

We should never forget that redemption—the world’s greatest blessing—is the fruit of the world’s greatest sorrow. —J.R. Miller

The tears of Christ are the pity of God. The gentleness of Jesus is the long-suffering of God. The tenderness of Jesus is the love of God. —Alexander Maclaren

### 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)*

21. Q. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it (Rom. 5:12, to the end; Eph. 2:1, 2, 3; James 1:14, 15; Mt. 15:19).

22. Q. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God (Gen. 3:8, 10, 24), are under his wrath and curse (Eph. 2:2, 3; Gal. 3:10), and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever (Lam. 3:39; Rom. 6:23; Mt. 25:41, 46).

#### 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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### THE ABSENCE OF FAITH

*Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. (Hebrews 4:1-2)*

The first verse of my text has often been a personal challenge to me. That is not owing to lack of understanding; rather it is in claiming the promise included there. Its importance is emphasized by seeing such a shortfall as something to fear. In reading the scripture that leads up to that statement we are reminded of the emphasis placed on promise in dealing with the Israelites in the wilderness and beyond. They were well schooled in the Law and the Commandments and yet faltered at the word of Moses concerning the promised land and all that pertained to it. Quickly, the writer turns us from the matter of that which occurred in the past to the spiritual application in the present. Alarm at this point is reasonable in that the consequences for us (believers of the Gospel) is far greater than those which they faced. The place of faith in this regard is then added to the explanation.

It is well to observe that the “us” of verse 2 is referring to the Jewish believers of the first century to whom this epistle was written and “them” refers to those who were delivered from Egypt under the mighty hand of God. The fact is that the Gospel was preached to both. Kenneth Wuest points out that “The character of good news must be defined by the context.” The good news to believers is of a spiritual rest in the finished work of Christ our Lord. The rest promised to those coming out of Egypt was of a rest in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Those who lack faith and rebelled at the thought of taking the Lord at His word never saw that land. In the absence of faith being exercised neither will any claim the benefits of the promised spiritual rest. It is evident that faith is lacking among the masses in our Land today in that “God is not in all his thoughts.”

In making some application to present circumstances we would observe two things. First, there is an increase of religious thought in the expression of many. Desperation is being expressed and many are searching for answers, howbeit on their own terms and concepts of God. Scriptures are being quoted and conclusions are being drawn. There is much that is being said of God that is foreign to the Word and many tend to grasp at anything. No doubt, many elements of truth are being declared, but what is lacking is a right concept of God, His dealings with sin, and therefore, a cry for mercy. Many seem to believe that God is struggling with this too. If it is believed that He could, and that He does not, we may conclude that it is according to His will and purpose.

The second thing to be observed is that rulers of darkness in high places, continue to politicize and promote fear regarding the things about us. There is a concerted effort to exercise control over the masses with a motive that is anything but pure.

No amount of debate over what the Lord can or will do, why He is allowing or even ordaining

it, or appeals for help will avail anything apart from true faith. While we know that the “effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much,” our rest will be found in trusting God regardless of the answer. And so, what of us? Simon Kistemaker provides an interesting analysis of verse 2, and I will paraphrase. First of all, the Word of God is a continuous revelation and from the first to the last it is good news for Israelites and for the Christian. Secondly, in the clause “For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as to them...” the writer does not say we have received the Gospel; rather it is that it has been preached to us over a long period of time to the point that we have been thoroughly evangelized. (Wuest wrote that “We have been thoroughly good-newsed.”). Thirdly, the same long-term exposure to the Gospel was experienced by the Israelites through the wilderness travels – Christ was ever being presented to them. We would further note that the Gospel has long been freely declared in America and ignored. But then, fourthly, we note that what they heard did nothing for them because they paid no attention to it. We compare this to New Testament saints such as: *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)*. Thus, the Word and all they understood of it availed nothing in the absence of faith. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who*

*hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:16-17).*

We might ask then, is there hope for America? Many have endeavored to place the being and existence of America on the same level as the Kingdom of God. Certainly, we are patriots and desire the land be preserved along with some semblance of moral integrity. That ship may have sailed. If the Land is to be delivered it will be by the mercy of God and not by the forces of government. Apart from faith none even know what revival means. It is far more than a return to the comfortable days of old. We do well to seek to please God. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God. The writer follows with a reason. They that come to Him must first believe that He is (not only exists, but in the way He is revealed to us in the Word). And the reward comes to “them that diligently seek Him.” It is not to them whose desires are tied to this present world; it is to them of whom the Lord Himself is their desire. Therein rest is given and discovered.

Moses taught the Israelites thusly, *But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. (Deuteronomy 4:29)*. Jeremiah taught to seek the Lord as well, *And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:13)*. Apart from true, God given, Spirit led, faith in Christ Jesus our Lord there will be neither seeking nor finding. *bhs*

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From Tim Challies Blog – May 18, 2020

For all of [the] questions and conundrums we may have personal answers or strong convictions based on our own reading of the news and our own interpretation of the data. But honesty ought to force us to admit that for so many of them we simply don't have good answers and don't have compelling solutions. We may never have them.

We haven't only done badly, of course. There has been some triumph amidst all the sorrow, some heroism amidst all the pain, some bold decision-making amidst all the

uncertainty. But so far the great story of COVID-19 is not one of wisdom or accomplishment or the triumph of the human spirit. The great story has been our lack of knowledge, our lack of wisdom, our lack of unity, our lack of resolve, our lack of accomplishment, our lack of good solutions.

And amidst all the lack, surely we should admit that we are weak and act weakly. Then, face to face with our weakness, surely we should echo the words of Solomon who once cried out for wisdom by admitting “I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in.” Here before the coronavirus we do not know how to go out or come in—how to beat it or surrender to it, how to save lives or save the economy, how to love one another by staying apart or love one another by coming together. But there is one who does know, and humility is the key to his ear, the key to his heart, the key to his mind. For as that same Solomon later said, “When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom” (Proverbs 11:2). Wisdom is there for those who will humble themselves enough to ask for it and receive it.

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### CHRIST IS GREATER THAN THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH HIM

Many treasure things associated with Christ  
more than the Christ of those things;

few treasure Christ more than things associated with Him.

- Many celebrate the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ; few celebrate the Christ who was born, crucified, and resurrected.
- Many cherish the cross of Christ; few cherish the Christ of the cross.
- Many boast of being in the church of Christ; few know what it is to be in the Christ of the church.
- Many debate the gospel of Christ; few believe in the Christ who is the gospel.
- Many profess what is called the finished work of Christ; few profess the Christ who finished His work.
- Many declare justification and sanctification to be through Christ; few declare Christ to be their only righteousness and holiness.
- Many partake of the bread and wine in what is called the Lord’s Supper; few partake of the Christ represented by those elements.
- Many speak of the return of Christ; few speak of the Christ who is returning.
- Many look for the coming kingdom of Christ; few acknowledge the Christ who is presently King.
- Many hope to go to the heaven of Christ; few want to go to the Christ of heaven.
- Many claim to believe in all the things associated with Christ; few confess “Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:11) – and that everything apart from Christ is nothing.

– Daniel E. Parks, Saint Croix, US Virgin Islands

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Then our Father’s will becomes more important than our own, and, like Jacob, we experience that precisely when we surrender to God, when we lay hold of Him in victorious contentment and submission. Only then do we understand that all true prayer is grounded in Jesus’ great petition, “Thy will be done.” Our prayer then is not that God will bend His will to ours but ours to His, so that we may think, speak, do, and wait upon His will in every situation. As Isaac Watts said, Father, I wait thy daily will; Thou shalt divide my portion still; Grant me on earth what seems thee best, Till death and heav’n reveal the rest. Joel Beeke, contributed by Kelly Tyler