

What a pity that Christians should ever meet together without some talk of their meeting in heaven or of the way to it, before they part. Pity that so much time is spent in vain conversation and useless disputes, and not a serious word of heaven among them... If a Felix will tremble when he hears his judgment powerfully represented, why should not the believer be revived when he hears his eternal rest described? Wicked men can be delighted in talking together of their wickedness. Should not Christians be delighted in talking of Christ, and the heirs of heaven in talking of their inheritance?
—Richard Baxter, “The Saints Everlasting Rest.”



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. 23. What is the misery of that estate whereunto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse, and made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

(Gen. 3:8,24; Eph. 2:3; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41-46; Ps. 9:1)

Q. 24. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, having chosen a people to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation, by a Redeemer.

(Eph. 1:3-4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 5:21; Acts 13:8; Jer. 31:33)

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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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THE COUNSEL OF THE HEATHEN

The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Psalms 33:10-11

From the time of the fall, men have persisted in rebelling against the sovereignty of God. History has demonstrated the sovereignty of God and there is ample evidence that the sovereignty of God is being exercised today; and the promise is that the sovereignty of God will continue to be exercised forever. To true believers, this is irrational behavior. They gratefully acknowledge the sovereignty of God because it is witnessed to them in a context of goodness and mercy. They clearly understand that the sovereignty of God is applied in their best interests. Such is not the case with the unbelieving and rebellious.

The Psalm begins with an exhortation to praise the Lord. Among the reasons that he is to be praised is His character, His work in creation, and the display of his mighty works through all generations. Certainly, to be included in these reasons of praise is the exercise of his rule among men. Men love the thought of being free. But, true freedom is often misunderstood. There is a freedom from something and there is a freedom to something. Historically then, nations have pursued freedom from tyranny and oppression. At the same time, men have pursued the idea of freedom to follow their own sinful lusts and desires. The thought that God should be the absolute ruler over a nation, or that he should disapprove of the moral choices of men is hateful to them. This was brought to the height of expression at the cross when the Jews cried out, "we will not have this man to

reign over us." True freedom is attained in knowing Christ and his righteousness. Those who know Christ have the liberty to worship God in a context of pure delight and have no sense of being oppressed.

It is to the delight of the Lord's people and to the consternation of those who oppose, that God's sovereignty is exercised. The use of the word "counsel" here suggests that men look to their own understanding. The simple observation here is that the counsel of the heathen is brought to nothing and is of none effect. Often the counsel of the heathen is the very thing that God causes to be to their own undoing. We witness in Scripture the sad case of Ahithophel when he betrayed David. The end result was his suicide. This case was prophetic, of that of Judas. In the time of Esther, Haman brought counsel to the King that was designed to destroy Mordecai. Here again, the counsel of the heathen was brought to nothing and Haman was executed on the gallows he had built for Mordecai. The Pharisees challenged our Lord at every turn. Yet, they were frustrated at every attempt to discredit him and to deny that he was indeed the Christ. They thought that they had finally succeeded against Him when they brought him to the cross. But, again their counsel is brought to nothing in that it was the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that brought him there. It was in this way that God had, from the foundation of the world, determined to save his people from their sins. Is

it any wonder then that the Psalmist cried out, *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying... Psalms 2:1-2.*

The problems of the Pharisees were only compounded when it was discovered that Christ had indeed risen from the dead. Though they would deny that this had taken place, the resurrection power of Jesus Christ was manifested in his disciples. At every turn the efforts to stop the testimony only resulted in the further spread of the gospel. We have the record of this frustrated opposition in the Book of Acts. Since then we have witnessed 2000 years of similar opposition. From the beginning, nations that have risen up against God have ultimately fallen. Nation after nation persisted in exalting themselves above the sovereignty of God. Consistent factors were national pride in the absence of true worship and the corruption of morals in an open manner. So it was that we note such things as the fall of the Roman Empire.

Men personally hate the sovereignty of God because it exposes personal weakness. Men want to think themselves as being sufficient unto their own ends. The fact is that men are weak and incapable of rendering satisfaction before God. For this reason Christ became weak

that we might be made strong. When Christ and his righteousness are set forth men are exposed as depraved. They are shown to be unacceptable, unwilling, and incapable. Their only hope is mercy. Even this is administered by a sovereign God. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Romans 9:18.*

It is sad to note that our own nation seems to be going headlong down the path of failed nations from the past. Legislation is enacted that is patently in opposition to the revealed will of God. While we abhor the oppression and persecution occurring in heathen nations, we seem bent on moving toward the same things. National sin as well as personal sin draws the condemnation of God. But the counsel of our leaders will be brought to nothing because it opposes the counsel of God. It seems that human governments would move to control the very souls of men.

Because of the sovereign mercy of God displayed in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ our Lord, there are a people whose God is the Lord. By His grace, they shall never bow to the counsel of the heathen. It is the counsel of the Lord that stands for ever. We are delightfully reminded, that "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," and that is to the glory of God. *bhs*

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."—1 Samuel 7:12.

THE word "hitherto" seems like a hand pointing in the direction of the *past*. Twenty years or seventy, and yet, "hitherto the Lord hath helped!" Through poverty, through wealth, through sickness, through health, at home, abroad, on the land, on the sea, in honour, in dishonour, in perplexity, in joy, in trial, in triumph, in prayer, in temptation, "hitherto hath the Lord helped us!" We delight to look down a long avenue of trees. It is delightful to gaze from end to end of the long vista, a sort of verdant temple, with its branching pillars and its arches of leaves; even so look down the long aisles of your years, at the green boughs of mercy overhead, and the strong pillars of lovingkindness and faithfulness which bear up your joys. Are there no birds in

yonder branches singing? Surely there must be many, and they all sing of mercy received "hitherto."

But the word also points *forward*. For when a man gets up to a certain mark and writes "hitherto," he is not yet at the end, there is still a distance to be traversed. More trials, more joys; more temptations, more triumphs; more prayers, more answers; more toils, more strength; more fights, more victories; and then come sickness, old age, disease, death. Is it over now? No! there is more yet-awakening in Jesu's likeness, thrones, harps, songs, psalms, white raiment, the face of Jesus, the society of saints, the glory of God, the fulness of eternity, the infinity of bliss. O be of good courage, believer, and with grateful confidence raise thy "Ebenezer," for—

He who hath helped thee hitherto Will help thee all thy journey through.

When read in heaven's light how glorious and marvellous a prospect will thy "hitherto" unfold to thy grateful eye! Spurgeon



Clouds and Darkness

Clouds and darkness surround Him . . . -Psalm 97:2

A person who has not been born again by the Spirit of God will tell you that the teachings of Jesus are simple. But when he is baptized by the Holy Spirit, he finds that "clouds and darkness surround Him" When we come into close contact with the teachings of Jesus Christ we have our first realization of this. The only possible way to have full understanding of the teachings of Jesus is through the light of the Spirit of God shining inside us. If we have never had the experience of taking our casual, religious shoes off our casual, religious feet- getting rid of all the excessive informality with which we approach God- it is questionable whether we have ever stood in His presence. The people who are flippant and disrespectful in their approach to God are those who have never been introduced to Jesus Christ. Only after the amazing delight and liberty of realizing what Jesus Christ does, comes the impenetrable "darkness" of realizing who He is.

Jesus said, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Once, the Bible was just so many words to us - "clouds and darkness"- then, suddenly, the words become spirit and life because Jesus re-speaks them to us when our circumstances make the words new. That is the way God speaks to us; not by visions and dreams, but by words. When a man gets to God, it is by the most simple way- words. Chambers



"God has chosen to make prayer a means of blessing, not so that the fulfillment of his purposes becomes dependent upon us, but rather to help us learn our absolute dependence upon him." - Iain Murray

"My grand point in preaching is to break the hard heart and to heal the broken one."
John Newton