I am greatly grieved when I see those who were once faithful in public worship, by degrees, absenting themselves from the assembly of the saints. I am grieved for them because I know what their absence indicates about them, what their absence says to those they influence, and what distress their absence causes the saints of God who care deeply for their souls. Don Fortner

"Thinking that I deserve heaven is a sure sign I have no understanding of the Gospel." Sinclair Ferguson

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

- 44. Q. What is the duty which God requireth of man?
 - A. The duty which God requireth of man is, obedience to his revealed will (Mic 6:8; 1 Sam. 15:22).
- 45. Q. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?
- A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law (Rom. 2; 14, 15, and 10:5).
- 46. Q. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?
 - A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments (Deut. 10:4; Mt. 19:17).

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Sunday Morning 11:00 AM
Sunday Evening 6:00 PM
Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM
WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

"The Pillar and ground of the Truth" -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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DESPISERS BEWARE

Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Acts 13:40-41

Unbelief is the ultimate sin in that it confirms one in all other sin and sins. In that our Lord came preaching "repent ye and believe the Gospel," to refuse the message and the messenger is to treat both with contempt. Samuel minced no words as to the seriousness of this matter in passing sentence on Saul. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. 1 Samuel 15:23. We read that Christ marveled at the unbelief of many. The term "unbelief" is often used with regard to weak faith and our Lord often chided the Apostles on that account. So it was with the father seeking deliverance for his child. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. Mark 9:24. But the unbelief that is identified here is of a far baser sort and elicits a strong warning from Paul to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia.

This warning comes after a powerful and precious declaration of the resurrection of Christ as answer to what had been promised in the Old Testament Scripture. The message is one that is timeless in its application wherever the Gospel is preached. It is only through Christ that forgiveness may be had because by His sacrifice the basis for it was accomplished. Furthermore, righteous justification could only be realized through faith in Him. And so it was

declared in the verse before: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Acts 13:39. To all that believe, these words are gladly received, closely guarded in their hearts and rejoiced in as the Gospel indeed. It was no doubt from sensing the anger that was arising among these Jews that Paul issued the warning.

The quote in verse 41 is from Habakkuk 1:5 where the prophet warned of the impending captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians. A similar reference is found elsewhere. Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Isaiah 28:14. In any event, Paul abruptly ended His discourse with an emphatic application of these warnings. Some think that the reference here is to the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A. D. However, this appears in the context of their unbelief and rejection of the Gospel. Certainly that event constituted a finality of God's dealings with them as a nation at that time. But the far greater calamity was that which befalls all who persist and ultimately die in unbelief.

Paul had preached powerfully as ever in showing what Messiah must do and that Jesus was the Messiah. He had spoken often of wonders and miracles the greatest of which was the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He, no doubt, told them of the testimony of the Apostles and the eyewitness account of above

five hundred of which many were still alive. For all of the correlation of the Old Testament prophecies with the appearance of Christ, His work, His sacrifice and His resurrection, they persisted in their unbelief.

The prophecy that Paul now presents to them is that indeed many would hear this message most wonderfully told and persist in their unbelief. On such cases no amount of human wisdom or persuasion would prevail to change their hardened hearts. The specific warning to them was that they should be concerned to be found as the ones of whom the prophet had spoken. These would be those of whom Isaiah spoke. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Isaiah 6:9. These are they whom Paul addresses as "despisers." Many of them did follow Paul and Barnabas and were persuaded to continue in the Grace of God.

Paul adopted the words of the prophet here and there was no mistaking his application and his intent. Paul's words were consistent with their actions. There were three admonitions forthcoming. The first was to "Behold." The language here would have been most forceful and uttered with urgency. Much of what is preached today is true but is presented as optional. The defense of freewillism by many

has softened the approach and so there is hesitancy to enter one's personal space. The second of the observations or predictions was that they should wonder. The story of the incarnation, ministry, sacrifice and resurrection of Christ is fantastic and unbelievable from a human perspective. It produces wonder in the eyes (not necessarily the heart) of the beholder. An even greater wonder will surely appear to the despisers when they see the face of Him whom they have held in contempt. The final aspect of the prophet's word was that they would perish. Not just in the overthrow of an earthly city; rather forever out of the sight of the one they were loath to behold in this life.

We love to declare the wonders of the Grace of God. We delight to relate all that is true of our most Glorious God and our Savior Jesus Christ the Lord. We declare with confidence the message of a substitute on Calvary's cruel tree dying in our stead and our victorious Champion emerging victoriously over death, hell and the grave. We rejoice that our hope lives and His name is Jesus. We would have it to be heard and believed by all to whom we preach. But, unbelief of this message is met with an alternative that is as sure as the holiness of the One who declares it. So, we must add to that precious message – Beware that you are not the fulfillment of an awful prophecy. bhs

Stephen Charnock from: A Discourse of the Efficieny of Regeneration

Man, in all his capacities, is too weak to produce the work of regeneration in himself. This is not the birth of a darkened wisdom and an enslaved will. We affect a kind of divinity, and would centre ourselves in our own strength; therefore it is good to be sensible of our own impotency, that God may have the glory of his own grace, and we the comfort of it in a higher principle and higher power than our own...God challenges this work as his own, excluding the creature from a...ny share as a cause: Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, I will cleanse you, I will give you a new heart, I will put a new spirit into you, I will take away the heart of stone, 1 will give you a heart of flesh, I will put my Spirit into you.' Here I will no less than seven times. Nothing is allowed to man in the production of this work in the least; all that is done by him is the walking in God's statutes by virtue of this principle. The sanctifying

principle, the actual sanctification, the reception of it by the creature, the removal of all the obstructions of it, the principle maintaining it, are not in the least here attributed to the will of man. God appropriates all to himself. He does not say he would be man's assistant, as many men do, who tell us only of the assistance of the gospel, as if God in the gospel expected the first motions of the will of man to give him a rise for the acting of his grace. You see here he gives not an inch to the creature. To ascribe the first work, in any part, to the will of man, is to deprive God of half his due, to make him but a partner with his creature.

Pluck It Out
—Matt. 5:29-30—

The devastation of sin is all around us, yet we do all within our might to avoid it. It makes itself known in every facet of life—from heinous, unbelievable crimes, to rust on our cars—yet we continue to look the other way. What is wrong with us? Why can't we admit the self-evident? Why do we continue to deny the obvious?

Because of sin, of course!

From the birth of our self awareness we begin justifying our own sins, lying to ourselves as we say in the still of our hearts, "I will never taste death."

Though we are confronted with it every day, we tell ourselves, "It will never happen to me."

In our text today, our Lord tells us, quite emphatically, that our sin is what sends us to eternal hell, and if we hope to avoid that miserable end, we had better confront it in the most radical way. Sin is a cancer. It eats away at everything it touches. And it touches all. For men to understand the necessity of salvation, they must first recognize the devastation of their sin. As I have stated before, sin is a matter of the heart. For one to justify himself by his actions is to deny the very essence of his fallen nature. His own works of righteousness only worsens his estate. His good deeds merely puff him up. He looks at his own works and says to himself, "I'm upright. I am a good person. I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers... I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." (Luke 18:11-12)

The only remedy for sin is Christ, for only He is righteous. Only He can reach into the depths of a rebellious soul and deal with the root of the problem. Only Christ is able, for in His flawless life and vicarious death, the scourge of sin was dealt with forever, for He is the spotless "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

Beloved, sin is devastating! If your eye offends you, pluck it out! If your hand offends you, cut it off and throw it away! Repent! It is imperative that you be done with it!

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." —Rev. 12:10-11—

Paul Osborne (Pastor in Lima Ohio)

If a wicked man seems to have peace at death, it is not from the knowledge of his happiness--but from the ignorance of his danger! Thomas Watson