



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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NO HOPE, FALSE HOPE, AND THE BLESSED HOPE

By Wayne Camp

SCRIPTURE: I Thes. 4:13-18

TEXT: *1 Thessalonians 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

Ephesians 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

INTRO: Several years ago a person who shall remain anonymous was killed when a tree he

had cut on a previous day fell on him as he walked under it on Monday. This person had cut the tree on a previous day and it had lodged in another tree and had been there two or three days, at least. On Monday, as he walked under it, a gust of wind dislodged the tree and it came down on him, bursting his skull and he died shortly after his brother and dad found him. They called it a freak accident; I call it Divine providence. It is no accident when a tree lodges and stays for several days and then just as he walks under it, just the right amount of wind from exactly the right direction comes along and dislodges it. It had been windy all day and he had just gone down to cut some logs and had **(See HOPE, NO HOPE, Cont. P. 6, Rt. Col.)**

“Three Positions”

Bro. Bill Lee

Preached at Central Baptist Church 1-25-09

Look with me in your Bibles to the Book of Ephesians to Chapter Two. I would like for us to read verses 11-13. ***“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; (12) That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”*** Now, hold your place in Ephesians and turn with

me to the Book of Philippians 1:23, ***“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”***

My subject this evening is “Three Positions”. In Ephesians 2:12 Paul stated, ***“That at that time ye were without Christ”***. In Ephesians 2:13 he said, ***“but now in Christ”***. Then in Philippians 1:23, he speaks of being ***“with Christ.”*** These are our three positions: Without Christ—In Christ—With Christ.

We begin with our first position in Ephesians 2:12: ***“at that time ye were without Christ”***. Paul had said in verse 11; ***“Wherefore***

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remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands". In the first three verses of chapter two Paul had reminded the Ephesians, and he reminds us also, of their state by nature. In verse 1, he stated we were dead in trespasses and sin. We could sum up verse 2 by saying that we were followers of Satan, walking after the course of this world. In verse 3, we were children of wrath, or wrathful behavior, even as others.

Human language has a great difficulty in at least two things. The first is in being able to fully describe the glory of God. Human language just seems to fail when we want to describe the glory of our God. But, it also seems to fail when we seek to describe the sinfulness and the depravity of man. There are many different phrases in the Scripture that are used to describe this state, but the Apostle Paul, in verse 12, seems to just sum it up with these words; **"ye were without Christ"**. This is the most desperate state a person can be in, to be without Christ. I cannot imagine a more terrible condition than to be without Christ! If you wanted to describe the awfulness of hell you could also sum it up with those same words; "without Christ." There is not a more terrible state imaginable than for an individual to be without Christ.

Also observe in verse 12, those without Christ are also "without God". And they are also without hope. There are some, in their false religions, who say they have God but want no part of the Lord Jesus Christ. They would affirm they believe in God, but they do not believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This kind of religion is a farce, it is a hoax, and those who adhere to this are yet in their sins. For you cannot have God without also having the Lord Jesus Christ. It is impossible! In verse 12, those who are without Christ are also without God. And, Paul said, "having no hope". Again, there are those in various religions upon this earth who say they believe in the same God we do, but they just do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, they do not believe in the same God we do! Those who are without Christ are also without God.

WITHOUT CHRIST

Consider our previous condition and position; being dead in trespasses and sin, and being without Christ. Those who are without Christ are without a Savior. Those who are without Christ, being without a Savior, are without heaven. There is no heaven without Christ. There is no access to the Father without the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, those who are without Christ are without a Savior, without God, without

heaven, and they have no peace. If you will notice in verse 14, Paul tells us Christ “is our peace”. Those who are without Christ have no peace! Think of the countless millions upon this earth who are in a religion that says they have God, but they don’t have Christ. They are without redemption. They have no Savior. They have no hope. They have no peace.

In verse 13, you will notice they are “far off”. And this was our position by nature. We were far off! I will mention once again, human language seems to fail in adequately describing our sinful and depraved state by nature. Human language cannot adequately express just how separated we were from God. To be without Christ is to be **far off!** We were “far off” from a relationship with God. We were “far off” from the knowledge of God. We were “far off” from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Separated from God! In our natural position of being without Christ, we were so far off from God that we were without Christ, and without hope.

In the Scriptures there are many words used to describe an individual in this desperate and despicable state of nature. There are many terms we use to try to describe how we were before the Lord saved us. You could say we were sinners, and depraved. You could say we were lost and unbelievers. There are many terms and words we could use to describe our state by nature. But we could never say it any more graphically than Paul does in our text; we were without Christ, without God, without hope and without peace. This was our state by nature. Without Christ!

IN CHRIST

Now notice verse 13 of our text. Here is our second position, “**in Christ!**” Notice Paul said, “**But now**”. These words are drawing a contrast between our state of sin and our state of grace. At that time, in our state by nature, we were without Christ, and without God. “**But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ**”. How thankful we ought to be for such words as we find in verse 13. “**But now!**” There is a difference now. Our position now is different than what it was before. Before it was without

Christ, but now it is in Christ! Again, you could not draw a more startling contrast than you find in these words.

If you look back to verse 4, you will find another contrast. In the first three verses of chapter two Paul had stated very clearly our first position, but then in verse 4 he said, “**But God**”. In verses 11 and 12 Paul clearly stated our first position, but then in verse 13 he said, “**But now**”. Again, in our first position we were “without Christ”. “But now” we are in our second position. Now we are “in Christ”.

I think we ought to mention here, there is a sense in which these Ephesians, as well as you and I, have always been in Christ. We were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Paul told us this back in chapter one, verse 4: “**According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world....**” There is a sense, because election is eternal, those who were chosen in Christ have eternally been in Christ. But, there is also a sense in which we are “now in Christ Jesus”. We are “now in Christ Jesus” experientially through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. By regeneration and the new birth, and God giving us faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are experientially in Christ. This is the “**but now**” of verse 13. In verse 12, in our first position, we were without Christ. Even though eternally chosen in Him, experientially we were without Christ, and without God in the world. But through the working of the Holy Spirit, through divine intervention, through faith that is given to those who are chosen in Christ, we believe in Him, we trust in Him. And there is a sense in which then, and only then, we are “in Christ”.

As an unbeliever you were without Christ, and without God in the world. Go with me to the Book of Romans just a moment. I want to read you what the Apostle Paul had to say in Romans 16:7; “**Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles,**”. Now, note this – “**who also were in Christ before me**”. This just simply means they were believers in Christ before the Lord appeared unto Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road. They were experientially in Christ before the Apostle Paul. This is why Paul would write in our text of a time

“ye were without Christ”. Then he would write, “But now” you are “in Christ”.

While you are in Romans look with me in Romans 8:1; **“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus....”**. Notice the word “now” in this verse. Remember our text in Ephesians 2:13 says, “But now in Christ Jesus”. Here in Romans 8:1 Paul said, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”. Paul said “now” there is no condemnation, but what about before this “now”? We have gone over this several times, but I want us to look at this again. In John 3:18 we read; “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” In Romans 8:1 Paul wrote, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*”. But the words of John 3:18 are, “he that believeth not is condemned already”.

As unbelievers we were under condemnation. If you look over to verse 36 you will find the wrath of God was abiding upon us as unbelievers. I try to emphasize over and over again the fact: We were saved from something! We were in danger, or we would not have needed salvation. We were in jeopardy. We were living our life in that first position without Christ, with the wrath of God just hovering over us and abiding upon us. We were under condemnation “but now”, by God granting us faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been delivered from the wrath to come. Our second position is “in Christ”.

We can view ourselves as being “in Christ” first of all by divine election. But also we are “in Christ” in and through the faith that God has given unto to us. This fact is further illustrated by comparing some other Scriptures. First, look in Galatians 3:26 where we read, **“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”**. Paul states very plainly we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. But we also read in the Scriptures where Jesus said, **“Behold I the children which God hath given me”**, Hebrews 2:13. In a sense, we have always been His children and as His children we

were given to the Lord Jesus Christ. But there is also a sense in which we are His children by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you look at verse 27 **“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”** My subject is not baptism, so I will not deal with all of the particulars of this verse, but suffice it to say scriptural baptism is believers’ baptism. And we know we are robed in His righteousness. We have, as the Apostle states, “put on Christ”. And if we have put Him on, we are in Him. We are “in Christ”. I’ll put it this way, and I know it is a crude way to put it, you put on your clothes, and therefore, you are in your clothes. And we have “put on Christ” by believing upon Him and we thereby we are in Him. We are “now” in the Lord Jesus Christ.

WITH CHRIST

In our first position we were “without Christ”. In our second position we are “in Christ”. And in Philippians 1:23 Paul states our third position. He speaks of our being “with Christ”. Do you notice the progression in these three positions? And what a progression we have, stated in these three texts. And they just keep getting better and better. By nature we were in the worst possible position imaginable, being “without Christ. Then through the grace of God, we are “in Christ”. And now the apostle speaks of our being “with Christ”. Paul wrote in Philippians 1:23, **“I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be *with Christ*; which is far better”**.

Paul said, “I am in a strait”. I am in a narrow place. I’ve got something on both sides of me, really applying pressure on both sides. It is sort of like being in a dilemma, caught between two opposing forces. Paul said, “I am in a strait between these two”. He had a desire to depart and to be “with Christ”, and he said, this is “far better”. He is here speaking of the fact it would be far better for him to be with Lord than to remain in this world. But he also points out in verse 24 that it would not be “far better” for the Philippians for Paul to depart. He said, **“Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more *needful for you*”**.

Paul said, “I am caught between these two

opposing things”: to depart and be “with Christ” and to “abide in the flesh” and continue my work. I think all Christians can to some degree relate to this. I have no doubt that for me, it would be “far better” for me to die and my spirit return to God, and me be with the Lord Jesus Christ. You and I, as Christians, could not have anything better happen to us than to die right now and immediately be in the presence of the Lord. But on the other hand, there is still work for us to do. And we are caught between these two.

I mentioned a moment ago, if you wanted to describe hell you could not describe it in any better terms than to be “without Christ”. Now I will say, if you want to describe Heaven in the best possible words, here they are: “to be with Christ”. You know, we are told many things about Heaven and about the New Jerusalem. And all these things fascinate us. But nothing fascinates me any more than the assurance that I am going “to be with Christ”. This fact really fascinates me!

And, there is not a mortal mind upon this earth with the ability to even imagine how it is going to be when we are “with Christ”. What a blessed thought; one day we will be “with Christ”! Notice again Philippians 1:23, Paul said, “*which is far better*”. Not just better. Being “with Christ” is FAR better than remaining here upon this earth. Even though we know it is needful for us to remain here until we have finished our course, we know it is going to be “far better” when we “depart to be with Christ”. When a saint dies we do not sorrow as others who have no hope. We can even rejoice and give thanks unto God, for we know they are now “with Christ”.

In John 17:24 we are given a little more insight into what it is going to be like when we are “with Christ”. Jesus said, “***Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory***”. It would be more than good enough for all of us just to be with Him where He is. But think for a moment, He added that we will behold His glory. Hold your place here in John 17 and go with me to I John 3: 2; “***Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know***

that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”. We shall see Him “as He is”! To see Him as He is, is to behold His glory! You cannot see Him as He is without beholding His glory.

You will notice this verse does not say we’ll see Him as He was. I have no desire to see Him as He was. I have no desire to see Him as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. I have no desire to see Him as He was when in a state of humiliation. I am going to add this, and I hope you understand this: I have no desire to see Him as He is, as I am now! I don’t want to see Him as He is, as I am now, because now I am not able to bear it. I am not capable. I want to see Him as He is when I am glorified together with Him. That is the way and the time God has ordained it, and I know this is “far better”. Then, and only then, will I be able to comprehend more and understand more about the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I were to see Him as He is, in the state that I am in now, I couldn’t stand it. I couldn’t comprehend it. But isn’t it a blessing to know, when we are changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, involved in that change is we are going to be given the capacity to behold His glory.

Let’s go back to John 17:24 and this portion of the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is Jesus speaking to His Father, expressing His will to the Father. He said, “***Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me...***”. This is what Paul is speaking of in our text in Philippians 1:23. This is our future position, to be “with Christ”. And Jesus states the reason He wants us to be with Him. It’s not because He needs companions. He doesn’t need someone else with Him just to keep Him company. He is speaking in grace and in love concerning those for whom He died. It is His desire that those whom the Father has given Him, verse 2, be with Him where He is, that they may be able to behold His glory. What a wonderful thought, it is the prayer of Jesus that we be “with Him”.

In John 14:3 Jesus said, “***and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also***”. Notice the words, “that where I am, there ye may be also”. To be

where He is, is going to be glory. I don't care about anything else. Just to be there with Jesus is all I desire. There is something terribly wrong with people whose total concept of Heaven is walking on the street of gold, sitting on a throne and wearing a crown. There is something wrong with that concept and something wrong with that individual. Heaven, to sum it up, will be to be "with Christ"!

In John 12:26 Jesus said, ***"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be."*** Where I am, that is where my servant shall be! In I Thessalonians 4:16 Paul wrote; ***"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*** Ever be with the Lord! It is overwhelming when you think about it, being forever with the Lord. In verse 18 Paul wrote, ***"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."*** Well, I find a lot of comfort here! I find comfort here 365 days a year. I find comfort here in this life! There is comfort in these words, just in knowing we are going to be with Christ. Notice the words recorded in Romans 8:18; ***"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"***. Nothing of this life is comparable to our being "with Christ".

There is one more place I want us to look, I Corinthians 13:12. Before I read this let me say that now our only glimpse of Jesus is in the confines of the word of God. This is the only means we have now of seeing Jesus and knowing Jesus. If you think you know anything at all about Jesus that is not revealed in God's word, you had better be very careful. The Bible states, "we see Jesus", Hebrews 2:9. We do now see Jesus. We see Him with the eyes of faith. But true faith will always carry you to the word of God. True faith will never carry you from the word of God. In I Corinthians 13:12 Paul said, ***"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."*** FACE TO FACE! Surely to depart and be with Christ is far

better.

These are our three positions: ***Without Christ—In Christ—With Christ!***

(HOPE, NO HOPE, FALSE HOPE, Continued) ever started his saw when it happened.

But, that is not the purpose of this message. What I am about to relate I have seen and heard at many funerals. At the funeral home before and during the funeral I saw people who, it was apparent, had no hope. They were unsaved and there was no evidence that they believed the deceased had any hope. There was a second group of people who were grasping at what I believe was false hope. The three preachers who participated in the funeral seemed to be trying to out do each other in fostering this false hope. They tried to convince all present that the deceased was a Christian because of a profession of faith he made some years before. After the funeral, a family member, without my making any comment on this whatever said, "Wayne, he made a profession of faith but he just drifted in and out of church, never giving any real evidence of having been truly saved." I have never, in all my years of being associated with funerals, seen such a concerted effort by preachers to give hope when there were no apparent grounds for so doing. They kept qualifying their statements with the expression, "We know the deceased was a long way from perfect, but he got saved and he is in heaven today."

There were some who evidently were true believers in Christ who have hope for their own future though they may have had no hope for the deceased.

The deceased was the classic "good ole boy" from the country. He was a good neighbor, a friend to many, and was mourned by several hundred people, over 400 at his visitation and probably \$2000.00 or more worth of flowers at his funeral. But, none of that will merit him one thing in the sight of God. He may be in heaven today, or he may be in hell. But, I was sickened at the false hope that was propagated by those three preachers. As I said earlier, I have seen and heard the same thing at many other funerals. I have also had people try to convince me that I should preach a similar message to what I heard at this funeral. As I observed all of

these things and listened to the different people talking including the preachers I thought of the subject that I'm going to speak on. I preached it 12 years ago and do not recall preaching it again since that time.

My subject is **NO HOPE, FALSE HOPE, AND THE BLESSED HOPE.**

CONSIDER FIRST THAT THERE ARE FOLKS WHO HAVE NO HOPE

The reprobate has no hope. **Ephesians 2:12** *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*

This verse speaks of those centuries before God began calling out of the Gentiles a people for his name. For the most part the Gentiles during that time were reprobates without hope.

It can also be applied to any person who is not in Christ at this present time—such a person is without hope.

In the days of Jesus Christ there were those who had no hope. He declared their unbelief and failure to come to him was grounded in the fact they were not of his sheep. **John 10:26** *But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.*

He spoke of others who could not believe because God had justly and judicially blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so they could not believe. **John 12:39-40** *Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.*

Paul spoke of other people who had and have no hope. He declared them to be vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. **Romans 9:22** *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.*

He spoke of those whom God had given up to uncleanness because of the lusts of their own heart. **Romans 1:21-24** *Because that, when*

they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.

These have also been given up to vile affections epitomized by the vile affections of the lesbian and homosexual. **Romans 1:25-27** *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. 26 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: 27 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.*

These and others of their character have been given over to a reprobate mind and those who have been given over to a reprobate mind have no hope. **Romans 1:28-32** *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; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

Let me also say, that humanly speaking, no unbeliever has any hope. **1 Thessalonians 4:13** *But I would not have you to be ignorant,*

brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

All unbelievers stand condemned before God and no one who is condemned before God could have any hope. **John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

All unbelievers are under the abiding wrath of God and no one under the abiding wrath of God has any grounds to hope in the Lord. **John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

These that I have mentioned have no reason to expect anything but judgment before God and hell for eternity. In the case of unbelievers, there are some who will one day have hope, but in unbelief there is no ground for hope.

THERE ARE ALSO FOLKS WHO HAVE A FALSE HOPE

There is the false hope of the hypocrite, a hope which will perish. **Job 8:13-14 So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: 14 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.**

There is the false hope which some of the wicked have. **Job 11:20 But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.** The wicked may expect to someday give up his wickedness and be saved. Or he may expect God to save him ultimately in spite of his wickedness. **Proverbs 10:28 The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. Proverbs 11:7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.**

There are those who trust in money and wealth to sustain them but they have a false hope. **Job 31:24-28 If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; 25 If I rejoiced because my**

wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; 26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; 27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: 28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.

Hope that is in a bank account is a false, uncertain hope. **1 Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.** There is no amount of money that can buy health or salvation.

There is the false religionist who has done many works in the name of Christ whose hope is a false hope. **Matthew 7:21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

THERE ARE THOSE WHO REJOICE IN THE BLESSED HOPE

We are very blessed when we are given the grace to look only to the blessed Trinity as our hope. **Jeremiah 17:7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.**

The Lord is the hope of his people, be it the elect remnant of Israel or the chosen among the Gentiles who have trusted him. **Joel 3:16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.**

David rested in this blessed hope. **Acts 2:26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope.**

False hope will one day be a shame to those

who rested in it; the blessed hope we have in Christ will never make us ashamed. **Romans 5:5** *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

The blessed hope carries one beyond this life into eternity. **Titus 3:7** *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

This hope is grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ who is in us. **Colossians 1:27** *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.* **1 Timothy 1:1** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.*

This blessed hope is eternal and infallible to all that truly believe on Christ. **Titus 1:2** *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.*

This blessed hope, and its fulfillment, is the expectation of every true believer in Christ. **Titus 2:13** *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Those who have this hope will manifest it. **1 John 3:1-3** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

This blessed hope is the anchor of our soul **Hebrews 6:18-19** *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.*

This blessed hope is our comfort in time of sorrow. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** *But I would*

not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

This blessed hope of those whose faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ is a living hope. **1 Peter 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

CONCLUSION

If we have this blessed hope that is in Christ it will so affect our lives that no preacher will need to be apologizing for our manner of life while trying to convince our loved ones that we really were saved even though our lives did not manifest that. **1 John 3:3** *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

QUOTES FROM THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

[EDITOR'S NOTE: I have not altered the quote's below at all. I have inserted scriptures where only references were given. I have made typographical corrections and inserted a missing word or two where needed. But I repeat I have left the quotes intact just as they were in the Baptist Examiner. I believe the oldest quote in this goes back to 1940. All may not agree with what these brethren of a few decades

ago held as to church organization and operation. These were their convictions.]

I would like to know.

What is the least number that can be organized into a church?

The master started with four. Read Mt. 4:18-22. I think right there was the beginning of the first Baptist Church the world ever saw. Possibly it would be all right to organize with even two. Read Mt. 18:20. [John R. Gilpin. TBE 3-30-40. P. 2].

REDELEGATED AUTHORITY

If church authority is re-delegable, then Catholics have priority of claim over us Baptists. Church authority is not re-delegable, and for Baptists to practice it is to betray the Lord. [Lee Rector. Christ and His ...Authority. TBE. 9-11-43. P. 2].

WHAT ARE THE REAL PREREQUISITES OF A MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH?

1. The organization must hold up the standard of a regular membership.
2. The organization must have a proper conception of Scriptural baptism.

I am perfectly ready to grant that I would like for every church to be sound in "all things" of God's Word. However, though that organization might be heretical on some of these, if it is sound in regeneration and baptism, it is still a Missionary Baptist Church. [TBE. 3-1-47. P. 1. John Gilpin.]

WHAT A CHURCH IS IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD?

Baptists believe that a church of Jesus Christ is a body of baptized believers, associated together in **one place** [emphasis mine, RWC] to preach the gospel, to keep the ordinances and represent the interests of Christ's Kingdom in the world. [TBE. 2-12-49. P. 1. J. G. Bow].

A Baptist church is an independent Church. A Baptist Church is its own governing body. Why is this? Because the NT churches were independent in their organization and

government. [TBE. 5-9-53. P. 1. Frank Beck].

HOW NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES SHOULD BE ORGANIZED TO BE SCRIPTURAL AS TO PRACTICE?

This challenge is laid down. Search the NT through and through and if you can anywhere find a passage that authorizes us to tack on such accessories and "gadgets" as Baptists have tacked on to their churches, then I will surrender my present position. The question is not to be settled according to "what other churches **HAVE** or what they **DO**."

The question should be settled on the basis of what the NT teaches. Other denominations justify the existence of such "practices as infant baptism on the same ground that Baptists justify their auxiliaries and their ecclesiastical system.

Is the Lord desirous that we shall do things as He says?

Let us see.

The tabernacle of the Jews was a type of the church. Was the Lord careful about the tabernacle being built exactly according to His specifications"? Read the following references. **Exodus 26:30 And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount. Exodus 25:9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. Exodus 25:40 And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount. Exodus 27:8 Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it. Acts 7:44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Hebrews 8:5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.** [I have corrected some scriptures and inserted others. RWC]

It is just as essential that we carry on a church according to the "pattern shown us" in the NT, as it was that the Jews carry on the building of the tabernacle according to the "pattern shown" them. If we do this, we shall not have all sorts of things that are not warranted in the Bible.

How does the Lord regard the changing of His way?

Read: **1 Chronicles 15:1-2 And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. 2 Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. 1 Chronicles 15:14-15 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. 15 And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD.**

Now read: **1 Chronicles 13:7-10 7 And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. 8 And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. 9 And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. 10 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.**

All of the modern innovations in use, not authorized by the Bible, are in the nature of "new carts" for the "ark of the Lord."

How should a church be organized? And how carry on its work?

It should be an independent, self-governing church, recognizing Jesus Christ as the only head. "Headquarters" should be in heaven.

It should have as an under shepherd a male pastor. (May the Lord bless the women. They are worth their weight in gold, but they have no authority to preach.)

It should have deacons, associated with the pastor.

It should not separate and divide the church up into factions.

The New Testament Plan Of Organization

Each church, separate, independent, self-governing. (No church or group in N.T. Times interfered with another church.)

Each church was a democracy. (Cf. Acts 6:5, "multitude" of the church chose deacons. This is but one example that shows democracy.)

Officers: just two, pastors and deacons. (Philipp. 1:1). But we have increased these until there are all sorts of "presidents" and etc.

No graded ministry. Equality of pastors. Even the Apostle Peter was just an "elder" (1 Peter 5:1).

No super-church organizations. There was cooperation among churches but no coercion. (Read 2 Cor. 3: for example.)

No complex local church organization. Every auxiliary exists without any Bible precedent or authority. They are largely responsible for the worldliness and failure along missionary lines, and for gossip and church quarrels. [TBE. 6-5-48. P. 1. Roy Mason].

From *The Exceeding Riches of the Manifold Grace of God*

By J. B. Moody

Hall-Moody Institute, Martin, TN., reprinted in 1993 by Stacy Printing Co, Buffalo, IA, Pages 172-173

[**Editor's Note:** I heard a preacher say recently, "The one thing that determines whether or not you go to heaven is your own free will." When I heard him make that statement I thought of the following article which I had on file.]

"Some think that this whole provision of grace might have resulted in the salvation of all, or none. That God provided only a possibility of salvation, and that to all alike. Or, that God provided the remedies for man's ailments, and the rest is left with the sinner. I have heard it urged in revivals that God has done all he can, or will do, and the rest is left to the choice of the

sinner; (led captive by the devil at his will). Hence they have invented a very suitable "scheme" which they call "The Remedial Scheme of Salvation." That is, grace has provided the remedies, and man must use the remedies; and that salvation is conditioned on his right use of these remedies. I reject the "Scheme" in toto. For such is the nature of sin and the condition of the sinner, that no remedies can reach his case. Is there any remedy for deafness? for blindness? for death? No. There are remedies for partial deafness, blindness and death, but when the fullness of these states has come, the doctor will dismiss the patient, or you will dismiss the doctor.

Now these states, or conditions, are applied to the sinner, and I protest against any doctor of divinity plying his remedies. Remedies are deceptive. They are utterly and infinitely inadequate. Not even "the influence of the Holy Spirit" is sufficient. After all Christ has done, it takes POWER, creative power, regenerating power, the power that raised Christ from the dead. A hundred pounds of embalming materials might have preserved the body of Christ from putrefaction, but no amount of remedies could have raised him from the dead. I may use means to convince men's minds, so they will have worldly sorrow, and that is my duty; but only the Holy Spirit can convict his heart so as to produce Godly sorrow for sin that works repentance unto salvation. I may, by the use of means, change a man's mind, and that is repentance; but as long as he has "an impenitent heart " toward God, his repentance will not be "unto life." The whole work is primarily of God, and secondarily of man. The sinner must repent, pray and believe, as he is moved upon by the Holy Spirit, otherwise he will fall short of the spiritual requirements of Christ's religion. Hence we must pray and wait for the Holy Spirit to work with us. Hence to make repentance, etc., conditions of salvation, as is common to do, is to bind heavier the chains of law, for these are spiritual exercises, and the sinner is not spiritual. I can help a man to hear, if God will give him the gift of hearing. Means and remedies improve hearing, but produce it never. If God has given a man the gift of sight, it may be improved, but not otherwise."

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