

The vast majority of the churches are in a sorry state! Those that are out-and-out worldly are at their wits end to invent new devices for drawing a crowd. Others which still preserve an outward form of godliness often provide nothing substantial for the soul; there is little ministering of Christ to the heart, and little preaching of sound doctrine without which souls cannot be built up and established in the faith.

The great majority of the pastors summon to their aid some professional speaker, who puts on a high-pressure campaign and secures sufficient new 'converts' to take the place of those who have 'lapsed' since he was last with them.

What a farce it all is! –Arthur Pink (1886 -1952)

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)

86. Q. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate (1 Kings 21:4; Esther 5:13; 1 Cor. 10:10), envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour (Gal. 5:26; James 3:14, 16), and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his (Rom. 7:7, 8, 13:9; Deut. 5:21).

87. Q. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God (Ecc. 7:20; 1 John 1:8, 10; Gal. 5:17), but doth daily break them in thought, word, or deed (Gn 4:5, and 7:21; Rom. 3:9-21; James 3:2-13).

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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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THY LIFE FOR A PREY

For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD. Jeremiah 39:18

In all generations, there has been a manifest refusal to acknowledge the coming judgments of God because of their sin. The book of Jeremiah chronicles one the most significant of those times. The warnings and the prophesies had been forthcoming for centuries with only brief times in which there was evidence of some national repentance. However, most of the time leading up to the Babylonian invasion was characterized by violent rejection of the prophets and their message, and a persistence in open idolatry. This was such idolatry as involved the grossest of sin and human degradation. Jeremiah remained a faithful witness against such practices at great cost to himself. When it became evident that repentance was not forthcoming, he began to advise as to how the remnant should deal with the impending invasion. Of course, this was falling on the ears of a sin-deluded people who reacted violently to the idea that they could be overthrown.

Jeremiah advised both King Zedekiah and the leaders to simply accept the inevitable and to go out of the city and surrender to the Chaldeans. This would have been the same as surrendering to the Lord and bowing to His will to destroy the city. These all persisted in defying the guidance of the “Weeping Prophet” and perished as a result.

The promise of “life given for a prey” occurs four times in the book. The first few times there is deliverance from a certain

destruction promised on the condition of the surrender mentioned above. So, was the message brought to Zedekiah after he had petitioned Jeremiah to seek a word from the Lord. On the other two occasions, an unconditional promise is made.

The promise made in this text was to an Ethiopian by the name of Ebedmelech. This man had interceded for Jeremiah at a most crucial time. Jeremiah had been taken by wicked men and cast into a dungeon because of the truth that he was bringing to them. Ebedmelech had been witness to these things and went to King Zedekiah to plead for Jeremiah concerning the wrong that had been done to him. From this text, we may assume that this servant in the household of the King was a believer and understood that Jeremiah was truly the Lord’s prophet. And so, he prevailed and the king sent thirty men to bring Jeremiah out of the dungeon.

It is of note that Jeremiah had found favor in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. It is supposed that through deserters or other contacts that he had heard of the warnings of Jeremiah and found that to be to his liking. Thus, in the providence of God Jeremiah was afforded the protection of the King of Babylon and would continue to prophesy after the city was fallen. So, it was, he was able to bring hope to such men as Ebedmelech and Baruch in the midst of all collapsing around them.

The thought of our life as a “prey” might

suggest something ominous to us. We understand the term prey as we observe the hunter going into the woods with his gun. The game he seeks may be referred to as his prey and he is intent in bringing the animal down. As we look to the order in nature, we are reminded that there are predators about and they, likewise, seek their prey for food. We are reminded of two such predators in the Word of God. Our Lord warned of wolves in sheep's clothing. And, Satan is characterized as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The questions to be raised in our text are how is our life to be considered as a prey, and who or what is the predator?

J. C. Philpot pursued this thought in a well-known sermon using the text: *And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest. Jeremiah 45:5.* He characterized the life of Baruch (The faithful attendant of Jeremiah to whom Jeremiah dictated his words) as being the prey of the enemy. It is certain that the things that Philpot suggested seek to damage the spiritual life of true believers. Building on the idea that Baruch may have thought he should have greatness, Philpot listed several things that may work toward destruction and or damage to the

believer such as pride, worldliness, presumption, and others. These are certainly proper observations of dangers to be avoided. But, the thought seems to be that we are the one to whom life is given to be taken.

The words of the text are "thy life shall be given for a prey unto thee." Two things come to mind. One is that in the face of destruction, his physical life would be spared. The other is that, seizing upon the thought that he had put his trust in the Lord, he would be able to be a partaker of eternal life in the truest sense of the word. When Paul wrote to Timothy that he should "lay hold on eternal life," it was not in order to be saved. It was rather that he should cling to that life as the greatest treasure ever. It was that life which was given by way of the New Birth, determined by the will of the Father, and purchased by the precious blood of Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, Ebedmelech would live to pursue that life which was evidenced by the fact that he had put his trust in the Lord. He would not labor to find it nor earn it. It was, by Sovereign Grace, given to him and so would be captured by him in the face of all opposition and the relentless enemy of his soul.

Do we presume upon the thought of eternal life? Or, do we pursue it as the precious prey that God would have it to be to us? *bhs*

Once an older man, was walking the beach at dawn. As he walked, he noticed that the beach was litterly covered, as far as the eye could see, with starfish. He also noticed a young boy ahead of him who was picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Catching up with the boy, he asked him what are you doing? The boy replied, "I am picking these starfish up and throwing them back into the sea so that they do not die." "But the the beach goes on for miles and miles, and there are millions of starfish," said the man. "How can our effort make any difference?" The boy looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the waves. "It makes a difference to this one." This example is about as far as our minds can go to explaining why God would save the ones he does. Why he would save one such as I. Why he would love someone such as I. Why he would put up with let alone save one such as I is truly amazing to me.

--Author Unknown

WILL A JASPER BE AT YOUR FUNERAL?

John Jasper was a prominent slave and Baptist preacher in Richmond, Virginia in the mid-1800s. He preached at many funerals. He said at one funeral: "Let me say a word about this [Name Withheld]. I say it first and get it off my mind. [Name Withheld] was no good man – he didn't say he was. He didn't try to be good, and they tell me he died as he lived, without God and without hope in the world. It's a bad tale to tell on him, but he fixed the story himself. As the tree falls, there must it lay. If you want folks who live wrong to be preached and sung to glory, don't bring them to Jasper."

What a rarity is a Jasper!

Many preachers prove themselves to be liars at funerals. In their ordinary preaching they say Jesus spoke truth when He said: "Repent, and believe in the gospel"; "unless you repent you will all likewise perish"; "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3,5; Mark 16:16). But at the funerals of people who refused to obey Jesus, they deny what they formerly preached, and speak of the unrepentant and unbelieving dead as dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, and declare that they are now in heaven with God.

A minister of Christ will not lie against God for you at your funeral. Therefore, if you want someone claiming the power to preach to glory those who disregarded Christ ... "Don't bring them to Jasper!"

If you want a Jasper to speak at your funeral of your blessedness in your death, obey Christ in your life.

– Daniel E. Parks

Can a fallen man come to Christ in his own wisdom and power? Can he use his willpower to choose Christ apart from the grace that makes his will good? It is astonishing how many professing, (otherwise biblical) Christians will spend defending the natural man's wisdom and power, even in the face of overwhelming biblical evidence that teaches otherwise. Why? Because men want to point to themselves and retain a small bit of righteousness of their own.

(1 Cor 1:23-24, 29-31, 12:3; Eph 2:1,5,8-9; 1 Thess 1:4-5, Deut 29:4, 30:6; John 6:63, 65) -- Monergism

"GRACE MEANS GOD MOVING HEAVEN AND EARTH TO SAVE SINNERS WHO COULD NOT LIFT A FINGER TO SAVE THEMSELVES"

— J.I. PACKER

"TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST IS TO SEE THAT HE IS A PRICELESS TREASURE OF INFINITE VALUE." -

--- STEVEN LAWSON