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The Landmark Baptist

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

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The Believer's Blessings In Christ

John R Gilpin
(1904-1974)



Scripture reading,
Ephesians 1:1-14

As I read this Scripture, I am reminded that some men are confirmed pessimists. In fact, great numbers of people pessimistically look on the dark side of life. Perhaps the best definition of a pessimist I have ever heard is this, "He is a man who wears both belt and suspenders, and carries a pocket full of nails for fear a button will pull off."

In contrast, there are those who are determined optimists. The apostle Paul was in the latter group. He was an optimist of first rank. We are convinced of that by this letter which he wrote to the church at Ephesus. He wrote this letter when he was in prison, and when he was a prisoner at Rome. Yet, his surroundings did not cast a shadow over the letter, nor did they dim Paul's faith. It is a letter of great joy and pronounced optimism.

Instead of gloomily, writing in a pessimistic tone, we have in the book of Ephesians one of Paul's richest letters.

Verses 1-2 is Paul's salutation. Then he launches into the longest sentence of New Testament Greek known. Verses 3-14 inclusive, in our English 264 words, is one complete sentence. In this the longest sentence of New Testament Greek known, Paul describes the blessings which the believer has in Christ Jesus. There are seven of these blessings thus enumerated.

I

The first blessing which Paul mentions is that of *election*. Listen:

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:4). Here then is a statement that God hath chosen us. I hear many believers talk about their conversion as to the time when they chose the

(Continued page 2)

Lord. Yet, beloved, long before any believer ever turned from Satan and chose Christ, God had already chosen that believer. This verse would even tell us that God chose us before the foundation of the world. Before the rocks, the hills, and the mountains were laid down, God definitely chose us unto Himself. This would tell us then that each of us is older than creation. Before God created the world and placed Adam and Eve here, He chose out of the descendants of Adam and Eve a group unto Himself.

Of this we are also given definite assurance in the book of 2nd Thessalonians. **"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."** (2 Thess. 2:13). I say then, beloved, that God's elective grace is no after-thought with God. Salvation is no hurry-up first aid after man's fall. It is no hurry up remedy which God got together after sin became a reality.

I heard a preacher some time ago say that God was very much surprised when He looked down on this earth and saw man in sin, and that He immediately put forth every effort to provide a plan for man's redemption. If ignorance is bliss, then what a blissful creature this afore said

preacher must have been, for beloved, long before the world was, everyone who has ever been saved, or who shall ever be saved, was chosen of God in Christ Jesus.

Our text also reveals the purpose for which Christ chose us, for it declares, **"That we should be holy and without blame."** Knowing that sin was to wreck the world, God chose a remnant even before the foundation of the world that He might have a group who would be holy and without blame before him in love.

Oh, what a tremendous blessing this is just to know that God chose *us*—just to remember that God thought about us and chose us unto Himself, for if God had not elected us, not one of us would have ever been Saved.

I realize that there are those who do not believe in election, and who object to it by saying that God would be unjust. May I remind you that salvation isn't a matter of justice, but of *grace*: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith."** (Eph. 2:8). If we received justice, we would all spend eternity in hell. It is best that God should elect some than that all should perish.

It is also objected, "Why preach the gospel since God has elected some to be saved." We are to preach it because *God commanded us* to do so. **"And he said unto**

them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mk. 16:15). Preaching is the means God Uses for the saving of His elect. **"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."** (1 Cor. 1:21). Since I do not know who the elect are, it is my duty to preach the gospel to all as though each man were one of God's elect and then wait on God to do the saving.

Then there is another objection:

Men speak about man being a free moral agent, and declare that the Scriptural invitation is, "Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." To answer this objection, I can imagine a door. On the outside as I look at it, I note above the door these words, "Whosoever will." When I walk through the door and look back over the door on the inside, I note these words, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." I therefore conclude beloved, that no man will ever definitely will to come to God unless he be one of God's elect, and that no man will ever chose the Lord unless God has first chosen him.

I say then, beloved, that this is a tremendous blessing—the fact that God elected and chose us unto Himself.

II

The second blessing which the believer has in Christ to

which Paul refers in this long text, is that of predestination: **"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."** (Eph. 1:5). There is a difference between election and predestination. Election marks off the manner of one's salvation. Or to put it personally, election marked off the fact that I was to be saved, while predestination marked off the fact that I would be hoeing tobacco on a hillside farm in Boone County, Kentucky, and that about 10:30 one morning, I would receive Jesus Christ as my Saviour.

I realize that there are so many who do not understand the Bible, and therefore do not believe these great doctrines. It is because of this that I want to read you a few verses of Scripture that you may see this truth that God predestinates our salvation. Listen to Jesus' own words: **"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."** (Jn. 15:16). Hear the words of the writer of the book of the Acts: **"And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed"** (Acts 13:48). These words indicate that only those who were ordained to eternal life believed and received Jesus.

Elsewhere in the Scripture this same great teaching stands out: **"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many**

brethren." (Rom. 8:29).

What a mighty blessing is this doctrine of predestination. Not only is it a blessing that God chose us, but it is also a blessing that He predestinated the time and the manner whereby salvation should come to each of us.

III

The third blessing which Paul enumerates as belonging to the believer in Christ, is the blessing of adoption. **"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."** (Eph. 1:5). Adoption is a legal term. Through it we become children and heirs of God. It is just as though you were to go to an orphan's home and adopt a child. When you give that child your name, that child will inherit the same as any child which might have been born into your home. In view of the fact that *not one of Adam's race has been born a child of God, but that all of us are born depraved sinners, and sons and daughters of Satan; it became necessary in order that God might have a family, that He adopt us unto Himself through Jesus Christ.*

This adoption takes place the very hour we believe on Him and receive Him as our Saviour. Listen: **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but**

ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself (Himself) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:14-18).

I can imagine a wealthy man driving down a street in a high-powered costly automobile. For some reason known only to himself, he pulls his car to the curb and accosts a little ragged, dirty-faced, tousled-headed street urchin. He asks, "What's your name?" and to this receives the answer, "I don't know." When asked as to where he lives, he learns that this lad sleeps under stairways and in doorways and wherever he can find an empty goods box. The only wardrobe he has is that which he has on his back. Soap and water, as well as a balanced diet of food, are unknown qualities in his life.

This wealthy man by adroit questioning and skillful maneuvering leads the child to a desire to become his own adopted child, and he therefore leads him into the court room and before all, legally adopts this street waif as his son. He is then cleaned up, he eats at this rich man's table,

he rides in the rich man's automobile, and when the rich man dies, he will inherit the latter's fortune.

What a similarity as to our spiritual experience, for each of us before salvation were children of Satan. We were clothed with the rags of self-righteousness, and the filth of our iniquity. No little street urchin was ever more detestable in appearance than each of us are spiritually and 'morally to a thrice-holy God. Yet, God for Christ's sake, skillfully maneuvered with us until He made us willing to become His children and then adopted us into His family. Now we bear the name of God, for we are God's children. We eat at God's table, and when we come to Heaven; we are going to have an inheritance.

What a mighty blessing then that God adopts us, for without His adoption, we would all remain children of Satan and die and go to a Devil's Hell; but through the adoption we become children of God, and we spend our eternity in Heaven.

I remember visiting the Louisville Baptist Orphans Home a few years ago for my first time, and I will never forget how those little lads and lassies climbed up my leg into my arms and begged to be adopted. They wanted to come home with me. To them adoption meant a new home and new possibilities which they did not have confined to

an orphanage. To us adoption into the family of God means that similar great blessing. What a blessing that any orphan child has someone to adopt it, and what a mighty blessing it is that God adopts us into His family. Surely nothing could be more wonderful, and in eternity we will ever sing His praises for this blessing we have in Christ.

IV

The fourth great blessing which Paul lists as belonging to the believer in Christ is the blessing of forgiveness which grows out of our redemption. **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."** (Eph. 1:7). We have forgiveness because we have redemption. And what is redemption? Literally, to be redeemed means to be bought back, and that's exactly what each of us as unsaved sinners stand in need of. Through the sin of Adam and Eve in Eden, we all became Satan's property. It therefore became necessary that God buy us back to Himself in order that we might become His child.

And what a price was paid for our redemption! Our text tells us that it was Christ's blood. Yet, beloved, this is no more than what we are told in all the Scriptures. Listen: **"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things**

unto himself." (Col. 1:20).

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Pet. 1:18, 19).

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, 'What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'" (Rev. 7:13, 14).

Each of God's children thus has forgiveness because of redemption, and that redemption was at the cost—of the death and the blood—shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would remind you, beloved, that there never was a soul forgiven apart from redemption. God does not forgive men because they are sorry for their sins, nor does He forgive them for their goodness, nor because they turn over a new leaf, nor does He forgive them for joining the church nor for being baptized;—God only forgives on the basis of redemption. **"And without shedding of blood is no remission."** (Heb. 9:22).

What a mighty blessing then is this—this blessing of

forgiveness through redemption. Each of us as children of Adam stands before God as sinners who have a tremendous debt of sin piled up against us. We are unable to atone for that sin, but Jesus Christ went to Calvary and at the cross suffered, bled and died that we might be forgiven; and now today we have our forgiveness through this death of Christ at Calvary.

I can imagine a man who is kidnapped, and who is redeemed or ransomed from the kidnappers at a great price. When he is returned safely to his home, there is tremendous rejoicing on the part of his family. They care not for the cost; their only thought is over his safe return. How similar to us. When the fact that God has redeemed us through His Son becomes a known reality to us, and we realize that our sins are forgiven, there is a joy that floods the soul the like of which that individual has never known before in life.

V

The next blessing Paul mentions which we experience in Christ Jesus is that of an heavenly inheritance. **"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who**

worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. 1:10, 11). This is the Christian's prospect. Every Christian has a heavenly inheritance in prospect.

What a contrast between the children of God and the unsaved sinner, for though the child of God has a heavenly inheritance awaiting him, each unsaved sinner has only the fires of hell facing him. Listen to these words: **"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."** (2 Thess. 1: 7-9). **"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."** (Rev. 14:10, 11). Surely there is a decided contrast between the prospect of the child of God and the prospect of that individual who knows not Jesus Christ.

On a chilly November day, a Christian gentleman spoke to a shivering Italian who could only speak in broken English. Thinking to sympa-

thize with the Italian who had only been in this country a short while, this Christian remarked concerning the cold dreary November weather. And then the Italian's face lighted up, for he remembered the sunny skies of Italy, and with a thought that someday he might return, he said, "But bye and bye tink of that." This thought often blesses my soul. When the load gets tough and the road gets rough, when I see the things I have stood for trampled beneath the feet of those who do not believe the Word of God, when I see spiritual conditions getting worse and worse, it almost chills the spiritual fervor from us; but then I like to look beyond this veil of tears, and disappointments, and heartaches, and remember that there is a better land, a better home, and a happier fellowship awaiting me. It isn't what we have now, but what we as God's children are going to have after a while that appeal to me. Therefore, beloved, our heavenly inheritance which we have in Christ Jesus is a tremendous blessing.

VI

Yet, the apostle Paul does not stop with these blessings. He enumerates a sixth in that he declares we are sealed. **"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were**

sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. 1:13). Most of our radio audience knows that Russell is a railroad town, and all railroaders must in turn remember the sealing of each car. It is just a little piece of tin, but it carries back of it the influence of the railroad and the backing of the federal government. It isn't that the seal itself is important, but the power and authority back of the seal is important.

So it is with those of us who are Christians. When we are saved, we are sealed by the Lord Jesus Himself. That seal indicates first of all ownership. It tells everyone to whom we belong, and that God is our owner. **"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His."** (2 Tim. 2:19).

That seal also indicates security. No one would dare break a seal on a railroad car, and the contents of that car are thus secure. I can imagine an object placed inside a keg, and that keg in turn placed inside a barrel, and that sealed barrel in turn placed inside a sealed hogs head. I ask you, "How would you get to that object that has been sealed inside the keg?" Of course, it is very apparent that in order to destroy it you must first break open the sealed hogshead, and then the sealed barrel, and lastly the sealed keg in order to get to the object which you wish to

destroy. I would remind you, beloved, that each of us as children of God are sealed in the power of the triune God, and that for the Devil to take one of us out of the hands of God and to destroy us, or in other words, for one of us who have been redeemed to be lost and go to Hell, the Devil would have to destroy the power of a triune God—he would have to break the seal of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I thank God that the Devil can never do this, and that each of the redeemed are saved and kept by the power of God.

VII

The last of these great blessings is what Paul calls an "earnest." **"Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."** (Eph. 1:14). The word "earnest" means a "pledge." You remember that when the children of Israel went into the land of Canaan, they came back with a great bunch of grapes hanging on a stick between two individuals who bore them. These grapes of Eschol were a pledge of what the children of Israel would find when they got into the land of Canaan. They were merely a sample of a pledge or an earnest of what the children of Israel would expect to find after a while. And you know, beloved, God gives us that today in Christ. In a

revival meeting we often get so happy and lots of times even in our regular services here we get so happy that we have a little taste of heaven here on earth. That's only a sample of what we are going to have. That is the earnest concerning which Paul speaks.

What mighty blessings, beloved, are these which we have in Christ. We are elected, predestinated, adopted, redeemed, we have an inheritance in prospect, we are sealed, and we have an earnest of what we are going to have after while right now as children of God.

These blessings are bestowed upon Christ. Verse three of this chapter says, **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."** (Eph. 1:3). We therefore get these blessings by getting into Christ.

If you are not in Christ, you don't have these blessings. If you are in Christ, these blessings are yours now. If you are not in Christ, may God grant that you shall receive Him now as your personal Saviour, and thus, enjoy these blessings of the saved. Ω

Ben Franklin's Epitaph

At 23 years old Franklin had composed an Epitaph for his grave:



*"The Body of B. Franklin, Printer;
Like the Cover of an old Book, its contents torn out,
And stripped of its Lettering and Gliding,
Lies here, Food for worms.
But the Work shall not be wholly lost;
For it will, (as he believed) appear once more,
In a new and more perfect Edition,
Corrected and amended
By the Author."*



Examining 2 Peter 2:1

Pastor Sam Wilson
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"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

2 Peter 2:1

This verse is a battleground. It is a verse that is often-times used by some to prove some doctrines that just are not true.

"But there were false prophets also among the people." The reference here is to the Old Testament days. In those days they had false prophets. **"There shall be false teachers among you."** This was in that day in time and in our day and time. In other words, in all times we will have false prophets and teachers **"who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."**

What does this verse mean?

Does this verse mean that Jesus died for everybody and yet on some of them He

brings upon them swift destruction? Let me urge you—if you don't have it—purchase a copy of John Gill's book on *The Cause of God and Truth*. He has good answers concerning this verse, some of which I agree with and some I don't agree with. But let us also understand that there are some hard verses in the Word of God which are hard to understand. There are things that I, as a believer in the Doctrines of Grace and the Sovereignty of God, need to be able to give an answer to them. I can't just say, "Well, the preponderance of the evidence in the Bible teaches this." I must give an interpretation to this verse of Scripture as to what it means.

The Arminians love this verse saying, "Even denying the Lord that bought them. He bought them, He shed His blood for them and some of them brought upon themselves swift destruction." But this is what false doctrine does. They grab a verse here and grab a verse there and deny the rest of the Word of God. We must always interpret Scripture with Scripture and interpret doctrine with

doctrine. There are no two verses of Scripture that contradict each other and there are also no two doctrines in the Word of God that contradict one another. It is important, not just for preachers, but it is important for every child of God to *study* and *search* the Scriptures. **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God"** (2 Tim. 2:15) that we might be able to stand tall and firm on the truths of the Word of God. We study the Bible looking for truth, not looking to prove what we believe, but looking for truth.

For example, the Bible cannot preach the truth of an unconditional election and the doctrine of effectual call and then preach a universal atonement. Those five TULIP doctrines go hand in hand; starting with the doctrine of Total Depravity one of them proves another one and so on through the Doctrines of Grace.

Now my desire is to examine 2 Peter 2:1 mainly to determine two things. First, it does not teach a universal atonement and secondly, what is the interpretation?

So, I will do three things:

1. I want to define false prophets.
2. I want to define perversions.
3. Define the proper interpretation of this verse.

Defining False Prophets

There are two basic definitions of a false prophet.

1. Number one being those who claim to be prophets of God and are not. They are not prophets of God, and they are not even saved. Our world is full of them, they are pseudo prophets. Men and women such as Osteen, Myer, Jakes, Swaggart and the vast majority of televangelists who preach a prosperity gospel, that is not a gospel at all. Those people are false prophets and I hope some of them are saved, but I have great doubts concerning them when I think about the doctrines that they teach.

2. Secondly, there are prophets (preachers) of God that are saved, are called to preach, but they preach a false message.

So there are false prophets who aren't saved, and there are false prophets who are saved. Now a lot of them preach some truth. They will preach the truth about heaven and maybe truth about hell. They may preach the truth about godly living, but they will not preach the truth about the Sovereignty of God, about the deadness of man, the Doctrines of Grace or Church truth. They shy away from them because they desire to have great popularity. They are preaching *some* truth, but they are also false prophets in

that they teach an abundance of lies.

We are here as members of this church because we preach the truth, but there are many who walk through those doors who do not like the truths that we preach and they leave. I refuse to compromise.

Now the Bible does not always have reference to lost people when it mentions false prophets. Mark 13:22; Matthew 7:15, 24:11 are examples that when false prophets are mentioned in the word of God false preachers are being referred to. The truth that Peter spoke of false prophets refers the Old and New Testament times and our times.

The message of these false prophets usually relates to "damnable heresies." That is what it says, **"Who privily shall bring in damnable heresies."** A damnable heresy is a heresy that—if you believe it—you cannot be saved. There are heresies that if you believe them, you are damned! You cannot be saved as long as you believe those heresies. I'm talking about if they deny the Virgin Birth; that's a damnable heresy. If they deny the inspiration of Scripture, that is a damnable heresy. If they deny the deity of Jesus Christ, it is a damnable heresy. If they deny the Genesis account of Creation and that God is the Creator that is a damnable heresy. In my opinion you cannot be saved if you believe

those things because that just does not coincide with the belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

II

The Perversions

Now let me define and explain some of the perversions of 2 Peter 2:1

1. The first perversion is that these "people" are saved and then they lose their salvation. They teach that there have been many who have believed the Gospel and then have lost their salvation and then swift destruction comes to them. There is no truth in this. What we find in the Bible about "swift destruction" is that it comes sometimes to saved people who fall into sin. But to say that these people are saved and can lose their salvation, and there is no such thing as eternal security cannot be shown from the Word of God. I can show you repeatedly where the Bible teaches that once you are saved *you are always saved* throughout all eternity. You may sin, but you will not lose that salvation. I have yet to have anyone who argues with me that you can lose your salvation tell me what sin will cause you to lose it; big sins or "little" sins? Or how many sins do you have to commit to lose your salvation? And then how many times after you lose your salvation can you get saved again? It cannot be true!

The Bible plainly teaches that there is *nothing* that **"can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus"** (Rom. 8:39). The Bible says that all who believe in Him have *now* **"everlasting life"** (John 3:16, 36, 4:14, 5:24, 6:27, etc.). I could go on and on. The Bible is so full of such teaching that once you are saved, you are *always* saved.

2. The second perversion of our text is that this can be a sin "unto death" committed by saved people. Now I believe there can be a sin unto death; those at the church at Corinth committed sins unto death (1 Cor. 11:29-30). I lean more that a sin unto death is a *continual, habitual sin and we fail to repent of*.

They say that they deny Christ, **"denying the Lord that bought them"**, and lose their salvation. Well, why didn't Peter die a sudden death? Why didn't Peter, when he denied Jesus Christ, just fall dead? Instead he lived many more years and was promoted to being a great leader in the church of God.

3. The third perversion of our text is that this verse teaches a *universal* atonement, teaching that even those who die and go to hell were bought by Christ. Saying, the term **"denying the Lord that bought them"** shows that the Lord

bought them, they had swift destruction come upon them and they went to hell. This is not what this verse is about at all. They teach that Jesus paid for their sins, died for their sins, and they go to hell because they deny Him. We ask what about those who never hear about Him, those who never hear the Gospel, never hear about Jesus Christ?

III

Proper Interpretation

As to the proper interpretation of this verse, what would yours be? If someone came to you and said, "You believe in that Limited Atonement and Eternal Security, what about 2 Peter 2:1?" What would your answer be?

First, there is the Arminian theory, i.e., that Jesus died for their sins and bought them with His blood; that they were bought by Christ, yet they were never saved. This is the Arminian interpretation.

There are two doctrinal teachings that are at stake here: the doctrine of Eternal Security and the doctrine of the Effectual Limited Atoning death of Jesus Christ. His death was limited in its design and in effect. If somebody says that Jesus' death was not effectual, it borders on blasphemy; it is saying that Jesus failed. This is an insult to the shed blood of the Lamb of God to say that He failed; to say His blood was not efficient.

We desire to show that 2 ty they are saying that He Peter 2:1 does not refute either one of these two truths and that there is a Biblical explanation that coincides with other Scripture and other doctrines in the Word of God.

Let us notice some false interpretations that are taught by some.

a. Some will say that this verse means that God bought them *as slaves* (as with Pharaoh) and was proving a point to His people in that though they were Israelites and Jews, God had bought them as slaves and servants to Him and they should be doing a better job of it.

b. Some interpret it as God died to rescue them from *temporal punishment*; How many children of God have had temporal punishment? That is, from being imprisoned, from being stoned, from being cut, from being devoured by lions. This cannot be true because they had, including Peter, much physical torment. This teaching again mocks the power of Jesus' blood and death.

c. Some believe that Jesus bought them by paying a *sufficient* price for their sins; that the blood of Christ, the death of Christ was sufficient to save all of humanity, but is only efficient for those who believe. This makes Jesus Christ one of the greatest failures that this old earth has ever known. If He died to save *all* of humani-

ty they are saying that He died for the rich man when he is already in hell (Luke 16:19-23). That He died for Esau whom He hated (Rom. 9:3). They are saying that He died for many who were in hell at the very time of His death. This makes the death of Jesus very impersonal. His death is personal to me and it should be to you. It is a personal death. This doctrine makes His death just a number, but His death was not just a number, it was an *effectual* shedding of His blood for the remission of sins. I don't understand how anyone can believe that Christ died for the sins of somebody who went to hell. How anyone can believe that Jesus paid for their sins on the cross and that God will punish them again in hell. God is a just God, and to say that Jesus paid the price for the sins of all the people, but some go to hell is just wrong, it makes God to be an unjust God. It terribly teaches against the efficacy of Jesus' death.

Was the death of Jesus Christ efficient to pay for the sins for those for whom He died? I insist that it was. Jesus said, **"ALL that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"** (John 6:37). This pretty much sums up the atoning work of Christ. Jesus promised the Father that He would not lose one of them. Jesus paid our ransom,

He is our ransom. That word ransom means "a corresponding price". Jesus paid the exact price to redeem all of the elect of God from their sins.

They say that Christ's death paid for all (everyone) sins because of the pain and suffering. Somebody tell me why there is a hell. If He paid for their sins, why is there a hell?

"Denying the Lord that bought them." Some teach that they deny the Lord that they *profess* bought them. This is a popular belief among many: they are denying the Lord that they profess bought them although He didn't really buy them; it is just a profession of faith.

Then they deny the Lord who in the eyes of others had bought them. In other words, other people think these false teachers are saved. Judas is an example of this. When others looked at Judas, they certainly thought he was saved, but he wasn't, he knew not Jesus Christ. There will be many missing from Heaven who others thought were saved, and for some that is the interpretation of this verse of Scripture.

What the Bible Teaches

Now let me give you what I believe the Bible teaches concerning 1 Peter 2:1. In reality the Bible is all that matters.

There are two things you want to notice. First, notice

that in this verse there is not one mention of Jesus Christ. There is not one mention of His blood. There is not one mention of His death. There is not one mention of the cross. There is not one mention of redemption. If you will study your Bible you will find that when they speak of the death of Christ and salvation, you will find those things are mentioned. This is important.

The word for LORD used here is the Greek word "despote". It refers to a Master or Lord over a slave in that kind of a relationship. That's not the relationship that Jesus Christ has with His elect people, those whom He has saved. He is not a master and lord over us. He is our LORD, but it is not in the same relationship.

Let us note some places in Scripture where the Greek *despote* is used. Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jude 4; and Rev. 6:10, and there it is talking about God the Father. When Jesus is mentioned it is the Greek *kyrios*. This Greek is not used in our text. Our text is not talking about the LORD Jesus Christ; it is talking about *GOD the FATHER*.

Let me read Jude 1:4 to you. **"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord (Grk. *despote*) God, and our Lord**

(Grk. *kyrios*) **Jesus Christ.**" Here, both words are used in one sentence stating they deny both of them, both Father and Son.

These words, *despote* and *kyrios*: *Despote* has a reference to a slave of a master and *kyrios* as a prince over the subjects. This proves that the words "denying the Lord that bought them" has reference to *God the Father buying and bringing the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage*. You will find that that phrase as it appears there, is borrowed by Peter from Deut. 32:5-6, & 12-13.

Notice further, that when Christ is mentioned, there is usually a mention of His death and the price He paid, Acts 20:28; 1Cor. 6:10; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 5:9, and 1 Peter 1:18-19 which reads, **"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."**

In your own Bible reading pay attention that when it mentions the Lord Jesus Christ it speaks about salvation, there is mention of the blood of Jesus Christ. That is not what our text is talking about. The redeemed of Christ are not left to deny Him. In John 6:39 Jesus said of the Father, **"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all**

which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." This means that the saved will never deny Him or lose their salvation. that whoever comes to Jesus Christ will be saved and raised up at the last day.

Now the question of what were they bought from? It was not and could not be for their sins, because we know that for those who are truly saved are sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ. I can't lose my salvation; I can't deny Christ because I am sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ and the workings of the Holy Spirit.

The word "bought" of our text refers to a temporal deliverance with a particular reference to buying the Jews from Egyptian bondage as referenced in Deut. 32:5-6, & 12-13.

Notice *whom* it is that Peter is addressing in our text. If you go back to 1 Peter 1:1 you will see that he is speaking to the *elect*, to those who know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. **"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect..."** He is addressing the *elect* and warning them of false prophets. **"According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. ."** There is that blood again when he mentions

about our salvation.

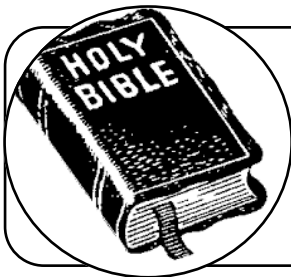
You have to understand that the Jews always thought themselves as a peculiar people bought of God and better than the Gentiles. Much of Paul's writing was in dealing with the schisms between the Jews and the Gentiles, because the Jews thought they were the only people who were God's people, and the Gentiles should not have any part of it. And so Peter, here in our text, shows that the Jews had many false prophets and it gives the proper meaning to this verse of Scripture. It was to warn them against false prophets and heresy. I do the same today. I warn you of false prophets and heresy. Always understand that that which is popular in the world is probably a damnable heresy. If it is popular with the world it is probably not popular with God; it is anti-scripture.

Remembrance

And then Peter also wants to bring to *remembrance* the great works that God had done for them and that God

has brought them out of that bondage of sin; and then perhaps to shame them, for their ingratitude. How many of us are always as thankful as we should be for the death of Jesus Christ, for the choosing of God the Father and for the effectual call of the Holy Spirit? How many of us show gratitude to God for saving us? Peter is saying, "You have these false prophets, but look at you. It is something special that you have and has been given unto you by God." He goes on to say, (1 Peter 2:2) **"And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."** That is, these false prophets are going to speak evil of truth. Don't we have that today?

Well, I hope you understand our text a little bit better. Study the Bible, love the Bible, learn from the Bible and then share the Bible. I am not ashamed of what I believe concerning the doctrine of God's sovereignty in the salvation of sinners. I believe I am well able to defend it. May God help us to be well able to defend and bless you. **Ω**



"Be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

Acts 2:25

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

Pastor Chris Burke
Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist Church
Catlettsburg, Kentucky



"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6

The mood among the disciples was one of anxiety and sorrow. Jesus was now preparing them for His soon departure from this world, to return back to His home in Heaven. Jesus explained that He was going to Heaven to prepare a glorious place for them to dwell in—even "Mansions", and that He would surely come again to take His people home.

Oftentimes the Lord told His disciples about the way He must die, and that He must afterward return to His Father in Heaven. But like Jesus' disciples today, they just couldn't accept some of the Lord's teachings! Many times human thoughts, feelings, and emotions stand in the way of simple faith in the plainly revealed Word of God.

Sometimes like Thomas, when overcome by emotions and sorrow, we doubt or lose sight of those precious truths that we have been taught

from the Scriptures. With Thomas we say **"Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"** (John 14:5). Our home in Heaven and the way we must go to get to there may become obscured by emotional circumstances and bad feelings. But emotions and feelings can be deceitful and treacherous—we dare not trust them. We must simply believe God's Word and commit our emotions and feelings to Him Who is greater than our heart (1 John 3:20).

"The Way, the Truth, and the Life"

The following words of Jesus, although spoken to Thomas, are words whereby we all must place our faith and hope of heaven and eternal life: **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."**

The words **"I am"** are reminiscent of the great **"I AM"** in the book of Exodus where God first revealed Himself to Moses as Jehovah (or

existing one). "I am" signifies the self-existence and eternality of God Almighty. Thus Jesus Christ is the "I am" of the New Testament. He is the self-existent, deified Son of God. Therefore His word is to be received, believed, and acted upon as it is in truth—the very Word of God. My friends, the only hope of heaven for anyone anywhere, is through receiving and believing the Gospel of Jesus.

Jesus is the Way

Jesus is the only way to God the Father and into Heaven. He is not merely *a* way, or even one of many ways, but the *only* way. This truth is the death blow to the majority of this world's religions—even to some which profess to be Christian. "The way" is not Jesus plus our good works, or our religious rites and rituals, or our holding out faithful to the end. Jesus alone is the way!

The way of Jesus is the way of:

1) Obedience

It was by the disobedience of one man that we were all made sinners, but it is through the obedience of Jesus that we are made righteous (Rom. 5:19). The obedience of Jesus was to do the will of His heavenly Father—to keep His commands, and to accomplish the work of redemption for His people. Jesus was not partially obedient, or occasionally obe-

dient, or mostly obedient—but He was *perfectly obedient*. There was not a time when Jesus ever failed to do His Father's will. It was essential for Jesus to be perfect in obedience—otherwise He could not have been our Savior. (Heb. 5:8, Phil. 2:8). We as God's people need to follow Jesus' example by living lives of obedience to Him (1 Peter 2:21, Matt.16:24).

2) Sacrifice

All men are sinners, and as such are unfit to enter into the presence of God or His Heaven. By His sacrificial death for the sins of His elect, Jesus made the way into Heaven for each one (Heb. 9:12,14,26; 10:19-20). We partake of His sacrifice *by faith* in His death, burial, and resurrection for our sins.

3) Mediation

Jesus is the Great High Priest and Mediator for His people. He sits at the Father's right hand making continual, daily intercession for them. Believers continue to sin and fall short of perfection, thus we need continual cleansing from our sins as we travel through this life. (Heb. 7:25; 9:24, 1 John 2:1).

4) The Resurrection

Finally, the way to the Father and into Heaven is by way of the resurrection. Soon Jesus will return for all His saints—with a shout He will

raise them from their graves to spiritually dead sinners and catch them away to heaven and enables them to repent along with all the living and believe in Him as their saints in that day. Savior (John 4:14, 5:21-26, 17:2; Rom. 2:4).

Jesus is the Truth

Jesus is very truth personified. He is the very truth incarnate. All truth is in Jesus, and Jesus is all truth. If there is any truth in this present evil world, it is owing to Jesus. In contrast to Satan who is the father of lies (John 8:44), and to mankind who **"go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies"** (Ps. 58:3), Jesus is the author and dispenser all of truth, and no lie ever proceeded out of His mouth or ever entered into His heart. What we as sinful mankind need more than anything else today is to know the truth "as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21).

As "the truth", Jesus is true to all His promises. He promised in John 14 that He was going to prepare a place for His people, and that He is coming again for them. We can trust Him as He is truth!

Jesus is the Life

Jesus is life, and all life comes from Him. All physical life, including all the earth creatures and mankind, received their life from Jesus. All created spirit beings including both the elect angels and the fallen angels along with Satan, all received their life from Jesus (Col. 1:16). Jesus is also the author of eternal life. Jesus gives spiritual life

In our natural state we are all dead in trespasses and in sins (Eph. 2:1). We have no spiritual life, no faint spark of life, or least inclination toward the Lord. We are totally dead to the things of God. Lost men show their spiritual deadness by their total inability to understand spiritual things. They cannot understand or believe the Gospel of Christ, because the Gospel is foolishness to them. They can not receive even the least spiritual truth because they are spiritually discerned (1Corinthians. 1:18, 2:14).

The ability to understand and believe the Gospel comes from Jesus, when He gives the lost sinner a new, spiritual birth. This is why Jesus told Nicodemus that a man must be born again to see or enter the kingdom of God. The old nature is oblivious to the realm of the Spirit, until the Spirit of God blows on one's soul and imparts new life from above (John 3:1-16).

Thus we see that Jesus *must of His own good will and pleasure*, give us spiritual life.

Not only is Jesus the cause of our physical and spiritual life, but He is also the sustainer of life. The apostle Paul said that the life that he lived in the flesh, he lived by the faith of the Son of God,

who loved him and gave himself for him (Gal. 2:20). In Colossians 3:4 Paul said that Christ "is our life". It is Jesus Who gives us life and sustains our life by His very existence within our souls!

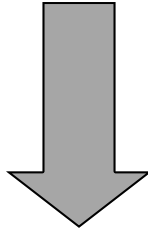
Conclusion

We have seen in this message our dependence on Jesus as "**the way, the truth, and the life**". If we know Jesus as our Savior we can take comfort in

knowing just how great a Savior that He is! Remember, our confidence is not in our feelings, but rather in our Savior! If you are not a believer, we invite you now to believe on Jesus as your personal Savior for: "**....no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**"

From

<http://www.sglb.net/index.html>



 QUESTIONS and ANSWERS as to CHURCH AUTHORITY Reprinted from THE BAPTIST EXAMINER	40 pages FREE OFFER !! Request from: Sovereign Grace Baptist Mission PO Box 1205 Goose Creek, SC 29445 Please Specify Quantity "In the summer of 1964 one of our readers in Cincinnati presented seven questions relative to the establishment of a new church. There have never been any questions asked, which have produced more comment and interest in the study of the Word of God than these. Generally speaking, independent Baptists throughout America have been highly pleased with these answers. From the time of their printing many have requested that these answers be made more permanent in book form and accordingly we are happy to send forth these questions and answers along with additional quotations from the outstanding Baptist leaders of this and other days." JOHN R. GILPIN, Editor The Baptist Examiner March 1, 1966.
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COULD JESUS HAVE SINNED?

By Pastor John Pruitt
LaCrosse Road Baptist Church
Ellaville, Georgia



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

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Hebrews 4:14-16

The question is: was Jesus Christ peccable or impeccable? So, let's examine the definition of these words.

[Merriam Webster]

Peccability: the quality or state of being peccable: capability of sinning.

[Collins Dictionary]

Liable to sin; susceptible to temptation.

[Dictionary.com]

Liable to sin or error.

[freedictionary.com]

The state or quality of be-

ing peccable; liability to sin; The common peccability of mankind.

Therefore, to define impeccability would be:

[Merriam Webster] Free from fault or blame: flawless; not capable of sinning or liable to sin.

[Cambridge.org]

Synonyms: faultless, approving, flawless, immaculate, perfect (*without fault*), unblemished, untarnished.

[Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language]

Exempt from the possibility of sinning.

The theological question is: whether Jesus Christ is peccable, or impeccable; whether He could have exercised His free will and chosen to sin, or whether lacking the propensity to sin because of His absolute holy nature. I must put that in present tense because the word of God tells us that He is the same yesterday,

today, and for ever (Heb. 13:8) **"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."** In other words, He is eternally the same; therefore, whatever He has been, He still is, and will always be. If the propensity to sin was in Christ on earth, it had to be before He came to earth, and is yet today as He sits on the right hand of the heavenly Father. If Christ is impeccable now, He must have been while on earth, and before He came to earth. Was Jesus a perfect child or was He not a perfect child? As a child, did Jesus simply choose not to misbehave, or was He incapable of misbehaving? As a little baby, did Jesus then have the situational awareness to choose to remain perfect and sinless?

Those who hold to peccability (going to the extreme in the doctrine of His humanity) believe that, if Jesus could not have sinned, He could not have truly experienced temptation, and therefore could not truly empathize with our struggles and temptations against sin. Those of us who hold to impeccability believe that Jesus could not have sinned, for there was no propensity to sin; that in His sovereignty He could empathize without actually and literally being tempted. There lies in the Old Testament many examples of the Lord showing empathy, loving-kindness, mercy and grace for His cho-

sen people Israel. Those who hold to peccability believe that Jesus could have sinned, but by His free will, chose not to. In my simple way, I would like to offer some reasons why the Man Jesus could not have sinned.

JESUS CHRIST COULD NOT SIN BECAUSE HE WAS FROM ABOVE:

The Lord Jesus did not originate on earth, nor did He originate in heaven. He never became God, but is the eternal God, coequal with God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. John 8:58 **"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."**

The Lord came here from heaven as God-man, having been conceived in the human womb by the Holy Spirit. John 6:51, **"I am the living bread which came down from heaven..."** John 8:23, **"And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."** He was made flesh and dwelt among mankind. He took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man.

JESUS CHRIST COULD NOT SIN BECAUSE HE WAS NOT BORN OF THE SEED OF A MAN:

The word of God tells us that the holy Seed was bonded with the egg of a virgin Jewish girl who had never

known a man, and was put there by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-35). The womb of that virgin girl Mary became the incubator for the human development of God being manifest in the flesh. All human beings were and are born as the result of a man and woman coming together, and the natural result of seed and egg produces a child. This was not the case with this one Child throughout all time. Jesus Christ was born as the only begotten Son of God, mentioned five times by the apostle John, meaning that He was and is the unique one of a kind Son. Christian believers are never referenced as only begotten sons and daughters, rather, we are adopted sons and daughters. He was of the seed of God, and not the seed of man. Even as an unborn child He was God, for we read in Colossians 2:9, "**For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.**"

JESUS COULD NOT SIN BECAUSE HE WAS NOT A NATURAL MAN:

2 Corinthians 5:21 "**For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**" We say that Jesus was God-man, being complete God and complete man. But does that mean that He had the whole nature of man? The definition of "natural" is the sensuous nature with its subjection to

appetite and passion. [Greek/English Lexicon] Therefore, it stands to reason that in order for Jesus Christ to have the propensity for sin He would have to be a natural man. Again, we say that He was total God and total man, but does that necessitate Him being a natural man? True, He had the nature of man in that He was subject to certain infirmities such as limits of time and space, hunger and fatigue, pain and sorrow; yet without sin or not able to sin. Are we to say that Jesus had to resist adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like? These are things that we are tempted with, yet restrained by the presence of the Holy Spirit; notwithstanding, we are in fact subject to these things. The apostle Paul proves this in Romans 7. I say, you can't have it both ways.

JESUS CHRIST COULD NOT SIN BECAUSE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO BE TEMPTED TO SIN:

James 1:13-15, "**Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it**

bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The idea that He could not have truly experienced temptation, and therefore could not truly empathize with our struggles and temptations against sin unless He Himself could be tempted to sin is good, sound, human reasoning, but it is not consistent with the word of God. Isaiah 53 also shows that He certainly could empathize with our sufferings having suffered these things Himself.

Now, is Jesus God or not? If not then the point I am making is moot. However, if He is God, and He is, then He is God *absolutely*. John 1:14, **"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."**

Let us study James 1:13-15—First of all, James lays down a stern warning that no one is to accuse God of tempting them; for the fact is, neither can God be tempted with sin, nor does He tempt man with sin. These are matters of fact that cannot be disputed.

Second, James establishes the nature of temptation as it relates to the mankind; But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. In order for Jesus to exercise His free will to prevent His sinning through temptation He would have to be drawn away of His own

lust, and enticed. James says that that is when a person is tempted to evil. We know, however, that God cannot be tempted with evil.

JESUS CHRIST COULD NOT SIN BECAUSE FOR REDEMPTION THERE MUST BE A PERFECT LAMB:

The peccable view cannot have it both ways. If Jesus could have sinned, but chose not to sin, then by virtue of the doctrine of total depravity, there must have been a sin nature present. Rom. 5:12, **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."** The very reason that the Son of God came to this world was to redeem the elect from their sins. Christ's blood must not be tainted with sin. Isaiah 53 shows us that the Offering for sin was a perfect Offering, His blood was perfect, holy, sinless blood. You cannot have a perfect sacrifice by one who had a free will to sin. Our Lord Jesus was the only fit sacrifice because neither sin, nor the propensity to sin was in Him. Psalms 5:4-5, **"For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity."** Some may argue that this passage is speaking of the heavenly Father and not the Son. 1 John 3:5, **"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins;**

and in him is no sin. "In Him" and in Divine love (a unique must mean in His nature. love). The fact is, Jesus Christ

May I remind you that Jesus Himself stated both in John 10:30 and John 17:21-22 that He and the Father are One. They are one in nature (Divine), in power (omnipotent), in essence (one as much God as the other), in purpose (their end design was in complete harmony), in perfection (absolute holiness),

was the perfect Lamb, and the only perfect Lamb. Because He was the perfect Lamb and still is the perfect Lamb, He is fit to take away the sin of the world. I beg of my brethren who hold the position of peccator to rethink your position in light of the word of God and not flawed human reasoning. **Ω**



THE PRIORITY OF SELF-JUDGMENT

Pastor Wm. Troy Sheppard
Citrus Missionary Baptist Church
Inverness, Florida

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." —(Matthew 7:1-5).

Here, Jesus gives divine revelation to His disciples certain to be Judged by Jesus about Judging. It is the Master's *prescription* to believers on how to rightly judge. It reveals Jesus' desire for His people to be in a position to judge "righteous judgments"

Of course, it should be noted that Jesus is certainly *not prohibiting* judging, though the "judge not" of verse one is often misquoted

or misinterpreted by wicked fore and in relationship to men and women to try and judging others.

silence any criticism of their unholy lifestyles and unbiblical choices. The Bible believer need not fear the godless Bible mutilator. They are just trying to cover their defiled conscience in the fig leaves of ignorance. God knows their game and so should we. We can kindly inform them that there is not a period after "Judge not", but a comma and then direct them to the truth of the passage. But, in correcting them, let us take great care not to disregard our Lord's message to us about judging.

It is a fact of Scripture that God has made His people judges (I Cor. 6:1-4). Judging is a mark of our spiritually and maturity (I Cor. 2:14-16; Heb.5:14), for **"he that is spiritual judgeth all things"** (1 Cor. 2:15) and if we are going to be responsible obedient Christians we must learn to judge "all things" and judge those things *righteously*. Through biblical wisdom we are commanded to judge the "small-est matters" and "things that pertain to this life" (I Cor. 6:2-4). But, where must our judging start? Jesus' answer is self-judgment. Self-judgment is *the priority* of the Master's message (Matt. 7:1-5). Jesus forbids judging others unless we "self-judge" *first*. It is God's revealed will that we start with self-judgment be-

Self-Judgment is critical.

You *must* rightly examine and remove the beam out of your own eye if you are to even be able to doctor another. Imagine the sight of an ophthalmologist bending over to remove a splinter out of a patient's eye with a telephone pole sticking out of his own eye! How absurd! He would cause more damage than good! He might knock the poor soul off the exam chair. He would inflict more pain and destruction whipping the beam around trying to get at the splinter because his own beam is a bigger problem. The picture is vivid, verging on ridiculous! But Christians can be ridiculous at times and are so when they do not self-judge.

Biblical Judgment is done right *only* if it is preceded by self-judgment. Self-judgment *must* come first and be at the forefront of judging others. Believer you must learn that in order to rightly judge your spouse, your children, your parents, your neighbors, your church, your preacher, your friendships, your co-worker, your nation... you must first rightly, carefully, and honestly judge yourself! Before you judge another man's work ethic, leisure time, family life, situation, circumstance, doctrine, practice, religious activity or a host of other things

make sure you take heed to lay *inside* God's boundaries! If the warning, "judge not, lest we are not willing to self-judge be judged". Knowing that, judge we *must* refrain from "with what judgment ye judging others, or face the consequences"

Self-judge your motives, intentions, attitude, and activity. You can be assured your Lord will!

This truth is reiterated by Paul to the divided, prideful church at Corinth where he commands, "**let a man examine himself**" (I Cor. 11:28). Self-examination or self-judgment is necessary for your own spiritual health and the spiritual health of others. Why? Because *you* may be the source of the problem or adding to the division, weakness, sickness, or even the death of those around you.

We are disobedient and hypocritical unless we practice self-judgment. Those who do not self-judge have blatant disregard for the rule of God's word in their life because "Judge not" and "let a man examine himself" are commands, not suggestions! Those who do not self-judge set themselves up for the Lord's retribution! You will be judged by the Lord (Matt. 7:2; I Cor. 11:30-32). The judgment maybe on your health, your finances, your spouse, your children, your relationships, or the church you are a member of.

We have *no right* to judge *unless* we have judged ourselves first. Our rights and responsibilities to judge others

Self-judgment is beneficial.

Self-Judgment is beneficial to others. It gives us power to *help* those in need (Matt 7:5). The God honoring purpose in our judging others is to *help* them. The illustration Jesus gave in Matthew 7 involves someone who needed help with a "mote" in their eye. The mote was a foreign object in the eye that affected their vision and caused pain. The individual needed help and relief. But without self-examination one could not be a help to others. We must first examine ourselves and seek *correction* from the Lord in our own lives *before* we can be a real help to others (Psa. 51:1-4, 7-13).

Self-Judgment is also beneficial to ourselves. God's dealings with those around us should move us to self-judgment. This truth can be seen at the church at Corinth (I Cor. 11:12-34). There were many weak, sickly, and dead "**among**" those at the Church at Corinth. God's judgment on those around them should have moved them to evaluate their *own lives first*! Too often God's judgments on others move us to judge others *first*. We have a right and responsibility to judge others, but that is *secondary*! The *first*

lesson *must be, what about me?* Where do I fit into this situation? What am I doing to help or hinder? Am I next? Do I deserve this same judgment? So, **"let a man examine himself"**.

Self-judging protects us from the Lord judging us. **"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."** (I Cor. 11:31). We have a choice! Judge self or the Lord will Judge you! Judge your motives, your actions, your attitude, your will, your heart —by the Scriptures—or be judged by the Lord!

Self-judging makes us obedient children, for **"But let a man examine himself"** (I Cor. 11:27) and **"examine yourselves"** (II Cor. 13:5) are commands of Scripture. There is joy, peace, and rest in obedience.

Self-judging gives us the proper attitude in our judgments. We will never be able to properly judge others unless we are careful to judge our own selves *first*. We may judge others, and even be right about the judgments we make, but the results will be flawed because we have *failed* in God's required *first* Judgment. The failure to judge self will lead to hypocrisy, pride, self righteousness... which all

lead to destruction.

Self-judging will help keep *grace* and *mercy* before our eyes (I Cor. 15:9-10; Psalm 32:1-5, 10). As we judge others with righteous judgment, we will be *forced* to see ourselves in view of *grace*. We will be forced to have compassion on those we judge. It will keep before us the truth of our neediness before the Lord.

Self-judging will keep our motive for judgment in perspective. As we judge ourselves, we will be forced to examine *why* we are judging. Why are *you* judging? Why are *you* judging this situation? Do *you* judge others to draw attention away from *your* own sin? Do *you* judge others to ease *your* own guilt? What is your motive in judging any judgment? God knows! Do *you*?

May this vital teaching of our Lord move us to see the seriousness of setting in the seat of judgment. Without doubt we must set in judgment. We have been called to it. But, let us with fear and trembling judge righteous judgments starting with a fair, true, honest, and biblical examination of our own selves so we may glorify God and be a blessing to others. **Ω**

"Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy." — Proverbs 31:9

The Gospel is for Everyone

Pastor Lewis Kiger
Memorial Heights Baptist Church
Perry, Georgia



Allow me to begin with a structured, they are Holy Spirit-simple truth; the Bible is it situated in order to drive an amazing book. The more home eternal truths. Allow me someone honestly and humbly to give you just one example studies Scripture, the more of what I mean.

amazed they will become at In John chapter three we the beauty, transcendence, are introduced to Nicodemus, and excellence of God's a religious leader of the Jewish Word. *Frankly, there is no ish Sanhedrin. In John chapter book like the Bible.* The providential wisdom of the Holy an that Jesus encountered at Spirit's work of governing men Jacob's well. *To put it mildly, not only to write what they these two individuals are did, but to also arrange their about as different as different writings in the deliberate can be.*

manner in which they did—is Nicodemus was a well-respected, religious male Jew. simply beyond human comprehension or explanation. As The unnamed woman at the our church continues to work well was a social outcast and our way sequentially through was considered by the Jews of entire books of the Bible, we her day to be of impure blood; are learning afresh just how a "half-breed" as it were, because her family lineage was a magnificently the inspired authors tied thoughts and ideas mix of Jew and Gentile. Nicodemus hailed from the city of together in a way that is Jerusalem, educated in the above and beyond any intellectual work of men. The law of Moses and by every Scriptures are inarguably of outward standard, a very Divine origin. moral man. The woman at the

Case in point, it was not well was an uneducated, immoral, five-time divorced female until we began a verse-by-verse exposition of John's male from Samaria, shunned Gospel that it became abundantly clear, the Apostle's living with a man outside the writings are not just skillfully covenant of marriage.

As if these comparisons female, Jew or Gentile —you are not obvious enough, consider this; in John chapter three Nicodemus came to find Jesus. In John chapter four, Jesus came to find this woman (John 4:4). Nicodemus, for whatever reason, came late at night under the cover of darkness to seek out Jesus, in contrast to Jesus who came to the woman at the well in the middle of the day. Then finally, we see that Nicodemus came to ask Jesus questions, but Jesus came to Jacob's well to ask this woman questions.

Take note dear friends, these two stories are not told back-to-back simply by random coincidence. Instead, *this is by Divine design*. What John and Jesus and the Holy Spirit would have us learn by these two contrasting real-life narratives is this—*Jesus and His Gospel is for everyone*. These stories are purposefully arranged to make every reader aware; that no matter who you are, where you are from, how religious you are, how immoral you are, or whether you are looking for answers or looking to be left alone ... *you need Christ*.

Both Nicodemus and this woman at the well, with all their differences, shared the same need—they both needed Jesus and His Gospel. Please hear me dear friend, regardless of whether you are educated or uneducated, male or

female, Jew or Gentile —you *need Jesus*. Whether you are rich or poor, shunned by society or high-society, you need Christ. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is for religious people and irreligious people. The reconciling work of Christ is Good News for every person on the planet no matter who they are or what they have done. This is exactly why the Holy Spirit inspired John to record both these stories and strategically arrange them in the way he did.

Can you not see the unparalleled wisdom of God in teaching deep eternal spiritual truths in the simplest of ways? By paralleling these two very different events of these two very different individuals, we learn one all-important truth—*all people everywhere need Jesus*. Nicodemus needed to be born-again, so do we. This woman at the well needed soul-satisfying Living Water, so do we. Whether you are someone like this religious man, or someone like this Samaritan woman, we are all looking for satisfaction and fulfillment that in truth, only God can provide. Trust in Him.

As I said in the beginning, the Bible truly is an amazing book. Read it, learn it, believe it, love it, live it and share it.

Because *Jesus and His Gospel is for everyone*. Ω