read of the gospel of the kingdom (Mark 1: 14; Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14); but never of the gospel of the church.

### 3. New Testament Usage of "Ekklesia."

It is rashly unreasonable to assume that Christ and the apostles took up a Greek word that had a well-established meaning and gave to it another meaning without one word of explanation. Consequently we find that in every passage in the New Testament where ekklesia occurs it can be taken in its true sense of assembly. There is not a passage that demands a broader sense. We find in the New Testament, in

full harmony with the common use of words, a three-fold use of *ekklesia*, viz.,

(1) The Abstract or Generic Sense. Terms that are commonly concrete in an abstract or generic sense. Such is true of home, marriage, and man. We find such a use of "*ekklesia*" in Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:10,21; 1 Cor. 12:28 and possibly in some other passages. The church as thus represented is conceived of as an institution similar to the home in the expression, the American home, and similar to marriage in the sentence, Marriage is a divine institution. "Church" in Acts 9:31, the better manuscripts have the singular instead of the plural, either refers to the members of the church at Jerusalem that had been scattered, or it refers in a generic sense to that church and various others that may have been established in Judea.

(2) The Prospective Sense.

There are two passages of Scripture where "*ekklesia*" refers to a future assembly. We refer here to Eph. 5:25-32 and Heb. 12:23: In Eph. 5:25-32 the church embraces the elect of all ages; but, according to the etymology of the original word, the church in this sense cannot be conceived of as actually existing at the present time. The word is thus used prospectively. The same is true of Heb. 12:23.

(3) The Present Concrete and Particular Sense. Of all the

113 cases in the New Testament where "*ekklesia*" refers to the institution founded by Christ, in all except the cases already noted, and a few others where there is possibly a mixed use, it refers to a particular, concrete, local church, or a plurality of such churches; such as "the church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1); "all the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom. 16:4); "the churches of Macedonia" (2 Cor. 8:1); "the church in thy house" (Philemon 2); and "the churches of God" (2 Thess. 1:4).

(4) The Fact that the Church is called "the Body of Christ."

A body is a compact, living, working association of parts. It is a medium through which action is obtained. It is a functioning entity. The human body exists to perform the functions determined by the mind working through the brain located in the head. It is manifestly because of the relationship between the human head and the rest of the body that the church is called the body of Christ, just as the human body carries out the purposes formed in the head, so the church exists to carry out the purposes of its head, Christ Jesus. Now the imaginary universal, invisible church never functions collectively. It holds no services, observes no ordinances, sends out and supports no missionaries. It is simply a colossal nonentity, without function, purpose, or reason for existence. It is the local church that functions for Christ. And

it is the local church alone that can rightly be called the body of Christ. See 1 Cor. 12:27. The author, therefore, affirms emphatically *that the universal, invisible church theory is without foundation in the Greek outside the Bible, it is without foundation in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and it is without foundation in the New Testament usage.* It is primarily the product of wishful thinking, and it is the mother of a motley array of heresies. It is appropriate to close this portion of our study with these words from Armitage: "The Romish figment of an impersonal and invisible Church never existed until the fourth century, when it was created in order to bring the local Churches under the yoke ... The local Church was the only Church known to the Apostles themselves, the only body which they ever addressed, and which they knew collectively as the 'Churches scattered abroad'" (History of Baptists, p. 121).

## II. THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

### 1. TWO ERRONEOUS CONCEPTIONS

(1) The notion that the church was founded on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2.

There is not the slightest hint of the founding of anything on this day. The church that existed at the close of the Day of Pentecost, existed before Pentecost. Before Pentecost the church had the gospel and had preached it. It had

baptism and the Lord's Supper. It also had a ministry and held services. Before Pentecost the church was a body of baptized believers, banded together to carry out the will of Jesus Christ (**The first Pastor-Ed**). That is what a church is.

(2) The notion that Matt. 16:18 marks the time of the founding of the church. This is quite a general notion among those who reject the Pentecost theory of the founding of the church. But Jesus did not say: "Upon this rock I will found my church." He used the word "build" instead of the word "found." And the Greek word here translated "build" means to build the superstructure. The same word occurs in Acts 9:31, and is translated "edified." Christ was then still building His church just as He said He would do in Matt. 16:18. This explains the future tense (I will build) in Matt. 16:18. What we have said of the Day of Pentecost, we may also say of the day that Christ uttered the words of Matt. 16:18. *The church that existed at the close of that day, existed before that day.* There is nothing that can be called a church that came into existence on that day, so far as the inspired record informs us.

### 2. THE TRUE TIME OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

In locating, the founding of the church we must find a time when something that answers to the description of the church came into existence. This rule points us to the time,

when, after a night of prayer, Christ selected the twelve disciples. With this selection, these twelve men, for the first time, became a body. They had a head—Christ. They had a treasurer—Judas. They were baptized believers. They were banded together to carry out Christ's will. What more than this did they become on the day that their Master uttered the words of Matt. 16:18?

### III. THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

There is much controversy regarding the meaning of "rock" in the words of Christ, "Upon this rock I will build my church." The Roman Catholics and others take the rock to be Peter. But the difference in gender and exact meaning between "Petros" translated Pe-

ter, and "petra" translated rock makes this idea untenable. In classical Greek the distinction is generally observed (see "petra" in Thayer's Lexicon), "petra" meaning "the massive living rock," and "petros" meaning "a detached, but large fragment." Others take "petra" as meaning the faith of Peter; still others Peter's confession. We regard Christ here as using a play upon words. We take "petra" as referring to Christ divinely revealed and implanted in the hearts of men (Col. 1:27). We think this interpretation is borne out by 1 Cor. 3:11. This passage speaks of the foundation of the church at Corinth. This foundation had been laid by the preaching of the gospel and the divine revelation and implanting of Christ in the heart. Ω

"Communities of Baptists have existed in all ages from the days of John the Baptist until now, maintaining essentially, the same faith and that the faith once delivered to the saints.

It is a distinctive tenet believed and taught by Baptists alone, that John the Baptist prepared the material and the Lord Jesus Christ organized the first Baptist church during his personal ministry here upon the earth. Of this the Scriptures give abundant proof. Old Testament types and prophecy point clearly to this. New Testament apostles and historians acclaim their testimony true.

H. Boyce Taylor, Sr.  
*Why Be a Baptist*





## The Parable of the Sower

By Pastor Lewis Kiger  
 Memorial Heights  
 Baptist Church  
 Perry, Georgia

**“And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;**

**And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up:**

**Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:**

**And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because thy had no root, they withered away.**

**And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:**

**But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.**

**Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” - Matt. 13:3-9**

One major problem with the *heart*.

many proposed methods of church growth so prevalent among Evangelicalism to-day, is that it seeks to make the Word of God more palatable to the carnal tastes of men. However, this is a vain effort of the human mind to use fleshly means to reach the spiritually dead. 1 Corinthians 2:14 states, **“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”**

If “church-growth gurus” would study the Parable of the Sower, they would quickly learn the problem is not with the seed, *it is with the soil*. In other words, there is nothing wrong with the Word, nor can it be genetically altered to appease lost sinners. *The heart of the issue is an issue of the*

This is one of the rare parables that is found in all three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8.) Its repetition among the inspired writers confirms its importance.

In one of His very first parables, Christ compares those who share the Gospel to a sower out sowing seed in his field. The Master Teacher then goes on to say that the seed is the Word and that the soil represents the heart or soul of the individual. Other significant details shared in the parable are noteworthy, yet I will caution my reader not to try and make too much of every character mentioned and miss the basic lesson that Christ is teaching. It is tempting to allegorize the parables (and many do) and overlook the main point.

Christ is using this earthly story to teach a heavenly lesson. He is preparing His disciples for the difficult and often disappointing ministry that lay before them. To a group of men who mistakenly thought the arrival of the King meant the immediate arrival of the Messianic kingdom, Christ would clarify that their message is not going to be as popular as they might expect.

They will go out and sow the seed. Some of it will fall on the beaten path as hard as concrete. Before that seed has any hope of rooting, the birds of the air come and snatch it away. Others will seemingly receive the seed and sprout up quickly, but when the sun rises and the heat of the day bears down, the shoot will fade away not having enough earth to nourish it. Further yet, several will appear to have life and be growing, but the weeds and thorns will choke out the seed, and it will become barren. Lest His fledgling evangelists lose hope, Christ encourages them by saying, "But some of the seed fell on good ground. And it sprang up, increased and yielded fruit. Some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, some a hundred-fold."

This was Christ's illustration, and behind closed doors He gave its interpretation to the Apostles.

Jesus explains some will reject the message instantly. That is just a fact of life. Others may seem to be committed converts, but when trials

or troubles come, they quickly turn away showing they were not true believers. There are also those, who seem to have spiritual life, but when they must choose between serving God and serving this world it becomes evident they too were just make-believers. *But*, (and thank God for it) there are some who will hear the Gospel message. The seed will fall on *good ground* and they will become faithful and productive Christians. Even though not all will yield the same harvest, or are not as faithful as another, still the continued crop of fruit bears evidence that they are true believers.

The lesson our Lord would have us learn, is this; even though not all will hear, some will. So, don't stop sowing the seed! We don't need "bait-and-switch Gospel gimmicks," we just need to sow the seed. There are some who God the Holy Spirit will prepare their hearts to receive the Word and we need to be faithful to sow the seed that He may give the increase.

Dear reader, has the Word of God taken root within you? Has your faith stood the test of trials and temptations? Do you continue to bear fruit for the glory of your Maker? If not, I pray that the Holy Spirit would break-up the barren ground of your heart, so that you are able to receive the glorious Good News that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Ω



## INSIDE THE TRANSGENDER EMPIRE

By Christopher F. Rufo  
Author, *America's Cultural Revolution*

**THE TRANSGENDER** movement is pressing its agenda everywhere. Most publicly, *activist teachers are using classrooms to propagandize* on its behalf and *activist health professionals are promoting the mutilation of children* under the euphemistic banner of “gender-affirming care.” The sudden and pervasive rise of this movement provokes two questions: where did it come from, and how has it proved so successful? The story goes deeper than most Americans know.

In the late 1980s, a group of academics, including Judith Butler, Gayle Rubin, Sandy Stone, and Susan Stryker, established the disciplines of “queer theory” and “transgender studies.” These academics believed gender to be a “social construct” used to oppress racial and sexual minorities, and they denounced the traditional categories of man and woman as a false binary that was conceived to support the system of “heteronormativity”—i.e., *the white, male, heterosexual power structure*. This system, they argued, had to be ruthlessly deconstructed. And the best way to achieve this, they argued further, was to pro-

mote transgenderism. If men can become women, and women men, they believed, the natural structure of Creation could be toppled.

Susan Stryker, a male-to-female transgender professor currently at the University of Arizona, revealed the general thrust and tone of transgender ideology in his Kessler Award Lecture at the City University of New York in 2008, describing his work as “a secular sermon that unabashedly advocates embracing a disruptive and refigurative genderqueer or transgender power as a spiritual resource for social and environmental transformation.” In Stryker’s best-known essay, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage,” he contends that the “transsexual body” is a “technological construction” that represents a war against Western society. “I am a transsexual, and therefore I am a monster,” Stryker writes. And this monster, he continues, is destined to channel its “rage and revenge” against the “naturalized heterosexual order”; against “traditional family values”; and against the “hegemonic oppression” of nature

itself.

It is clear from this and from other transgender scholarship that the transgender movement *is inherently political*. Its reconstruction of personal identity is meant to advance a collective political reconstruction or transformation. Some trans activists even view their movement as the future of Marxism. In a collection of essays titled *Transgender Marxism*, activist writer Rosa Lee argues that trans people can serve as the new vanguard of the proletariat, promising to abolish heteronormativity in the same way that orthodox Marxism promised to abolish capitalism.

"In a different era," Lee writes,

"Marxists spoke of the construction of a 'new socialist man' as a crucial task in the broader process of socialist construction. Today, in a time of both rising fascism and an emergent socialist movement, our challenge is transsexualising our Marxism. We should think [of] the project of transition to communism in our time—communisation—as including the transition to new communist selves, new ways of being and relating to one another."

*This is the great project of the transgender movement: to abolish the distinctions of man and woman, to transcend the limitations established by God and nature, and to connect the personal struggle of trans individuals to the political struggle to transform society in a radical way.*

### FROM THE FRINGES TO THE CENTER

The trans movement was hatched, then, on the fringes of American academia. But how did it move so quickly to the center of American public life? Like many other things, it began with a flood of cash, as some of the wealthiest people in the country began devoting enormous sums of money to promote transgenderism.

One of these people is Jennifer Pritzker, who was born James Pritzker in 1950. After serving several years in the U.S. Army, Pritzker went into business, having inherited a sizable part of the Hyatt hotel fortune. In 2013, he announced a male-to-female gender transition and was celebrated in the press as the "first trans billionaire." Almost immediately, he began donating untold millions to universities, schools, hospitals, and activist organizations to promote queer theory and trans medical experiments.

This money was allied with political power, as Pritzker's cousin, Illinois Democrat Governor J.B. Pritzker, signed legislation in 2019, his first year in office, *to inject gender theory into the state education curriculum and to direct state Medicaid funds toward transgender surgeries*. Speaking before an audience of trans activists, he proclaimed:

"Our state government is firmly on your side, on the side of every gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer person in the state of Illinois . . . Those of you in

this room know better than anyone that marriage equality was never the endgame. . . . We're gonna make sure that all transgender Illinoisans are ensured their basic human rights and that healthcare services are provided to them so that they can thrive."

Here's an example of how this combination of well-funded activism and political influence works in practice: Pritzker-funded activists at Lurie Children's Hospital (the largest children's hospital in Chicago) provide local schools with training, materials, and personnel who promote gender transitions for children, using the hospital's reputation to give their ideology a scientific veneer. And the more one investigates, the worse it gets. Children are exposed, for instance, not only to trans ideology, but to concepts such as "kink" (unusual tastes in sexual behavior, "BDSM" (bondage, domination, submission, and masochism), binders to flatten breasts, and prosthetic (male privates-*Ed.*).

Lurie Children's Hospital, through its outreach presentations in Chicago public schools, encourages teachers and school administrators to support "gender diversity" in their districts, automatically "affirm" students who announce sexual transitions, and "communicate a non-binary understanding of gender" to children in the classroom. The objective, as one version of the presentation suggests, is to disrupt the "entrenched [gender] norms in western society" and facilitate the

transition to a more "gender creative" world. School districts are encouraged to designate "Gender Support Coordinators" to help facilitate children's sexual and gender transitions, which, under the recommended "confidentiality" policy, *can be kept secret from parents and families.*

In effect, this results in a sophisticated school-to-gender-clinic pipeline. Teachers, counselors, doctors, and activists on social media and elsewhere—many of whom are employed or subsidized by members of the Pritzker family—push children in the direction of what Chicago-area "de-transitioner" Helena Kerschner, recalling her own experience, calls "the trans identity rabbit hole." And despite frequent claims to the contrary, *this is not a temporary or reversible process.* Of the children who begin puberty blockers, the medical literature suggests that approximately 95 percent move on to cross-sex hormones, and that 50 percent of the females who begin cross-sex hormone treatments move on to "trans-affirming" surgeries.

### **THE SYNTHESIS OF ALL OPPRESSIONS**

Another place my investigation of the trans movement has taken me is Highland Park, Michigan, a city of roughly 9,000 residents located about six miles north of downtown Detroit. Highland Park has been plagued by poverty, violence, and crime for decades. Many of its homes and businesses have been

abandoned or demolished. It is teetering on the edge of insolvency, yet it is home to one institution that is overflowing with funds: the Ruth Ellis Center, metro Detroit's central laboratory for the synthesis of transgender science and politics.

The Ruth Ellis Center's marketing pitch is an amalgam of all the usual euphemisms: "trauma-informed care," "restorative justice," "harm reduction," "racial equity," and "gender-affirming care." In the name of these things, the Ellis Center and its partners conduct large-scale medical experiments on a population of predominantly poor black youths.

Dr. Maureen Connolly, a pediatrician at Henry Ford Health, leads the Ellis Center's medical partnership, providing puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgical referrals to scores of Detroit kids. Here's how she describes the child sex-change process:

"Transitioning is an umbrella term to describe the process that someone goes through to bring their external self more closely into alignment with their gender identity. For some people that might mean changing their gender expression and the clothes that they wear or how they wear their hair. It might mean using a new name and different pronouns. And that's wonderful. For others, it can involve taking medication to make their body more closely aligned with how they identify in terms of gender—typically, that's masculinizing or femi-

nizing medications or hormone therapy. People can also choose to pursue gender affirming surgeries, which are surgical interventions to bring their body more closely in alignment with their gender identity."

Keep in mind, again, that in the context of her role at the Ellis Center, Connolly is not talking here about the affluent, educated, male-to-female trans individuals who serve as the public face of the trans movement. *She is mostly talking about kids from the Detroit ghetto who suffer from high rates of family breakdown, substance abuse, mental illness, and self-destructive behavior.* As such, one might suppose that they are especially vulnerable to the claim that gender transition will solve all their problems.

"My name is Righteous, first and foremost," says an Ellis Center patient who now identifies as non-binary and uses they/them pronouns:

"I think I might have been about eight years old when I remembered or that I recall having any thought of being transgender or gender non-conforming. . . . It felt like I was an outsider to this whole world of America. On top of not being, you know, a European-American, I was black. . . . Most of my dysphoria comes from people misgendering me. With gender-affirming care, I could get the hormones I needed for free."

Righteous is thus a perfect example of the new synthesis of transgender science and politics. She works as an

activist not only for the trans movement, but also for a broader intersectional coalition (i.e., a coalition of oppressed and marginalized groups), including, for instance, the movement to abolish the police. She represents the identity of the oppressed by both nature and nurture and marshals this unique "positionality" to advance the full suite of left-wing social policies.

### FRANKENSTEIN REDUX

In 1818, Mary Shelley wrote the famous novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. The premise of the book is that modern science, stripped from the constraints of ethics and nature, will end up creating monsters. "Trans-affirming" doctors are the post-modern version of the book's protagonist, Doctor Frankenstein.

*According to survey data, up to 80 percent of trans individuals suffer from serious psychopathologies and one quarter of black trans youth attempt suicide each year. "Gender-affirming care" largely fails to solve these problems, yet the doctors use these failures to justify even more extreme interventions up to the final one: genital reconstruction.*

Dr. Blair Peters is a plastic surgeon (he uses he/they pronouns) who performs trans genital surgeries at the publicly-funded Oregon Health & Science University and whose specialty is creating artificial sex organs. "I think what we're becoming very known

for at OHSU is genital surgery," he says. "A prime example of that is a procedure called phalloplasty, which is the creation of a (male private -Ed.). And we now have a robotic vaginoplasty program [that] has been a kind of game changer for patient care."

As I have previously detailed in *City Journal*, the process for robot-assisted vaginoplasty is gruesome:

*(The Editor of TLB has removed this portion because it is overly graphic and indecent to this publication. Full reference to this article will be given at the end should the reader desire to see its complete contents.)*

This procedure is plagued with complications. OHSU warns of wound separation, tissue necrosis, graft failure, urine spraying, hematoma, blood clots, vaginal stenosis, rectal injury, fistula, and fecal accidents. Patients must stay in the hospital for a minimum of five days following the procedure, receiving treatment for surgical wounds and having fluid drained through plastic tubes. Once they are home, patients must continue transgender hormone treatments . . . . *(Edited)*

The castration business is booming. According to Peters, the gender clinic at OHSU has "the highest volume on the West Coast"—and with the help of the robot, his team can perform multiple vaginoplasties per day. The phalloplasty program has a 12-to-18-month waiting list for consultations and an additional three-to-six-month waiting list for surgical appointments.

A less common but more symbolically apt surgery performed by Peters and his colleagues is known as “nullification,” in which a smooth, continuous skin covering from the abdomen to the groin is created following a castration or vaginectomy. In other words, the genitalia are replaced by nothing. Nullification surgery is the perfect symbol for the ideology behind the trans movement: the pursuit of the Latin *nullum*, meaning “nothing”; or the related *nihil*, the root of the English word “nihilism.” *Trans ideology is animated by a profound nihilism that denies human nature and enables barbarism in the name of progress.*

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The future of transgender medicine is in flux. *Major American institutions have rallied to its support, with the major medical associations going so far as to call on the federal government to investigate and prosecute its critics.* At the same time, some cracks are showing. Detransitioners, a group comprised of mostly young women who have accepted their biological sex after transitioning to various degrees, are going public about the dangers of gender medicine in deeply affecting personal terms. Organizations such as *Do No Harm* have filed lawsuits and launched advocacy campaigns to curb transgender procedures on minors. And increasing numbers of doctors, who had previously been cowed into silence, are beginning to speak out. State

legislators have also taken notice. Earlier this year, I worked with whistleblowers at Texas Children’s Hospital to expose child sex-change procedures that were being conducted in secret. The exposé attracted the attention of Texas lawmakers, who immediately passed the final version of a bill to ban such procedures.

Jennifer Pritzker, Maureen Connolly, Blair Peters, and their ilk occupy the heights of power and prestige, but like Doctor Frankenstein they will not be able to escape the consequences of what they have created. They are condemning legions of children to a lifetime of sorrows and medical necessities, all based on dubious postmodern theories that do not meet the standard of Hippocrates’ injunction in his work *Of the Epidemics*: “First, do no harm.” Although individuals can be nullified, nature cannot. No matter how advanced trans pharmaceuticals and surgeries become, the biological reality of man and woman cannot be abolished; *the natural limitations of God’s Creation cannot be transcended.* The attempt to do so will elicit the same heartbreak and alienation captured in the final scene of Mary Shelley’s novel: the hulking monster, shunned by society and betrayed by his father, filled with despair and drifting off into the ice floes—a symbol of the consequence of Promethean hubris.

A doctor at a major children’s hospital had this to say about what puberty blockers do to a child’s mind, body, and



and soul:

This medication is called a “gonadotropin releasing hormone agonist” and it comes in the form of monthly injections or an implant. And because it simulates the activity of this hormone, it shuts down the activity of the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus is this almond-sized structure in your brain, it’s one of the most primal structures we have, and it controls all the other hormonal structures in your body—your sexual development, your emotions, your fight-or-flight response, everything. . . . And I always think that if someone were to ask me, Where is it that you would look for the divine spark in each individual? I would say that it would be somewhere “beneath the inner chamber,” which is the

Greek derivation of the term hypothalamus. *To shut down that system is to shut down what makes us human.*

This is why we must fight to put the transgender empire out of business forever. Ω

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**“Lo, this only I have found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” - Ecc. 7:9**

**“ . . . Haters of God, spiteful, proud, inventors of evil things . . .”- Rom. 1:30**

*For reading in its entirety see:  
<https://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/inside-the-transgender-empire/>*

***“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:***

***Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.***

***For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:***

***And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.***

***And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient . . .” — Romans 1:24-28***



## IF YOU SHOULD DIE THIS YEAR

Samuel Davies  
(1723-1761)

**"This year thou shalt die."** – Jer. 28:16

**T**his year you may die! And should you die in your sins this year—you will be forever cut off from all the *pleasures of life!* Then farewell, an everlasting farewell to all the mirth and gaiety, to all the tempting amusements and vain delights of earth! Farewell to all the pleasures you derive from the senses, and all the gratification of appetite. This year the sun may lose his luster as to you; and all the lovely prospects of nature may become a dismal blank. To you music may lose all her charms, and die away into everlasting silence; and all the gratifications of the palate may become insipid. When you lie in the cold grave, you will be as dead to all such sensations—as the clay that covers you! Then farewell to all the pompous but empty pleasures of riches and honors. The pleasures both of *enjoyment*, and *expectation* from this quarter will fail forever. But this is not all.

If you should die in your sins this year—then you will have no pleasures, no enjoyments to substitute for those which you will lose. Your capacity and eager thirst for happiness will continue, nay, will grow more strong in your immortal state. And yet you will have no good—real, or imaginary—to satisfy it; and consequently the capacity of *happiness* will become a capacity of *misery*; and the *privation of pleasure* will be positive pain. Can imagination think of anything more wretched than a creature formed for the enjoyment of the infinite good, pining away forever with hungry, raging desires, without the least degree of gratification! Banished at once from the supreme good, and from all the created enjoyments that were accustomed to be poorly substituted in its stead! Yet this may be your case in the short compass of the following year! Oh! what a terrible change! What a prodigious fall!

If you should die in your sins this year—then all your hopes and prospects of a long life, will perish abortive. Several of you now are in a state of education, preparing to enter upon the *stage of the world*; and you are perhaps often pleasing yourselves with mirthful and magnificent dreams about the figure you will make upon it. You may be planning many schemes to be

accomplished in the several periods of a long life: and are perhaps already anticipating in idea the *pleasure*, the *profit*, or the *honor* you expect to derive from their execution. In these fond hopes—your affectionate parents, friends, and teachers concur with generous pleasure.

But, alas! in the swift revolution of this beginning year, all these optimistic expectations and pleasing prospects may vanish into smoke! Youth is the season of promise, full of fair *blossoms*; but these fair blossoms may wither, and never produce the expected fruits of maturity. It may perhaps be the design of God, that after all the flattering hopes and projects, and after all the pains and expense of a fine education, that you shall never appear upon the public stage; or that you shall vanish away like a phantom, as soon as you make your appearance! Certainly then you should extend your prospects beyond the limits of *mortality*; extend them into that world, where you will live to execute them, without the risk of a disappointment. Otherwise,

If you should die in your sins this year—then you will not only be cut off from all the flattering prospects of this life—but from all hope entirely, and forever! You will be fixed in an unchangeable state of misery; a state that will admit of no expectation but that of uniform, or rather ever-growing misery; a state that excludes all hopes of making any accomplishment, except as the monuments of the vin-

dictive justice of God, and the deadly effects of sin! How affecting is the idea of a promising youth cut off from the land of the living—useless and hopeless in both worlds! fallen from the summit of hope—into the gulf of everlasting despair! Yet this may be your doom, my dear youth, your doom this very year—if you should die in your sins!

If you should die in your sins this year—then all the ease and pleasure you now derive from thoughtlessness, self-flattery, and suppressing the testimony of your consciences, will forever be at an end! You will then be obliged to view yourselves in a just light, and to know the very worst of your condition. The secret plaudits of self-flattery will be forever silenced, and conscience will recover itself from that state of insensibility into which you have cast it by repeated hardenings, and, as exasperated by your ill-treatment, it will become your everlasting tormentor! It will do nothing but accuse and upbraid you forever; you will never more be able to entertain so much as one favorable thought of yourselves!

And what a wretched state will this be! for a man to be self-condemned! to disapprove of his whole past conduct! to be pleased with nothing in himself—but heartily, though with horror, to concur in the condemning sentence of the Supreme Judge—to esteem himself a fool, a sinner, a base, sordid wretch; an enemy to himself, and the whole universe; a self-destroyer, an

outcast from all happiness, and from the society of all happy beings; a vile, odious, useless, miserable, despairing creature forever! O miserable situation! Does it not alarm you to think you may be so near to it?

If you should die in your sins this year—then you will be deprived forever of all the *means of salvation*. All these are confined to the present life, and have no place in the world of eternal punishment. There the thunders of the divine law roar; but the *gentle voice of the gospel* never sounds. There the *LION* of the tribe of Judah tears the prey; but never exhibits himself as a *LAMB* that was slain, an atonement for sin, and the Savior of the guilty. There conscience exerts its power, not to excite the medicinal anguish of kindly repentance—but the hopeless horrors of everlasting despair!

There *Jehovah* works—but not to enable the sinner to work out his own salvation—but to touch all the springs of painful sensation, and open all

the sources of misery in the criminal. There *mercy* no more distributes her bounties—useless, miserable, despairing creature forever! O miserable situation! Does it not alarm you to think you may be so near to it?

the great *Apollyon*, diffuses its deadly poison!

In a word, when you leave this earthly state of trial, all the discipline of the present state, all your advantages for salvation, all the means of grace, and all the encouragements of hope—will be forever removed out of your reach; and consequently all possibility of your salvation will cease forever; for when the necessary *means* are taken away—the *end* becomes utterly impossible.

Therefore, if you should die this year—then all your hopes of heaven will vanish forever!



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“And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. — Luke 12:16-21

## NOT A MAN

Arthur W. Pink  
(1886-1952)



Of old, God complained to an apostate Israel, **“Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself”** (Psa. 50:21). Such must now be His indictment against an apostate Christendom.

Men imagine that the Most High is moved by sentiment, rather that actuated by principle. They suppose that His omnipotence is such an idle fiction that Satan is thwarting His designs on every side. They think that if He has formed any plan or purpose at all, then it must be like theirs, constantly subject to change. They openly declare that whatever power He possesses must be restricted, lest He invade the citadel of man’s “free will” and reduce him to a “machine.” They lower the all-efficient atonement, which has actually redeemed everyone for whom it was made, to a mere “remedy,” which sin-sick souls may use if they feel disposed to; and they enervate the invincible work of the Holy Spirit to an “offer” of the Gospel which sinners may accept or reject as they please.

The “god” of this twenti-

eth century no more resembles the Supreme Sovereign of Holy Writ than does the dim flickering of a candle the glory of the midday sun. The “god” who is now talked about in the average pulpit, spoken of in the ordinary Sunday School, mentioned in much of the religious literature of the day, and preached in most of the so-called Bible Conferences is the figment of human imagination, an invention of maudlin sentimentality. The heathen outside of the pale of Christendom form “gods” out of wood and stone, while the millions of heathen inside Christendom manufacture a “god” out of their own carnal mind. In reality, they are but atheists, for there is no other possible alternative between an absolutely supreme God, and no God at all. A “god” whose will is resisted, *whose designs are frustrated, whose purpose is checkmated, possesses no title to Deity, and so far from being a fit object of worship, merits naught but contempt.*

Ω

*From — The Attributes of God*



## Lessons From The First Baptist

Matthew Henry  
(1662-1714)

**H**is (John the Baptist's) diet was plain; his meat was locusts and wild honey; not as if he never ate anything else; but these he frequently fed upon, and made many meals of them, when he retired into solitary places, and continued long there for contemplation. Locusts were a sort of flying insect, very good for food, and allowed as clean (Lev. 11:22); they required little dressing, and were light, and easy of digestion, whence it is reckoned among the infirmities of old age, that the grasshopper, or locust, is then a burden to the stomach, Ecc. 12:5. Wild honey was that which Canaan flowed with, 1Sam. 14:26. Either it was gathered immediately, as it fell in the dew, or rather, as it was found in the hollows of trees and rocks, where bees built, that were not, like those in hives, under the care and inspection of men. This intimates that he ate sparingly, a little served his turn; a man would be long ere he filled his belly with locusts and wild honey: John Baptist came neither eating nor drinking (Mt 11:18)—not with the curiosity, formality, and familiarity that other people do. He was so entirely taken up with spiritual things, that he could seldom find time for a set meal. Now,

(1) This agreed with the doctrine he preached of repentance, and fruits meet for repentance. Note, Those whose business it is to call others to mourn for sin, and to mortify it, ought themselves to live a serious life, a life of self-denial, mortification, and contempt of the world. John Baptist thus showed the deep sense he had of the badness of the time and place he lived in, which made the preaching of repentance needful; every day was a fast-day with him.

(2.) This agreed with his office as Christ's forerunner; by this practice he showed that he knew what the kingdom of heaven was, and had experienced the powers of it. Note, Those that are acquainted with divine and spiritual pleasures, cannot but look upon all the delights and ornaments of sense with a holy indifference; they know better things. By giving others this example he made way for Christ. Note, A conviction of the vanity of the world, and everything in it, is the best preparative for the entertainment of the kingdom of heaven in the heart. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Ω

# Of the Fall of Man, Of Sin, And of the Punishment Thereof

## From the London Baptist Confession Of 1689

- 1.** Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, (Gen. 2:16, 17) and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honour; (Gen. 3:12-13) Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, (2 Cor. 11:3) then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.
- 2.** Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their (Rom. 3:23) original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them whereby death came upon all: (Rom. 5:12, etc.) all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled (Titus 1:15; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19) in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.
- 3.** They being the root (Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15: 21-22, 45, 49), and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin (Psalms 51:5; Job 14:4), and by nature children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), the servants of sin, the subjects of death (Romans 6:23, 5:12), and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free (Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10).
- 4.** From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21), disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions (James 1:14, 15; Matthew 15:19).
- 5.** The corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain (Romans 7:18,23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8) in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin (Romans 7:23-25; Galatians 5:17).

## JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

By Pastor Troy Sheppard  
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Child of God, not only did Jesus purchase us on the cross (1 Pet. 1:18-19), He is coming again to claim what is rightfully His (1 Thess. 4:13-18), finish His restorative work on us and in us through our glorious resurrection (Rom. 8:18-25; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 51-57; 1 John 3:1-3), destroy His enemies (Rev. 19:11-21), establish His personal visible majestic rule on this earth (Rev. 20:1-6), and ultimately restore all things to a pre-cursed order (Acts 3:19-21). Amen! So be it!

The truth of Christ's second coming is not a scantily, hardly-ever-mentioned promise of Scripture. Many passages in God's infallible word inform us Jesus is coming again. It is the repeated, believer encouraging theme of Scripture. Jesus Himself spoke of His coming again (John 14:1-3; Matt. 24:27-31; Rev. 22:7, 12). Angels from heaven assured the apostles Jesus' return (Acts 1:9-11). Peter tells of the Lord's return (Acts 3:19-21; 1 Pet. 1:13, 5:4; 2 Pet. 1:16). Paul wrote of the Lord's return (1 Cor. 15:23; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 1:9-10, 2:19; 3:13; 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:8-9; Heb. 9:28, 10:37). James says the Lord is returning (James 5:7-8), and John says Jesus is coming again (1 John 2:28, 3:2; Rev. 1:7). As a Bible believer, every

one of us should expect the literal fulfillment of these precious promises.

The very design of God giving us so many promises of the return of Jesus is to give us hope and encouragement in our present distresses, disappointments, and discouragements. Knowing and believing that Christ's coming is certain will have a great impact on the life of every child of grace. If we will just believe that Jesus will do just as He has said our expectation of our faithful Savior's return will have many blessed effects on our Christian life and earthly witness.

Believing in the certainty of Christ's return will give comfort in present turmoil (John 14:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:18), sustain our faith in uncertain times (John 14:1), give us certainty of a glorious future home (John 14:2), give us assurance of being received into the presence of our Redeemer (John 14:3), stabilize us in an ever degenerating society (Phil. 3:20-4:1), give us urgency toward our present duties (2 Timothy 4:1-2), rejuvenate us for diligent faithful service (2 Peter 3:12-14), empower us to overcome sin (1 John 3:1-3), move us to kill sin in our life (Colossians 3:1-6), and relieve us from the many sorrows of death (1 Thess. 4:13).

Jesus is coming again! Believe it, look for it, wait for it, and expect it dear Christian. **"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."** (Rev. 22:20). Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Amen! Jesus Christ is coming again and I can hardly wait! **Ω**