

No man is excluded from calling upon God, the gate of salvation is set open unto all men: neither is there any other thing which keepeth us back from entering in, save only our own unbelief." - John Calvin

To be a Christian is to be devoted utterly, and irrevocably, to Christ! J. R. Miller

**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 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**

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: [branthjs@msn.com](mailto:branthjs@msn.com)

Website: [www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com](http://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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### A SIGN NOT ASKED

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14*

It is often the case that the most wonderful revelations of the grace and mercy of God come in the direst circumstances. Such is the situation with this most wonderful prophecy. The King in Judah was Ahaz and he was known for his wickedness. The nation was under threat from both Syria and Ephraim. The King was certainly uncertain as to the outcome even though scripture tells us that they could not prevail against Judah. Isaiah reports that he was sent to Ahaz with a message from the Lord. The message was a simple assurance that these enemies would not prevail. It would seem that Ahaz was looking to the Assyrians for deliverance and had no interest in the Lord's message. The Lord directed Ahaz to ask of Him a sign. It could be anything he chose, but he refused and added this “weariness” to the rest of his wickedness.

So it was that the Lord would give the sign of His choosing. That which He gave came to be realized more than seven hundred years later with the conception and birth of Christ Jesus our Lord. It is amazing that a sign so unique and so profound should be ignored by many even to this day. When men doubt and discredit the Word of God it begins with that which was proclaimed – the virgin birth and deity of Christ our Lord. This Old Testament declaration is the very substance of the Gospel. It reveals to us the manner in which God would (and did) bring salvation to His people. He would be “God with us.”

But, why is it placed here in this setting? The message came at a time when wickedness was at an extreme and hope seemed far from them. Jewish Historian Alfred Edersheim remarked that the nation had reached its lowest ebb when Christ came into the world. Perhaps, this announcement prefigured that scene as well. God does not present Himself or His Son in competition with the ideas of men. Neither does He act in a way than can be explained away in blatant unbelief. So the declaration of a virgin conception and birth has no explanation from men. It was both miraculous and necessary in that our Savior could not have an earthly father else the sin of Adam would be found in Him. Men cannot of themselves understand either the miracle or the necessity. He must be Holy, harmless and undefiled and such could never be found among men. So it was that He came into the world in this manner.

So many things are brought together at the realization of this wondrous birth. Not the least of which had to be a mystery to all reading it. How could there be a “seed of the woman?” Yet, it is He that is declared to be the conqueror of the god of this world. Thus, we see Him at the beginning in Genesis. We see Him here in the writing of Isaiah. And we gloriously celebrate the incarnation of the same in all our Christian testimony. Great indeed is the mystery of Godliness – “God was manifest in the flesh...”

How rich are the many announcements with regard to Him and His coming. It is well said in

this quote from Robert Hawker: "I only detain the Reader, to remark with me, the grace of God in the sweet discoveries made of Jesus, from age to age: how, by gradual means, from the first dawn of revelation, down to the very moment of Christ's coming, the Lord unfolded the wonders of his person and character, like the light of the morning, shining more and more unto a perfect day! To Adam it was said, that the Redeemer should be of the seed of the woman; to Abraham, of his house and family; to Jacob, the tribe of which he should spring; in the time of David, many of his offices, in his prophetic, priestly, and kingly character, were foretold; and now in the days of the prophets, other features were given: Isaiah in this place declares, that he should be born of a virgin; Micah is commissioned to tell the place of his birth; Daniel the time: and thus the Lord prepared the church, by little and little, to have clear conceptions both of his person and character, that every soul, might be on the look-out to hail and welcome the coming Saviour!"

We are given a look at the nature of His relationship to His people. While many look with sympathy and sentiment to the manger scene, the shepherds were given the full impact of

what had happened. This was not a mere baby. This was "Immanuel." This was God with us. This was God the Son robed in human flesh. He was the "Man Christ Jesus." How else to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities? How else to bear our sins in His body? How else to accomplish in us that which God required. What a precious text this is indeed!

Matthew Henry preciousy commented: "Those whom God designs for the great salvation may take that for a sign to them that they shall not be swallowed up by any trouble they meet with in the way. The Messiah shall be introduced on a glorious errand, wrapped up in his glorious name: They shall call his name Immanuel - God with us, God in our nature, God at peace with us, in covenant with us. This was fulfilled in their calling him Jesus - a Saviour (Mat. 1:21-25), for, if he had not been Immanuel - God with us, he could not have been Jesus - a Saviour.

The traditional celebrations of the birth of Christ have given way to ornate displays of human design and often lack the true elements of worship. May we ever be in the way of celebrating our "God Manifest in the flesh." *bhs*

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## How to Magnify God

John Piper

I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. (Psalm 69:30)

There are two kinds of magnifying: microscope magnifying and telescope magnifying. The one makes a small thing look bigger than it is. The other makes a big thing begin to look as big as it really is.

When David says, "I will magnify God with thanksgiving," he does not mean: "I will make a small God look bigger than he is." He means: "I will make a big God begin to look as big as he really is."

We are not called to be microscopes, but telescopes. Christians are not called to be con-men who magnify their product out of all proportion to reality, when they know the competitor's product is far superior. There is nothing and nobody superior to God. And so the calling of those who love God is to make his greatness begin to look as great as it really is.

The whole duty of the Christian can be summed up in this: feel, think, and act in a way that will make God look as great as he really is. Be a telescope for the world of the infinite starry wealth of the glory of God.

This is what it means for a Christian to magnify God. But you can't magnify what you haven't seen or what you quickly forget.

Therefore, our first task is to see and to remember the greatness and goodness of God. So we pray to God, "Open the eyes of my heart," and we preach to our souls, "Soul, forget not all his benefits!"

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### A GOSPEL HANDED DOWN

When the apostle Paul writes that he "received" the gospel, he is making a claim to special revelation. He did not fabricate this message, nor was it borrowed from others. Rather, it came to him through an extraordinary revelation of Jesus Christ. In Galatians 1:11–12, Paul describes this experience in greater detail: "But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ." Paul's purpose for relating this unique experience is to demonstrate that his gospel has a divine origin. He was not writing to exalt himself or to suggest that his gospel was somehow different from that given to the other apostles or to the church as a whole. In fact, he later relates in the same letter that he had submitted his gospel to those who were of high reputation in the church of Jerusalem, and they had neither corrected him nor contributed anything to his understanding.<sup>4</sup> Paul intends for all of this to demonstrate that there is only one true gospel. It was born in the heart of God and handed down to the church through the apostles. It is an eternal and immutable word that transcends both time and culture. It is not to be modified or adapted to please the palates of differing cultures or epochs, but it is to be held in the highest regard as absolute and immutable truth. For this reason, we who have become recipients and stewards of the gospel should learn to handle it with great caution, even fear. Jude, the half brother of the Lord, exhorted us to contend earnestly for this gospel faith that was once and for all handed down to the saints, and the apostle Paul admonished us to guard it as an entrusted treasure.<sup>5</sup> He even went so far as to pronounce a curse upon any man or angel who would alter its contents for any reason: "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." – Paul Washer

As Spurgeon opened the Bible, he beheld the clear teaching of the sovereignty of God in man's salvation. He believed he had no choice but to preach these truths because these are the teachings of God Himself. He simply would not be moved from these doctrines of grace. However, Spurgeon also found that God's Word teaches the necessity of gospel preaching and evangelism, and that it is the responsibility of every person to believe on Jesus Christ. Spurgeon held these twin truths—divine sovereignty and human responsibility—because both are unmistakably taught in the Bible. --Steven J. Lawson -- *The Gospel Focus of C. H. Spurgeon*