

"God's grace is the originating cause of regeneration; the sinner's faith is the immediate effect. Unfortunately, many Christians think and speak as if it worked the other way around—as if a free-will act of faith from the sinner were the determining factor that enables God to bestow His saving grace."

- Dr. John MacArthur

“Sinners cannot obey the gospel, any more than the law, without renewal of heart.”

- J. I. Packer

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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47. Q. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves (Mt. 22:37-40).

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthjsi@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM – In Richwood

Services:

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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FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER

And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building. 1 Kings 6:7

Both the Wilderness Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple are central as we think of the types and shadows of Christ and the grand work of redemption. Intricate details of both were given with the understanding that they were essential. It was enough that the Lord so provided the specifications which were not subject to arbitration. But, such things pointed to the exacting details of all that Christ would be, what He would do, and what He would accomplish. Many have attempted to parallel every detail of these buildings with a specific trait or action, but we dare go no further than scripture. Some references are easily understood, while others are suggested and should be used where no violence is done to the Word of God.

In both cases, we witness an engineering and architectural marvel. While homes and other structures are often pre-fabricated, nothing would match such feats as are suggested here. While working as an engineer I often witnessed and participated in intricate construction plans both small and great. Often a note was added to some instruction saying, “field fabricate.” The meaning was that the designer was not sure and threw final responsibility to the craftsman to make it fit. This did not happen with the construction of the Temple. And so, every detail was attended to before construction began and there was never a need for the craftsman's tool. Everything perfectly fit in the place for which it was designed and made fully functional in the

predetermined manner. *Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house. Proverbs 24:27*

This picture finds no counterpart in popular religion and the thoughts that are often found in the preaching of false prophets. Their methods are to shape and fit people to a function that suits their needs. This would be equivalent to the stones being told to shape themselves and fit in as best you can. The result is a building in disarray and having no resemblance to that which God will indwell.

The inspired writers seem to make reference to the picture from Solomon's method. In writing to the Corinthians Paul declared: *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9.* The context indicates that the ministry was in view as functioning in the placing of people in “God's Building.” In this case, the Corinthian assembly was in view and the exhortation was that great care be given as to such building being permanent.

With Peter, the reference embraces both structure and function. *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:5.* In this same context, Christ is shown to be the Chief Cornerstone and so functioning in that building being built to precise specifications. God has never subjected Himself to the designs of men and is not waiting

to see the make-up of that with which He will occupy forevermore.

Again, the Apostle Paul writes to the Ephesians and presents a picture of organic functioning in that which is designed by God and whose function involves such a precious and living interaction of the several parts. In the Temple we might imagine that the builders marveled as they placed each stone in the intended place and saw the perfection that was unfolding before their eyes. Paul saw the Lord's work, through the Spirit perfecting that which was decreed by the Father and he marveled. And, so should we. *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:15-16.* Such does not come about by a happenstance assortment of hybrids and adaptations that neither fit nor function.

Such was the intent of the gifts to the church there. *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Ephesians 4:11-12.* It was not that the parts of the building required "field fabrication." It was rather that their function be identified. What was true then is true now: "And the Lord added to the church

daily such as should be saved."

Solomon's method pictured that of the Lord. The idea of men is that they must prepare men to "accept the Lord" before the Lord can do anything. God's method is that He does all the preparation which He determined before the foundation of the world. It is of Christ to display the perfect pattern wherein the Father says of Him, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." It is the work of the Holy Spirit to regenerate and effect a birth from incorruptible seed. In the process those "lively stones" have imparted to them the very image and nature of Christ; they are functioning partakers of the "divine nature" and from the very beginning, they fit and begin to function as intended. Thus, the purpose of God is realized: *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. Romans 8:29.*

All that is done in salvation is done without the hammering of the false teachers and the sawing and shaping of the deceivers. And, the finished building will be found without error. *And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Hebrews 2:13.* The collection of His treasures will need neither addition or deletion: *And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Malachi 3:17. bhs*

"The duties which God requires of us, are not in proportion to the strength we possess in ourselves. Rather, they are proportionate to the resources available to us in Christ. We do not have the ability in ourselves, to accomplish the least of God's tasks. When we recognize it is impossible for us to perform a single duty in our own strength — we will discover the secret of its accomplishment: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." This is the law of grace." John Owen

"When the Holy Spirit saves people, He puts into their minds, wills and hearts — a gracious, supernatural principle which fills them with a holy desire to live to God. The whole life and being of holiness lies in this." John Owen

How Paul Came

We are not left to wonder. The Bible records Paul's approach to spreading the gospel in Corinth. We read, "He was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:4-5). Despite the repeated rejections he had suffered earlier, Paul's strategy for reaching Corinth remained unchanged. The apostle maintained the same approach he had used in other cities. He came proclaiming Christ crucified, doing so in the power of the Holy Spirit. Such Christ-exalting, cross-centered preaching was not without effect. The leader of the synagogue, Crispus, was soundly converted under Paul's ministry (Acts 18:8). Likewise, many other Corinthians came to believe in Jesus. So powerful was the reception of the gospel there that the apostle stayed 18 months, an unusually long period of time for his fast-paced itinerant schedule. In this pagan city, a beachhead for the truth had now been established. A church had been birthed, as it were, on the doorsteps of hell. Paul's straightforward preaching of the crucified Christ was used mightily by God. But after Paul's departure from Corinth, these new believers cooled down in their devotion to Christ. Their zeal waned. Though genuinely converted, these disciples reverted back to their desire for more sophisticated styles of public speaking. With this regression came a return to their previous infatuation with worldly wisdom. In AD 55, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to confront these people about their spiritual relapse. At the outset of this epistle, he reminded them of the straightforward manner with which he had preached the gospel to them. He stated, "When I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1). This is to say, when he was there, Paul had not attempted to match wits with the great Greek debaters. He did not compromise his message in order to accommodate their cultural tastes. Neither did he cater to the conventional wisdom of their Greek minds. He adamantly refused to cater to them in order to win them. Instead, Paul did not vary the substance of his message one iota. Neither did he adjust the style of his delivery. The apostle came to Corinth as he did every place, preaching the crucified Christ. The entirety of his ministry could be summarized in this succinct statement: "We proclaim Christ, and Him crucified" (see 1 Corinthians 2:2). Bottom line, the sum and substance of his message was the person and work of Jesus Christ.

--Steven Lawson, *The Preaching God Blesses*

Genuine repentance involves four things: (1) spiritual enlightenment and remembering whence you have fallen; (2) confessing, grieving over, and forsaking sin; (3) bowing under sin's just judgment, which is death, and (4) falling upon Christ for mercy. Peter still would have confessed Christ as righteous even if Christ had not restored him. But Christ wondrously chose to restore Peter. Soon after Christ rose from the dead, the angels told the Jesus-seeking women: "Go tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him" (Mark 16:7).

--Joel Beeke, *Walking as He Walked*