

People often question what God does because they don't understand that He can do anything He wants. They ask, "Why did God do that?" I've often replied, "Because He wanted to." He showed His sovereignty-His ultimate control of everything-in showing mercy to some like Isaac and Jacob, while hardening the hearts of others like Pharaoh (Rom. 9:6-21). To those who object to God's right to control such things, Paul said, "Who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? " (Romans 9:20-21). John MacArthur

GADSBY'S CATECHISM
by William Gadsby (about 1800)

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

Question LXVI. What is faith?

Answer. Faith is a grace of the Holy Spirit, whereby the sinner believes in God as He is revealed in His Word; and whereby he beholds and receives Jesus Christ as a Saviour just suited to his case in the glory of His Person, fulness, work, offices and relationship; and it is called "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Jn.6.29 & 16.13-14; Rom. 10.9-11; 1 Cor. 1.30; Eph. 2.8-10; Heb. 11.1.

Question LXVII. What is repentance unto life?

Answer. Repentance unto life is a grace of the Spirit, whereby a sinner, under a true sense of his sin, and an experimental acquaintance with God's pardoning mercy in Christ, does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God with full purpose of heart, and to serve the Lord in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Joel 2.12-13; Luke 23.40-42; Acts 2.37 & 5.31 & 11.18; Rom. 2.4; 2 Cor. 7.9-10; 1 Thess. 1.9.

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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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EXPERIENCE

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: Romans 5:3-4

A wise man once said that “not every experience is salvation, but salvation is an experience.” It is evident that with many the idea of experience stops with an initial event that has a momentary effect. Such happenings are often recounted with great confidence and, for them, are the sum total of their assurance of salvation. So it is that many speak of their salvation experience when they are referring to a singular event and not a life of continued involvement with the Lord. The context of this reference will certainly not admit such an interpretation of the word here. It is rather to be seen as the cumulative assurances given through the confirmation of the Lord’s presence in enduring tribulation whereby one senses divine acceptance and approval.

It is always a delight to read of something proceeding from the grace of God and wonderfully described by the Apostle. The fact of justification and its realization by faith and the peace that we have as a result is a matter of continuing delight by all true believers. Add to that the fact that we have, through our Lord Jesus Christ, access by faith into marvelous grace wherein we both “...stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” As if that is not enough, Paul delightfully adds, “And not only so...” The implication here is that we discover things about which the world has no knowledge. Paul was not some strange man who enjoyed pain and suffering. It was not the tribulations that gave him satisfaction; it was what

proceeded from it as evidence of God’s interest in Him. And, so it was, patience, or the ability to endure (rise above) suffering, had its perfect work with Him (see James 1:4). It produced *experience* which in turn established hope – Christ in you!

It is interesting to note that the word *experience* occurs only three times in scripture. In the first (Genesis 30:27) Jacob’s uncle Laban confessed that he had learned by experience that the Lord had blessed him for Jacob’s sake. In Ecclesiastes 1:16, the writer speaks of his own *experience of wisdom*. The first reference had little to do with the building of character. The second sees the writer as claiming the experience gained through the right exercise of wisdom as a credential. Prospective employers consider experience as high on the list of qualifications. So, it is to be feared that many professing Christians think in terms of personal accomplishment as qualification rather than seeing grace with no thought of personal worth. Consider Jacob: *I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Genesis 32:10.*

As we look at the use of the word *experience* in this context we surely must note its connection with trial and subsequent confirmation. Robert Haldane gives the following explanation: “The Greek word translated experience signifies trial or proof.

Here it means proof; for trial may detect a hypocrite as well as manifest a saint. But proof implies that the trial has proved the genuineness of the tried person, and also of the faithfulness and support of God, which will enable us to overcome every difficulty." Experience, like the other things mentioned here is a link in a chain that brings us to a productive hope in the God of our salvation. This part of it has to do with the very character of the people of God in that they show forth a developed confidence in the grace of God.

Two things are proven to the tried believer. The first is an enhanced confidence in God as he receives from God the strength, consolation and ability to look beyond the immediate circumstance. The second is the proof that he is the child of God indeed. He has read of the patience of Job. He has more especially learned of the suffering of Christ and His entrance into His glory. But, we have been made to know the hand of the Lord personally intervening and delivering us from all our fears. John Gill preciousy wrote: "As tribulations tend to exercise and increase patience, so patience being exercised and increased, enlarges the saint's stock and fund of experience; of the love and grace of God communicated to them at such seasons; of His faithfulness in fulfilling His promises; of His power in supporting them; and of their own frailty and weakness; and so are taught humility, thankfulness, and resignation to

the will of God..."

Thus we understand the ability of Paul to "glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Sadly, unlike Paul, many lack the spiritual ability to be troubled in a proper manner let alone to rejoice at an opportunity to watch the Lord work. Like the things that lead up to it and proceed from it, experience, thus considered, is a precious gift. It is not merely bestowed; it is gained by a divinely ordained process. From the Old Testament we read: *And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God. Zechariah 13:9.* From yet another commentator we read: "It is immediately clear that consciousness, on their part, of the fact that they have sustained the test, so that God's approval rests on them, will strengthen their hope (William Hendriksen)."

Paul's hope was not in what he had done; it was in knowing "Whom I have believed." His accumulation of experiences, as we understand the term, is unrivaled and he might have simply "rested on his laurels." But, these things had been imparted to his very character as proof that, of Christ he would say, "Whose I am and Whom I serve." O that we might truly possess our experience with Christ who is our "Blessed Hope!" *bhs*

JESUS IS GOD

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? John 14:8-9

Theologians have wrestled with the dual nature of the Lord Jesus since the beginning. On the one hand, there are those who deny or belittle His humanity, and on the other hand, these are those who deny His deity. Both natures are completely true: Jesus is fully human and fully God.

The prophets identified the coming Messiah as fully God. Isaiah 9:6 is the “naming” prophecy that specifies that the Messiah would be called “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The prince of peace.” Isaiah 7:14 specifies that “the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” Matthew quotes this passage and translates the Hebrew word Immanuel as “God with us” (Matthew 1:23)

The scriptures abound with this teaching.

- He is called the only begotten (John 1:14, 18; 3:16; 1 John 4:9).
- He is called the Son of God (John 3:18; 5:25; 9:35; 11:4).
- He is recognized as eternal (John 17:5, 24; Colossians 1:15; Micah 5:2)
- He has power of life in Himself (Romans 1:4; John 10:17-18; Colossians 1:18; Acts 13:32-33).
- He is given the inheritance of God (Hebrews 1:2; 3:4,6).
- He performed the works of God (John 10:36-38).
- Even the demons and Satan recognize Christ as God (Luke 4:41; Matt. 2:3, 6).

Henry Morris III

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD FOR OURSELVES

It is to be feared that many speak authoritatively concerning things of which they have no knowledge. That is not to say that they have not learned the facts with which they have to do. It is not even that they have not confirmed them in the mouth of learned men and experts on their subject. It is that they have not personally experienced and thereby known the reality of the things they convey. Some may argue that such knowledge is not always obtainable and that we must rely on the words of others. But, has not our Lord given to us the gift of faith whereby these things do come to us as firsthand information. John confirmed the reality of living truth in this way: *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. 1 John 5:12-13.* Do we then speak about the Lord and His truth or do we speak from the perspective of a personal relationship with Him. By faith we truly “see Jesus” (Hebrews 2:9).

Paul reminded the Ephesian Elders that his was a living testimony among them – he lived what he spoke. Consider this observation from R. C. H. Lenski with regard to the word “testifying” in Acts 20:21: “Paul’s own soul and person were put into all his announcing and his teaching... With his whole soul Paul believed and lived what he propounded to others. It welled up out of his own heart like a living stream. He did not have to put his heart into it; it came out of his heart. This is one secret of Paul’s power as missionary, preacher, and teacher. We can tell about it, but that helps very little. The fire of divine truth must catch in the heart, then the flames will glow in testimony and will set other hearts afire. It is like Paul’s tears – unknown language to all who do not know it from experience.”

Are repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ a matter of mere lip-service or are they a way of life lived in the presence of our Blessed Lord. *bhs*