

"It is not a little mending and alteration, a little cleansing and purifying, a little painting and patching, a little turning over a new leaf and putting on a new outside that is wanted. It is the bringing in of something altogether new, the planting within us of a new nature, a new being, a new principle, a new mind; this alone, and nothing less than this, will ever meet the necessities of person's soul. We need not merely a new skin, but a new heart." ~ J.C. Ryle



KEACH'S CATECHISM – Benjamin Keach 1640 - 1704

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

Q. 11. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby for His own glory, He has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass

(Eph. 1:11; Rom. 11:36; Dan. 4:35)

Q. 12. How does God execute His decrees?

A. God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence.

(Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; Matt. 6:26; Acts 14:17)

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsi@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

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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SCARCELY SAVED

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Peter 4:18

Men are often heard commenting on the goodness of man as being sufficient to be accepted with God. Such comments often come at the passing of some loved one with the confident assertion that they are in Heaven. Yet, our Lord commented: *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Mark 10:18.* It may well be that the person who has passed knows the Lord and the grace of salvation has assured their place in Heaven. But, salvation does not come easy and the righteousness of men avails nothing. *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: Romans 3:10.*

Salvation comes with great difficulty. With the popularity of “easy-believe-ism” such a statement is quickly rejected. That is because of two factors. One is that men tend to cheapen the great cost to Christ in obtaining salvation for His people. The other is that they reference the thoughts of men and do not look to the scriptures. Consider our Lord’s stern warning: *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Matthew 7:14.* No amount of effort on the part of men can avail to gain salvation. Yet, the way of the saved in this world is difficult and we are characterized as pilgrims in a strange land.

The warning of Peter here is timely in all generations. The thought here is not of having just made it by a little bit. Rather it addresses the idea of the difficulty that distinguishes it from the way of the ungodly. It has been

observed here that the idea of “saved through much effort” is the thought Peter would communicate to us. What is important to see is that the effort that was extended was that of Christ. The salvation purchased by the blood of Christ and applied by the Holy Spirit to believers is forever and secure in every way. They are the recipients of abundant mercy and their salvation is full and complete. It did not come cheap and not even a fraction of the price could be paid by those who are saved. It took all of the pain Christ suffered and all of the blood He shed to merit such a salvation. He suffered in the stead of sinners and received not only the rejection of men but the righteous wrath of God for them. It is His life that is credited to them and it is His righteousness alone that makes us acceptable in God’s sight.

The dearest and most separated saints we have known did not go to heaven on the basis of their own merits. If we see goodness and beauty in the life of a believer, it is there at great cost. These are not the causes of salvation, they are the evidences. This does not mean that the way is easy in the world. In Christ it is. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. A seeming contrast appears when we read: *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12.* The Apostle Paul bore witness to the struggle he had with indwelling sin in the old nature. (See Romans 7). Thus, we may conclude that the way of salvation in this world is a struggle. Difficulties within and without confront us all along the way. In this salvation is

manifested, not brought to question. The sense of trial that comes upon us is evidence of who we are. In the true believer such things cause us to strain the more to be found in Christ and assured of His salvation and to attain unto the power of His resurrection.

So, Peter brings these thoughts to bear on the condition of the ungodly and sinner. The reference in this passage is to: *Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner. Proverbs 11:31*. The assertion is that the righteous will have difficulty but there is much more coming to the ungodly. Paul pointed the Athenians to the death of Christ our Lord as the confirmation that judgment was sure. What God did to Christ is seen as salvation to the believer but condemnation to the ungodly and the sinner. We normally think of these things in conjunction with horrible crimes and lifestyles. But, ungodly simply means life and actions without a consideration of God, His Son, and His Gospel. They obey not the Gospel (1 Peter 4:17). Thus a person may be thought moral and upright in the eyes of men but in fact be ungodly and

governed by sin and pride. That is why the mere thought of “turning over a new leaf” or self-willed change does not suffice to bring one to God. It took no less than the blood of Christ.

The reality of hell is confirmed in the death and suffering of Christ. The power of God to save is confirmed in His resurrection. To be weighed in the balances with the suffering of Christ on one side and the righteousness of men on the other is to leave man woefully wanting. The righteous in this passage are they who have the righteousness of Christ to their account. They have come by faith and have believed that God is and that “He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” They are saved through much effort and theirs is a life in the way of much effort in the pursuit of God and His righteousness. How sad it is to contemplate the end of those who persist in their own way apart from God. The question is rhetorical and serves to emphasize the distance of such from God and His grace. If it took all that Christ did to deliver the righteous there remains no hope for them.
bhs

REPROOF FROM AN ATHEIST

Were I a religionist [i.e. a Christian], did I truly, firmly, consistently believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and the practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion should be to me everything. I would cast aside earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as less than vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought and my last image when sleep sank me in unconsciousness. I would labor in her cause alone. I would not labor for the meat that perisheth, nor for treasures on earth, but only for a crown of glory in heavenly regions where treasures and happiness are alike beyond the reach of time and chance. I would take thought for the morrow of eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. There should be neither worldly prudence nor calculating circumspection in my engrossing zeal. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand nor seal my lips. I would speak to the imagination, awaken the feelings, stir up the passions, arouse the fancy. Earth, its joys and its grief, should occupy no moment of my thoughts; for these are but the affairs of a portion of eternity – so small that no language can express its comparatively infinite littleness. I would strive to look but on eternity and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly miserable or everlastingly happy. I would deem all who thought only of this world, merely seeking to increase temporal happiness and laboring to obtain temporal goods – I would deem all such pure madmen. I would go forth to the world and preach to it, in season and out of season; and my text should be: “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”
– Anon (Quoted by Daniel Parks)

"The first and the great work of a Christian is about his heart. Do not be content with seeming to do good in 'outward acts' while your heart is bad. See that your chief study be about your heart; that there God's image may be planted; that there His interests be advanced; that there the world and flesh are subdued; that there the love of every sin is cast out; that there the love of holiness grows." - Jonathan Edwards

DIVINE SYMPATHY
(excerpt from John MacDuff)

Jesus has Himself passed through every experience of woe. There are no *depths of sorrow or anguish* into which I can be plunged--but His everlasting arms are lower still! He has been called "*The great sympathetic nerve of His Church*, over which the afflictions and oppressions, and sufferings of His people continually pass!"

Child of Sorrow! A human heart beats on Heaven's Throne--and He has your name written on that heart! He cares for you as if no other claimed His regard--*as if you were the only object of His care!*

He "has been tested in every way, just as we are!" Blessed assurance! I never can know a sorrow into which the "Man of Sorrow" cannot enter. Ah rather, in the midst of *earth's most lacerating trials*--let me listen to the unanswerable challenge from the lips of a suffering Savior, "Was there ever any sorrow, like unto My sorrow!" Yet He willingly drank the *cup of wrath!* He did not shrink back from the appointed cross! And even when He hung upon the bitter tree--He refused the sour wine which would have assuaged the rage of thirst and mitigated physical suffering.

Are we tempted at times to *murmur* under God's afflicting hand? "Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart!" Shall we hesitate to bear any *cross* which our Lord and Master sees fit to lay upon us--when we think of the *infinitely weightier Cross* He so meekly and willingly carried for us?

Jesus has some wise and gracious *purpose* in every mysterious chastisement. His language is, "Hear the rod--and Him who has appointed it!" Micah 6:9. He has too kind and loving a heart--to cause us one needless or superfluous pang!

God sees us-- abandoned, evil, wicked, and deserving His wrath; if He saves us, it is His boundless, fathomless love that leads Him to do it- nothing whatever in us.
Charles Spurgeon

The grace that saves is the grace that teaches us godliness. Hence, those who excuse their sins either misunderstand the nature of grace or the nature of sin.

~Copied