

"Oh, that men and women would learn to live with an awareness that one day they are going to die! Truly it is a waste of time to set our hearts on a dying world and its short-lived comforts and pleasures, and for the sake of momentary pleasures to lose a glorious eternity in Heaven! Here we are striving, laboring, exhausting ourselves about little things, and running here and there like ants on an anthill and yet after a few years we will all be gone, and another generation will take our place. Let us live for eternity. Let us seek His Kingdom and His Righteousness that can never be taken from us." ~ J.C. Ryle

GADSBY'S CATECHISM – William Gadsby about 1800

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

Question LXXI. What blessings are connected with faith in Christ Jesus?

Answer. The blessings connected with faith in Christ Jesus are, a freedom from the bondage of sin, Satan, the world, death and the law, with free access to the Father, and a hearty welcome to all the glory of the gospel and the blessings of God's house.

Jn. 3.14-17; Rom. 5.2 & 6.14 & 8.1-4; Eph. 2.18-22; I Jn. 2.12-14 & 5.4-5.

Question LXXII. Since a believer is made free from the law, is it any part of his freedom to be at liberty to sin?

Answer. No; for he is called to holiness; and though he is dead to, and free from, the law of works, he is not now, nor does he wish to be, without law to God but is under the law of Christ. Luke 6.46; Rom. 6.1-2,6-7,11-19 & 7.1-6; 1 Cor. 9.21; Gal. 5.1,13-25; Col. 2.6-7; 2 Tim. 2.19; Tit. 3.8.

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsj@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

Volume 6, No. 38

September 22, 2013

OUR HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Philippians 3:20

Over the centuries many words have lost the richness of their original meanings through common usage. Such a word is “conversation” as it is used in the King James Version of the Bible. Today we think of conversation as being a verbal exchange between two parties. The meaning as was intended by the King James translators was far richer. The meaning of the word includes the thought of community. Many of the modern language translations of the Bible have correctly changed the word to citizenship. Even then the full richness of the thought is not fully captured. Citizenship may be as simple as living in a country with legal registration. However, one’s citizenship is often identified by the way he carries himself and in the way he projects himself toward others. His culture is recognized as being identified with his country. The thought here then was that we believers belong to a community of like-minded citizens whose culture reflects an identity in Heaven.

The apostle Paul was quick to claim his Roman citizenship when his legal rights were being violated. He also, claimed his Hebrew identity as a member of the tribe of Benjamin. But above all else he was a citizen of Heaven and often expressed his desire for his true home. He spoke earlier in this book of having a desire to part and to be with the Lord. But even in this world by his actions, his witness and his character he would be quickly identified as a Christian or at least as being alien to this world. Peter’s words were “I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims.” It is been well said that as

believers we are in the world but not of the world. The country of origin of a foreign born person may often be identified by their mannerisms, their accent, and the way they express themselves. So it is with Heavenly citizens. The admonition of the apostle was to “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” It is in this manner that we are to be identified in this present world and our citizenship to be determined as not of this world.

Governments of this world maintain a registration of their citizens. It is interesting that our Lord directed us to such a registration as a cause for rejoicing. *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Luke 10:20.* That such a Heavenly record exists is conspicuous as we read, *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Revelation 13:8.* This fact is also noted in Revelation 17:8. Our Lord did not tell those men that their names would be written in Heaven rather that they were already written there. So then, to the question often asked, “What is your country of origin?” We answer we are born from above which is the thought conveyed in our Lord’s words, “you must be born again!”

At the new birth we in fact experience that change of citizenship. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: Colossians*

1:13. The immediate thought is how can we still be here and yet be in his kingdom? As new creatures in Christ Jesus we have a present spiritual and very real connection with Heaven. We further read, *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 2:6*. Again, how are we here and yet seated there? In Jesus Christ we are there and even here our life and identity are tied integrally to him. And, we find ourselves firmly established in the community of the redeemed of the Lord.

We are directed in the Word of God to be submissive to the governments of this world. But we are under a new government. But, most assuredly our King and thus our government is in Heaven. It is there that we look for direction and receive it through the Word of God. It is there we look for protection and are given assurances of it in the Scriptures. It is from there we receive life and the provision for it. We are drawn to Heaven because of who is there. While many focus on and are motivated by the prospect of seeing departed loved ones, the ultimate look is to seeing our Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly we are comforted in the knowledge that loved ones who have died in the Lord are secure there. Heaven is indeed our homeland.

The heart of the true believer is there. The glory of God is on full display there. All of our hopes and expectations are registered there. So it is to there we look for the promised return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We read in the Scriptures of many mandates as to proper behavior and expression. Yet, it would seem that these are simply directing us to be identified with our heavenly origin and with Him whose image we bear. The world ever moves us to conformity with it. Our Lord warned us that if we were of the world the world would claim us. He then declares that we are not of this world and are therefore subject to its contempt. *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. John 15:19*. Earlier in this same epistle the Apostle Paul admonished that we should let our conversation (community, culture, practice of life, etc.) be as it becometh the gospel. Our Lord came into this world and lived, suffered, died, rose again, and ascended back on high in order to certify and confirm our Heavenly citizenship. It is as citizens of Heaven that we should be recognized in this world. *bhs*

THE KINGDOM OF GO IS WITHIN YOU

Moreover, we have the life of God in us and the rule of God over us. We have been given blessings and stature befitting true citizens of Heaven. We have become part of a new family, a new kind of community. We have left the kingdom of darkness for the kingdom of light. We are no longer under the dominion of Satan but have entered God's eternal kingdom alongside Christ. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.' We are among the firstfruits of God's new creation (James 1:18), which will culminate in the eternal new heavens and new earth. That's what Jesus meant when he said, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21, kjv). John MacArthur *The Glory of Heaven*

"It is always a sign of repentance in Christians who have fallen when they leave the company where they were led astray." Spurgeon

TWO WORDS

Concerning them, the late James Montgomery Boice wrote, “May I put it quite simply? If you understand those two words—‘but God’—they will save your soul. If you recall them daily and live by them, they will transform your life completely.”

It is no surprise, then, that the human authors of Scripture use this phrase repeatedly to highlight God’s grace in every aspect of salvation. From Moses to Paul and just about everywhere in between, “But God” appears time and again at many crucial junctures in Scripture. It is the perfect phrase for highlighting the grace of God against the dark backdrop of human sin.

To the left of “But God” in Scripture appear some of the worst human atrocities, characterized by disobedience and rebellion. To the left of “But God” is hopelessness, darkness, and death. But to its right, following “But God,” readers of Scripture will find hope, light, and life. Following God’s intervention, the story of Scripture becomes one of grace, righteousness, and justice.

This book has been born out of my desire to better understand these two words, and how they are used in Scripture. Having searched through and referenced every instance of “But God” (or “But he,” “But you,” etc.), I have found that this phrase is used to describe God’s activity in nearly every great salvation story in the Bible.

“But God” marks God’s relentless, merciful interventions in human history. It teaches us that God does not wait for us to bring ourselves to him, but that he acts first to bring about our good. It also teaches us of the potential consequences if God were not to act. Scripture shows over and over that without God’s intervening grace, without the “But God” statements in the Bible, the world would be completely lost in sin and under judgment.

It may not be a common thing to write a book about two words, but these are no insignificant words. Indeed, everything Dr. Boice wrote above is true. If we understand these two words as the biblical authors use them, we will understand salvation—a salvation that is by grace alone, through Christ alone. Casey Lute, Introduction to: *“But God...” The Two Words at the Heart of the Gospel*



LISTEN TO GOD

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. —John 8:12 If while hearing a sermon we can fix on but one real jewel of truth we may consider ourselves well rewarded for the time we have spent. One such gem was uncovered during a sermon which I heard some time ago. From the sermon I got one worthy sentence and no more, but it was so good that I regret that I cannot remember who the preacher was, that I might give him credit. Here is what he said, “Listen to no man who fails to listen to God.”... No man has any right to offer advice who has not first heard God speak. No man has any right to counsel others who is not ready to hear and follow the counsel of the Lord. True moral wisdom must always be an echo of God’s voice. The only safe light for our path is the light which is reflected from Christ, the Light of the World.... God has His chosen men still, and they are without exception good listeners. They can hear when the Lord speaks. We may safely listen to such men. But to no others.

Don’t ever let me preach my own empty, worthless stuff, Lord. Whenever I enter the pulpit I pray that I might have a fresh word from heaven. Amen. A. W. Tozer Christian Leadership