

Soar back through all your own experiences. Think of how the Lord has led you in the wilderness, and has fed and clothed you every day. Think how God has borne with your ill manners, and put up with all your murmurings and all your longings after the 'sensual pleasures of Egypt!' Think of how the Lord's grace has been sufficient for you in all your troubles. "Oh to grace how great a debtor!" – Charles Spurgeon

Holiness is nothing else but the habitual and predominant devotion and dedication of soul, and body, and life, and all that we have to God; and esteeming, and loving, and serving, and seeking Him, before all the pleasures and prosperity of the flesh and the world. –Richard Baxter

### BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

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

Q. 13. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the Word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good. (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3; Ex. 20:11; Gen. 1:31)

Q. 14. How did God create man?

A. God created man male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures. (Gen. 1:27; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24; Gen. 1:28)

#### THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: [branthsj@msn.com](mailto:branthsj@msn.com)

Website: [www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com](http://www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com)

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM– In Richwood

#### Services:

Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

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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### THE EFFECTUAL WORD OF GOD

*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13*

At the mention of persecution, my thoughts are often drawn to the Saints at Thessalonica. Paul’s words of comfort to them have echoed down through the ages still providing encouragement to those suffering for the cause of Christ. Not only are the words of Paul a source of comfort, but also, the example of those dear brethren under persecution magnifies to us the grace of God so evident in their lives and testimony. It was against a backdrop of persecution that Paul would assure them. He would not do it with mere well-wishing and platitudes. He would call to their attention the evidence that indwelt them and was made manifest in word and deed.

It was certainly a matter for thanksgiving with Paul. Having opened the epistle with an expression of thanksgiving in conjunction with prayer for them, he adds here an additional reason for thanksgiving. He acknowledged their “work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope” and quickly added that all evidence pointed to the fact that they were the elect of God (1 Thessalonians 1:3-4). Theirs had truly been a life change in that they had turned from idols to “serve the living and true God.” Their expectations had removed from this world as well and were replaced by a focus on Christ alone: *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10.* He now reminds them of his

thanksgiving for their reaction to the Word of God. We would note three things regarding their identity with the Word of God.

It is a matter of great joy to any preacher to know that the precious Gospel he preaches is being received by the objects of his ministry. Many of us, this preacher included, have preached often with no apparent reaction and that often noted even among professed believers. Of course, we understand with Paul that ours is to faithfully preach the Word with the understanding that any positive outcome will be of the Lord even as the power to preach is so given. As we read of Paul’s commendation of the Lord’s work in these people, we are stirred to a desire to see such an outpouring of the Spirit as to bring such attention to the Word of God once more.

First, we would note that they had received the Word of God and the Word of God personified in Christ Jesus our Lord. In an age where the popular thing is to urge men to “accept Jesus,” and that as a matter of human will and evaluation of the One whom God has declared to be “both Lord and Christ.” These folks had come near to and fully identified with the Word. Strong has the word being that they had literally associated themselves with it. They had not given mere mental assent to what had been said. They had internalized the Word and were indwelt by it. They were literally living “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of

God.” It was what Paul had preached, but it struck a responsive chord in their opened hearts and it was received, not merely acknowledged.

The second thing we would note is that these people heard more than a preacher. They gratefully surrendered to the fact of divine inspiration and heard it as “God-breathed.” Paul makes the comparison to the word of men. It was not with arbitrary additions and corrections. It was not with the assistance of other devices. It was not received as the result of flowery speech or polished oratory. It was not with the promise of anything beyond an eternity with Christ our Lord (no prosperity gospel here). It was not dependent on entertainment or worldly accommodation. The seekers here would find only Christ and the Word of God exclusively. It had been the Word of God spoken with boldness from the start (Acts 4:31). It was that which confirmed that the Gospel was to the Gentiles as well: *And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. Acts 11:1.* Paul’s time in Thessalonica and everywhere he went was spent in teaching the Word of God.

It is sad that we are witness to so many devices and inventions of men that they find no need of the Word of God and so a generation is being wooed to hell and laughing all the way. We have neither mandate nor need to look to anything other than the pure Word of God and the Christ therein declared.

The third thing we observe with these people is that Paul bore witness to the fact that that same Word was working effectually in them. These were living truths. The Lord had, of His own will, begotten them with the Word of Truth. Faith comes by hearing and hearing from the Word of God. John MacArthur ably points out, with appropriate scripture references that the Word of God provides training, counselling, reviving, restoring, warning and rewarding, nourishing, judging, sanctifying (John 17:17), freeing, enriching, protecting, strengthening, making wise, rejoicing the heart, and prospering. And, we would be reminded that: *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:1.* Such could never be apart from the Word of God that such occurs.

Particularly precious are such references as: *Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. Psalms 119:24.* Such a statement is drawn out of the depths of experience of the Psalmist. It is the Word of God that confirms to us all how that Christ died for our sins “according to the Scriptures,” and that He rose again “according to the Scriptures.” It is not only that the Scriptures are “God-breathed” to us; they are “breathed” in us and it is in that way we hear. It is not as the word of men; it “is in truth the Word of God.” *bhs*

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Preachers of Freewillism tell sinners that they have “free will” through which they may believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.

They thereby commit two great errors!

First, they ascribe to sinners a “free will” that they do not have. Man’s will is not free, for it is subject to his nature. Man therefore cannot act contrary to his nature. Man’s nature is sinful and evil. Since man’s will is subject to his sinful and evil nature, he cannot will to do – much less perform – any deed that is righteous and holy, such as believing in Jesus Christ. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil” (Jeremiah 13:23).

Second, they ascribe to sinners a “free will” that even God does not have. As man’s

will is subject to his nature, so is God's will subject to His nature. As man cannot act contrary to his nature, neither can God act contrary to His nature. God's nature is righteous and holy. Since God's will is subject to His righteous and holy nature, He cannot will to do – much less perform – any deed that is sinful and evil. For example, “God cannot lie” (Titus 1:2; Numbers 23:19) – “it is impossible for God to lie” (Hebrews 6:18).

As surely as God does not have “free will” to lie, so surely does man not have “free will” to believe. – Daniel E. Parks

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### What Binds the Hands of Love

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. (Colossians 1:3–5)

The problem with the church today is not that there are too many people who are passionately in love with heaven. The problem is not that professing Christians are retreating from the world, spending half their days reading Scripture and the other half singing about their pleasures in God all the while indifferent to the needs of the world.

The problem is that professing Christians are spending ten minutes reading Scripture and then half their day making money and the other half enjoying and repairing what they spend it on.

It is not heavenly-mindedness that hinders love. It is worldly-mindedness that hinders love, even when it is disguised by a religious routine on the weekend.

Where is the person whose heart is so passionately in love with the promised glory of heaven that he feels like an exile and a sojourner on the earth? Where is the person who has so tasted the beauty of the age to come that the diamonds of the world look like marbles, and the entertainment of the world is empty, and the moral causes of the world are too small because they have no view to eternity? Where is this person?

He is not in bondage to the Internet or eating or sleeping or drinking or partying or fishing or sailing or putzing around. He is a free man in a foreign land. And his one question is this: How can I maximize my enjoyment of God for all eternity while I am an exile on this earth? And his answer is always the same: by doing the labors of love.

Only one thing satisfies the heart whose treasure is in heaven: doing the works of heaven. And heaven is a world of love!

It is not the cords of heaven that bind the hands of love. It is the love of money and leisure and comfort and praise — these are the cords that bind the hands of love. And the power to sever these cords is Christian hope.

I say it again with all the conviction that lies within me: it is not heavenly-mindedness that hinders love on this earth. It is worldly-mindedness. And therefore the great fountain of love is the powerful, freeing confidence of Christian hope.

--John Piper

**AH, BELIEVER, IT IS ONLY HEAVEN WHICH IS ABOVE ALL WINDS, STORMS, AND TEMPESTS. GOD DID NOT CAST MAN OUT OF PARADISE, THAT HE MIGHT FIND ANOTHER PARADISE IN THIS WORLD. –THOMAS BROOKS**