

As religious beings, let us seek to understand the truths of religion. As immortal beings, let us strive to make ourselves acquainted with the doctrine on which our everlasting happiness depends. And let us be careful that we do not merely receive it coldly into our understanding, but that its renewing power is ever operative in our hearts.

--John Dagg

BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

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

Q. 43. What shall be done to the wicked at death?

A. The souls of the wicked shall at death, be cast into the torments of hell, and their bodies lie in their graves till the resurrection and judgement of the great day. (Luke 16:22-24; Ps. 49:14)

Q. 44. What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgement?

A. At the day of judgement, the bodies of the wicked, being raised out of their graves, shall be sentenced, together with their souls, to unspeakable torments with the devil and his angels forever. (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28,29; 2 Thess. 1:9; Matt. 25:41)

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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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INFORMED RELIGION

All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. Matthew 23:3

Our Lord was unrelenting in the matter of warnings about the Pharisees and the Sadducees. In that He devoted such attention to them is reason enough for us to give His words and His warnings careful attention. The fact that they were the principle sources of religious authority in Israel enabled them to add to and take from the Word of God as they saw fit and certainly did so when they could. Knowing that men are easily swayed by both flowery language and appearances, our Lord probed deeply into the mind and the methods of these enemies of the Gospel.

These are they who exhibited such an intense hatred for Christ in that they sensed not only an attack on their system, but also that they were being exposed to the ones they had for so long deceived. They cried out loud and long in that they were being brought face to face with the righteousness of God in the person of Christ Himself. Others who threatened or disobeyed could be easily dispatched without much objection. But, this One would not go away on their terms and so they sought to discredit Him and ultimately to kill Him.

Jesus warned His disciples in a way that reveals much of their nature in saying: *How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Matthew 16:11.* It was then that they understood that His reference was to the teaching. The use of the term leaven is self-

explanatory in that a common element in bread-making, known to all, permeates the bread so that it is indistinguishable to the naked eye. Such was that which was to be feared with them. Outwardly (see Paul’s testimony in Phil. 3:6) they appeared moral. The conflict was to be discovered in their pride and their deceptive practices. It was the insidious way in which these things intrench themselves and begin to corrupt the whole life that necessitated such intense warnings.

What follows in this passage is the well-known woes pronounced on the Pharisees. The Lord spared no detail in exposing what comes because of their teaching. While we would like to think that we could never be guilty of such things, the seeds for these actions remain in our old fallen nature. As to religion, the old man is always a Pharisee. Our Lord was making these observations because of His disciples and would be careful to maintain their awareness of what was going on. And, it is for us to be so warned as well. The enemy would have us to believe that we are immune from such things and so draw us away from full dependence on our Lord and His mercy and grace. He is a master of disguise both of himself and the things he promotes. But we have this: “we are not ignorant of his devices.”

Our Lord’s words here might at first seem strange. He directs “whatsoever they bid you observe and do...” It would seem that with such a group that everything they advocate should be rejected immediately. However, these were

they who “searched the scriptures” and although they erred, the fact that the Word was being made public was worthy of attention. Thus, the thought of observing the truth they brought from the Word of God was not to be rejected because of who was doing it. Their works were another matter.

First was the fact that they were rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. The very words they were declaring declared Him. *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.* John 5:39. In essence they were setting religion and ritual above the Lord and so were blinded to His very presence. Secondly, they were directing their efforts to promote their religion by manipulating their fellowman. They would close them off from the Kingdom and rather labor to increase the numbers of those who would subscribe to the same things they were doing (do we know of anybody like that). They would seek to personally profit from their actions both financially and in terms of pride and prominence. They would give attention to the most minute details and omit the weightier things of the “law, judgment, mercy, and faith.”

Again, we would note that while believers have that which delivers them from such a way of life, we are still in the flesh and so are to be exercised in avoiding the leaven that produces such behavior in the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They are still with us. We note the

emphasis of many on increasing their numbers and are reminded of the proselyting actions of the Pharisees. We see pride and ostentation promoted in the name of religion.

We would be delivered from their works. They cannot produce what they claim, not to mention the manner of Godliness to be found where the witness of the Holy Spirit is fully realized. The works with which we would have to do are produced as result of grace: *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* Ephesians 2:10. By the grace of God we are enabled to resist the devil and all his teaching, much of which is disguised as true religion. Of such, Paul gives warning in that they: *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.* 2 Timothy 3:5.

James gives wonderful counsel to a people who had been so affected. *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.* James 4:7-8. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Such is the manner of life for which our Lord died and rose again. We would be doers of the Word and not hearers only and by the grace of God we shall.

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He has chosen us (v. 4). This is the marvelous doctrine of election, a doctrine that has confused some and confounded others. A seminary professor once said to me, “Try to explain election and you may lose your mind. But try to explain it away and you may lose your soul!” That salvation begins with God, and not with man, all Christians will agree. “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (John 15:16). The lost sinner, left to his own ways, does not seek God (Rom. 3:10–11); God in His love seeks the sinner (Luke 19:10). Note that God chose us even before He created the universe, so that our salvation is wholly of His grace and not on the basis of anything we ourselves have done. He chose us in Christ, not in ourselves. And He chose us for a purpose: to be holy and without blame. In the Bible, election is always unto something. It is a privilege that carries a great responsibility.

--Warren Wiersbe

WE ARE STILL PRECIOUS

First, we are a chosen race. That is, we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and even then our names were written in heaven (Revelation 13:8). The knowledge that we are precious to God inspires us to live up to our calling. God is not about to abandon us because we feel weak politically or unpopular in our culture. Second, we are a royal priesthood. In the Old Testament era the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies only one day a year. Today, we who are believers actually live in the Holy of Holies, for Christ has brought us into God's presence and left us there. For this reason we need never think that God has abandoned His people. When confronted with a hostile culture, we can daily come before God to receive grace to help in the time of need. The greater the need, the greater the grace. Third, we are a holy nation—that is, we are set apart to God. We should be astonished if the world welcomed our moral and political agenda. Christ exposes the sins of the world, and darkness loves darkness. The church is to be in the world as a ship is in the ocean—but when the ocean gets into the ship it begins to take on water. If it is true that (as polls suggest) the basic lifestyle of believers today is essentially no different from that of the world, why should we be surprised if our impact in this culture is so limited? Finally, we are, above all, a people for God's own possession. No matter what personal battles we may face, we are still number one on God's list of priorities. We are the objects of His attention; He is preparing us to eternally display His grace and wisdom (Ephesians 2:7).

Our calling is to live out the reality of who we are with dignity, kindness, and conviction. If we confront the world in anger or needlessly antagonize, we have abandoned our calling. We are to model the character of Christ in a world that is skeptical, a world that is convinced that God doesn't matter. As believers we can be sure that there is no such thing as meaningless suffering. After all, we are God's special possession. —Erwin Lutzer *Where to we go from here?*

It isn't enough to passively believe we're dependent upon God for every aspect of our lives. We must actively rely on Him. The primary way we do this is through prayer. J. I. Packer has written: The prayer of a Christian is not an attempt to force God's hand, but a humble acknowledgment of helplessness and dependence. When we are on our knees, we know that it is not we who control the world; it is not in our power, therefore, to supply our needs by our own independent efforts; every good thing that we desire for ourselves and for others must be sought from God, and will come, if it comes at all, as a gift from His hands.³ By praying we recognize our helplessness and dependence. By praying we recognize that we are not in control of our lives, our health, our plans, or the decisions other people make respecting us. We recognize, as Dr. Packer said, that we must seek God for every good thing we desire for ourselves and others. —Jerry Bridges

CREATION WAS NEVER DESIGNED TO SATISFY YOUR HEART. CREATION WAS MADE TO BE ONE BIG FINGER POINTING YOU TO THE ONE WHO ALONE HAS THE ABILITY TO SATISFY YOUR HEART. —PAUL DAVID TRIPP