

God's meticulous sovereignty—whether we live or die—serves his holiness and righteousness and goodness and wisdom. In Christ we are not his dispensable pawns. We are his valued children. —John Piper

### 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 XCIII. Are men able to obtain these blessings by works of righteousness?

Answer. No; sin has rendered man hateful in the sight of God's holy law; made the whole head sick and the whole heart faint; killed him to everything that is good; so that by nature he has neither power nor will to come to Christ, the only way of obtaining the blessings of the gospel. Isa. 1.5-6; Jn. 1.13 & 3.27 & 6.44; Rom. 8.7-8 & 9.16; 1 Cor. 2.14, Eph. 2.8-9; Tit. 3.5.

Question XCIV. Is it no sin for men to neglect the reading of God's Word and the preaching of the gospel?

Answer. It is a great sin for men to neglect the reading of God's Word; and their neglect of and enmity to the gospel of Christ will add to the everlasting misery of all who have so done, and who die in their sins.

Matt 11.20-24; Jn. 3.18-21 & 5.39-40 & 8.24.

#### THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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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### PASSOVER AND PASSING THROUGH

*Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. (Hebrews 11:28-29)*

We rejoice at the examples of faith to which we are pointed. These were those who acted in faith; they were not as the many who speak of it without being exercised therein. The faith of Moses occupies a prominent place among those preserved for us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. His faith and theirs was after the order of that referenced in: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* (Hebrews 11:6). We understand from the previous verses here that by faith Moses refused the world, chose to suffer, esteemed the reproach of Christ to be of infinite value, had respect unto that which was promised, and endured as seeing Him who is invisible. So, it was that Moses began and carried out the work for which God had prepared him. The story of the Passover and the exit from Egypt remains as most inspiring and instructive in understanding our salvation.

We will not revisit all the events of the Passover, but we would be remiss if we did not note that Christ is our Passover. *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:* (1 Corinthians 5:7). We are reminded that the plagues, and especially the last plague did not touch the Children of Israel. What we are shown literally in their experience we possess in salvation through

the operation of the Spirit and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. That which devastated Egypt liberated the Lord's people.

We are dealing with two plagues in the world today. The Covid-19 virus is the one attracting the attention of the masses, while a far worse plague continues to be the destruction of men and their eternal souls. No doubt, many true believers have died as a result of this dread virus. Our Lord directed our fears away from that which could destroy the body and rather directed our attention unto the One who holds life in His hand. Men are desperately searching for a cure and a vaccine for this virus. Outside of a work of grace none are searching for a cure for their sin. To experience that cure one must abandon all hope from self and mankind and rather appeal to the mercy of God. That which is necessary to surviving the plague of the heart is a new heart and the infusion of the righteousness of Christ.

There are many things about the departure of the Israelites from Egypt that excite the student of the Word. What is not recorded is that any of the Israelites perished. It was clearly understood that survival demanded strict compliance as to the sacrifice, the placement of the blood, and that they remain in the house until the time determined. There is no record of failure here. The journey through the wilderness, while no doubt grueling, suffered no losses.

The Lord has many ways of “shutting us up to His mercy.” With the children of Israel, they found themselves with the armies of Pharaoh bearing down on them from the rear and the Red Sea before them. This was no mistake. They were exactly where the Lord wanted them. Of course, they murmured as we often do when facing the impossible (or even the inconvenient). We do well to try to enter into their experience. Try to imagine Moses lifting up the rod as he was commanded and seeing the sea part leaving a clear path to pass through. As you enter look to the left and to the right and see that whatever is restraining the waters is not visible and that at any instant it could be released and consume you. Yet, there is no record that any of them failed to pass safely through. Furthermore, they were witnesses to the destruction of the enemy army that pursued them. All they had was the Word of the Lord and that was all they needed. Surely, they looked around and noted that all were present and that the Lord had prevailed.

I would have you go to another scene even more profound than this. Consider that the enemy of our souls and the forces of evil in this world have incessantly conspired to destroy those upon whom God has set His love. At any moment he would break through and destroy all that is dear and glorious unto our God. But, as the waters of the Red Sea were restrained from the Israelites, so death and the wrath of God is restrained from those who love God and are the called according to His purpose. Satan had tried

in every way to destroy our Lord and fiercely attacked His lovely person and hung Him on a tree. Then the wrath of God, that was to be mine, was poured out on His soul. But neither the enemy nor the righteous wrath of God could reach those for whom Christ died. And even as He emerged from death with life forever more, so we are raised with Him.

Even now we may look about and see that which would and could destroy us in an instant. Certainly, physical death awaits us all. But that was true long before the virus came on the scene. The way of the world is to subject us to fear and men often remain in bondage through the fear of death. Apart from faith in Christ, the kind of faith Moses had, there is reason to fear. That life that is in Christ Jesus our Lord cannot be touched by disease or death and we need not fear this or any other enemy. May we sing with Fanny Crosby: “Safe in the arms of Jesus, Safe on His gentle breast. There by His love o’ershaded, Sweetly my soul doth rest.”

Safely in Christ our Lord, we have been passed over by that which we deserve, and by His tender mercy and grace we shall pass through this present world. While the world flounders about in desperation refusing to call upon the Lord in repentance, we may rest peacefully and with full assurance of faith. We have no need to see the outcome, we just need to see the One who determines it. “We do not yet see all things put under His feet...” but like Moses, we see Jesus. *bhs*

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### BEST KEPT SECRET

Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (GALATIANS 3:3)

One of the best kept secrets among Christians today is this: Jesus paid it all. I mean all. He not only purchased your forgiveness of sins and your ticket to heaven, He purchased every blessing and every answer to prayer you will ever receive. Every one of them — no exceptions. Why is this such a well-kept secret? The core issue is that we don’t believe we’re still spiritually “bankrupt.” Having come into God’s kingdom by grace alone solely on the merit of Another, we’re now trying to pay our own way by our

performance. We declared only temporary bankruptcy; we're now trying to live by good works rather than by grace. After we become Christians, we begin to put away our more obvious sins. We also start attending church, put money in the offering plate, and maybe join a small group Bible study. We see some positive change in our lifestyle, and we begin to feel pretty good about ourselves. We're now ready to emerge from bankruptcy and pay our own way in the Christian life. Then the day comes when we fall on our face spiritually. We lapse back into an old sin or fail to do what we should have done. And we assume we've forfeited all blessings from God for some undetermined period of time. Our expectation of God's blessing depends on how well we feel we're living the Christian life. We think we can and must "pay our own way" with God. Try this test: Think of a time recently when you really fell on your face spiritually. Then imagine that immediately afterward you encountered a terrific opportunity to share Christ with a non-Christian friend. Could you have done it with complete confidence in God's help? --Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace*

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### Divine Sovereignty

I do not intend to spend any time at all proving to you the general truth that God is sovereign in his world. There is no need; for I know that, if you are a Christian, you believe this already. How do I know that? Because I know that, if you are a Christian, you pray; and the recognition of God's sovereignty is the basis of your prayers. In prayer, you ask for things and give thanks for things. Why? Because you recognize that God is the author and source of all the good that you have had already, and all the good that you hope for in the future. This is the fundamental philosophy of Christian prayer. 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. If this is true even of our daily bread (and the Lord's Prayer teaches us that it is), much more is it true of spiritual benefits. This is all luminously clear to us when we are actually praying, whatever we may be betrayed into saying in argument afterward. In effect, therefore, what we do every time we pray is to confess our own impotence and God's sovereignty. The very fact that a Christian prays is thus proof positive that he believes in the lordship of his God. --J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*

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How are we to worship? What are we to do when we gather? In short, we're to read the Bible, preach the Bible, pray the Bible, sing the Bible, and see the Bible. Our worship is to proceed from the Bible, to depend upon the Bible, and to be soaked in the Bible. Our desperate need, and our great privilege, is to know and proclaim God's Word. Yes, we have some freedom within these parameters, and no, the worship of a church within suburban Canada will not be identical to the worship of a church in rural Papua. But the purpose of our gatherings is not to entertain people or to meet the ever-changing and ever-fickle felt needs of the unsaved or even the saved. Rather, it's to expose them to the Bible, to feed them with the Bible, to encourage them with the Bible, to equip them with the Bible, then to send them out to a lost and hurting world to proclaim the Bible. Anything that serves a different purpose or fails to meet these purposes is less than God expects and less than God deserves. Worship, it turns out, is serious business. —Tim Challies