

"Never will man pray as he ought unless the Master will guide both his mouth and his heart." -  
John Calvin

## 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 LXIX. What is hope?

Answer. Hope is a grace of the Spirit, whereby the believer expects all that the Lord in His Word has promised to give, and is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

Psa. 42.11; Prov. 14.32; Acts 26.6-7; Rom. 5.2,4-5 & 8.24-25; Col. 1.27; 2 Thess. 2.16; Tit 2.13 & 3.7; Heb. 3.6 & 6.11,18-20.

Question LXX. What is patience?

Answer. Patience is a grace of the Spirit, whereby the believer submissively waits the will of God, for the accomplishment of blessings promised.

Psa. 40.1; Rom. 5.3-4 & 8.25; Heb. 6.12-15 & 10.35-36 & 12.1; James 5.7-8, 10-11.

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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 DEPRESSION OF ELIJAH

*By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil. Proverbs 16:6*

The mention of Elijah evokes images of greatness of a unique nature. Of course, we see the same characteristics manifested in John the Baptist who identified as “The voice of one crying in the wilderness.” We meet him in the scripture (1 Kings 17:1) with a simple declaration as to his place of origin, and little else. He is depicted as being about his Father’s business and delivers an offensive announcement to King Ahab – the Lord God of Israel had proclaimed a drought that would continue until further notice. Humanly speaking, this placed him immediately in danger. The accounts that follow are the things that excite faith and promote worship of the Lord God of Elijah.

The narrative of the next few years in his life has provided the material for many sermons and supplied devotional thought to lovers of God. God has chosen the base things of the world to confound the wise and prudent and Elijah was just such a character. The Lord would make him more than a match for this wicked king and his wife Jezebel. The Lord so directed the path of this man over the next few years so that he would be kept from the disaster that was affecting the rest of the land. These are precious stories in themselves.

First, he is directed to a place in the wilderness where his provisions would be delivered by ravens. He would have water and food in a desolate place. When the water dried up because of the drought (and the Lord’s timing) he was sent to Zarephath to a widow about to starve. Provision would be made in an

unlikely way – a barrel of meal and a cruse of oil miraculously continued to provide food for Elijah, the widow and her son. His was to simply wait on the Lord. A further manifestation of the Lord’s visitation of power and authority with Elijah was seen when he raised the widow’s son from the dead. As she observed, “thou art a man of God and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.”

The results of the drought had been a famine in Samaria (seat of the Northern Kingdom). A messenger was dispatched from Elijah to Ahab announcing his arrival. And Elijah went about the business of setting up the confrontation on Mount Carmel. There Elijah’s claims of the greatness of the Lord God would be mightily vindicated. We read of the gathering of the people, the vain attempts at sacrifice by the prophets of Baal, the prayer of Elijah, and the glorious display of the Lord’s power in sending fire to consume a water-soaked sacrifice. In the boldness of that moment, he commands the slaughter of the heathen prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:20-40).

The message was sent to Ahab and the rain came at the prayer of the Man of God. It would seem that at this point his confidence would be very high. But Jezebel, on hearing of the slaying of the false prophets promises to kill Elijah. At that Elijah ran for his life and we find him passing out of the land, though Beersheba and into the wilderness. Here he asks the Lord to take his life. He had gone from the heights of

seeing the Lord's victory to desiring death. How could this be?

Elijah is not the only one to have come to this place. Moses had expressed that he would prefer death to going on without the Lord. Job was even more intense with his request. *Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! Job 6:9.* It is to be noted at this point that with believers, death does not hold the terror that it does with the unregenerate. We might suppose that he felt that death would be certain at the hands of Jezebel and it was to be preferred that it be at the hand of the Lord.

Such thoughts as that may have arisen in his mind, but we would rather see divine purpose in what was happening to him. Having seen the greatness of the power of God near at hand will surely emphasize the smallness of the beholder. Seeing the power of God will make us ever more sensitive to our personal weakness. If such is encountered apart from faith in action it will cause us to despair of any personal usefulness. Perhaps it is in the same manner that Paul was given a "thorn in the flesh" to humble him, that Elijah was given a lapse in faith. Faith is a wonderful provision of grace and so is the ability to exercise it. Some have suggested that he may have thought his usefulness was at an end. And he may have looked at the conditions that

existed under the reign of perhaps the most wicked of all in Ahab and Jezebel and despaired of any remedy for the situation. But when faith would be restored it would be seen that the Lord is controlling all, including the exercise of faith (Philippians 2:13).

The Lord graciously brought Elijah to see what he needed to know and in the proper context. It would not always be in an outward show; it would rather be realized in the hearts of those who had not bowed the knee to Baal. The Lord could, at will, produce mighty winds, devastating earthquakes, and consuming fire. But His people will hear it as Elijah did in the "still small voice" revealing grace and truth.

I will readily confess that I have at times desired of the Lord to take me home. As we look about us it is easy to forget that all things are given into the hands of the One who came and lived and suffered and died and is now risen above in order that we might live forever with Him. We do not yet see all things under His feet, but by precious faith, we see Him.

The message for us is that we receive the nourishment provided us as the Holy Spirit ministers the Word to us and in the strength of His unfailing provision continue on in the way appointed. May we see in the Lord what Elisha saw as he cried out, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" *bhs*

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### Robert Hawker on 1 Kings 19:4

Is this Elijah, who but the day before confronted all the host of Baal's worshippers? What, to flee because of the threats of a poor woman? And moreover, at a time like this, when after such a miracle he had reason from his own prayer to hope, that the Lord would turn the heart of the people back again! But Reader! let you and I learn from it, that great faith and unbelief are near neighbours in the same heart. Some of the Lord's highest servants have given striking testimonies of both. Abraham could, and did, at the Lord's command, offer up his son. But Abraham could not trust to God for the safety of his wife. Ge 22 with Gen 20:1-2. Peter could, and did, at the command of Jesus, venture to walk to him upon the water. But the same great apostle, at the instance of a poor servant-maid, denied Christ. Mat 14:28; Mat 26:72, etc. And what are the precious lessons the Holy Ghost teacheth us from such views of the faithful, but these; that faith is God's gift, not man's own creating: that as Paul saith, we can do nothing of ourselves; but can do all things through Christ strengthening us. And therefore we can never trust ourselves too little, nor Jesus too much.

## Federal Headship

Before the foundation of the world, God gave a chosen people, which are identified as Christ's sheep, to His Son (John 6:39). Christ, at that time, willingly received these sheep as His own possession. By accepting the gift, Christ became the legal guardian and surety of His flock. In other words, through election, Christ became the federal head of His chosen people. The Scriptures give us several examples of the federal headship principle. First, we learn that Adam was the federal head of the human race. Adam legally represented all mankind. This may sound unfair, but we must remember that in Adam, all of humanity existed. Put simply, the whole human race was present in Adam (Rom. 5:11–19). Consequently, because the penalty for Adam's sin was spiritual death, when Adam sinned He brought death to all those in union with him. As it is impossible for clean water to flow from a polluted fountain, it was impossible for Adam to produce clean children. The concept of federal headship is not as strange as we may think, for even federal governments recognize that parents have the legal right and responsibility to oversee their children. My wife, Letha, and I experienced this firsthand on our ten-year wedding anniversary. Because our second child, Christian, was just a toddler at the time, we brought him with us to the Boston Mountains in Northwest Arkansas. As we were pushing Christian around in a stroller through an antique store, our little buddy reached out his paw and knocked over a ceramic-tile painting of the ugliest little cherub we had ever seen. Why in the world would anyone want such a thing? But I was left with a decision to make—walk away, or pay for the ugly thing. I could have tried to justify leaving without paying by telling my conscience that it wasn't me who technically broke it. Why should I have to pay for it? Shouldn't the lady take up the matter with the little perpetrator with the grabby hands? Yet, I knew better, and I did the responsible thing when I dutifully marched over to the salesclerk and paid for the item that I didn't personally break. I knew it was the right thing because Christian is my son. I knew that he is under my legal care, and I knew that I am responsible for him and for his actions. I am his legal representative, so his debt is legally my debt to pay. In the same way, after Christ's sheep went astray in Adam, Christ stood up and walked over to the divine cash register and said to the Father, "These sheep belong to me, and I will pay for their sins with My own blood" (John 10:15; Rom. 3:24–25).

--Jeffrey Johnson. *He Died for Me*

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"If a man be walking afar off, and see people dancing together, and hear no noise of the music, he judges them fools and out of their wits; but when he comes nearer and hears the music, and sees that every motion is exactly done by art, now he changes his mind, and is so taken up with the sweet agreement of the gesture and the music, that he is not only delighted therewith, but desirous to join himself in the number. So it falls out, saith he, with men: whilst they look upon the outward carriage and conversation of God's people, and see it differing from others, they think them fools; but when [God begins to open their eyes and ears] they look more narrowly into their courses, and see a gracious harmony betwixt their lives and the word of God, then they begin to be in love with the "beauty of holiness," and join in conformity of holy obedience."

- Richard Sibbes