

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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## Can A Christian Be Prejudiced And Still Go To Heaven?

by Neal Pollard

What an odd question. Obviously, an alien sinner (i.e., non-Christian) will not go to heaven even if he or she is *not* prejudiced. One must render obedience to the gospel to enjoy eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:9). It is unfortunate that a Christian would treat another Christian differently because of the color of one's skin, the level of income one makes, or one's physical attributes and appearance. Yet, some things seem to prove that prejudice is alive and thriving in some places in the Lord's church. Borrowing a phrase from James, "My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (cf. James 3:10).

First, consider the presence of "black congregations" and "white churches." With what authority do such segregated bodies exist? In fairness, when it is decided by all races in a multi-racial area to meet separately to more effectively further efforts of evangelism, that would seem fair and acceptable (so long as no one is refused or mistreated who wishes to worship at one of the other congregations). Sadly, however, in churches which are predominately one race, visiting minorities have been ostracized and avoided. In the days before the civil rights of black Americans were improved, a "mixed" congregation was a rare exception. While strides have been made, there are still congregations who would be quite uncomfortable with having an African-American preacher preach at the congregation they attend or participating in any public way in the assembly.

Also, think about the strategy of "taking the gospel to the community." Evangelism can be the greatest weakness of a congregation anyway. When a church does seek to reach out to the community, minorities seem to be passed over frequently. Why is the "black community" or the "Hispanic community" at the bottom of a strategy list? It would be dangerous to make judgment. But, *could* it be fear for our personal safety? *Could* it be fear of having success in that community? *Could* it be an unwillingness to reach out to someone "different"

from us? These are not legitimate excuses in God's eyes.

Finally, ponder the need for equality in the Lord's Kingdom. A common phrase is, "There are no 'second class citizens' in the Kingdom." Amen! So wrote James, inspired by the Holy Spirit. He penned, "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:1-4, ASV). Would we be willing to serve under an elder or with a deacon who is financially poor, who is of different ethnic background, or who has "only a high-school education"? Remember, "God is no respecter of persons..." (Acts 10:34,35; Romans 2:11). Despite racial, economic, and geographical differences, all faithful Christians are "the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (1 Corinthians 12:27). Paul reminds us that "there is *one* body" (Ephesians 4:4). The Bible reveals only one heaven and one hell, not one for each race or social strata.

Christians who do not get along with all races and labor as equals in the Kingdom with faithful brethren on earth should not expect to bask in the glory of the unprejudiced Father throughout eternity. It is hard to fathom that our soul could be red, yellow, black, or white or that one's soul would "appear" differently because of the model car he drives, the size of her bank account, or the kind of house in which one lives. As we "press on unto perfection" (Hebrews 6:1), let us "put away" the besetting sin of prejudice (cf. Hebrews 12:1) so that God can fully bless our labors for Him!

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*Editor's Note: I truly appreciate brother Pollard's article and the manner in which he deals with what remains for some an emotional topic. Seldom is this matter dealt with, and I say that to our shame. Some who try to speak or write on racial relations in the church do so in ways which close minds instead of stimulating them. Do we still have serious problems facing our acceptance of racial equality in the Lord's church as we head toward the 21st century? Indeed, we do! Those problems range from an indifference to saving the souls of blacks and other racial minorities to an overt hatred for such people. Unfortunately, I know of places where minority races are ignored in evangelistic campaigns and of one place where a good preacher had his elders resign and he was subsequently fired by those who took over the congregation. Why? Because he studied with and baptized two black ladies. Such incidents, I pray, are rare, but they should never be named in the church for which Christ died. All nations are to flow into that church (Isaiah 2:2-4; Matthew 28:18-20). Read the gospel of Luke and note Christ's love for all races and social classes of people. Then compare your attitudes with the Lord's. Do you have the mind of Christ? (Philippians 2:1-12)*

## THINGS THAT DO NOT PROVIDE THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

by Richard England

The New Testament is very plain in its teaching regarding what must be done to obtain the forgiveness of sin. One who has never become a Christian must hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, believe it, and "call on the name of the Lord" (Romans 10:13-17). Calling on the name of the Lord includes being baptized (Acts 22:16). If one should fall away there must be repentance and prayer to return (Acts 8:22).

Often people think there are other ways and means of having sin forgiven or even not having it counted against them in the first place. Here are just a few of the ideas of men:

(Continued on page 2)

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1. If it is legal and approved by the majority of people it is not sin. Such a standard would sanction abortion (which is murder), gambling, lying (as long as it is not under oath), divorce for any or no cause, profanity and cursings, and on and on the list could go. Legality or majority vote does not make sin righteous.

2. The passage of time does not provide forgiveness. Some have the idea that if the sin was long enough ago there is no need to take any steps to correct it. The Bible teaches no such thing.

3. Close kin to the passage of time excuse, is the one that says if people have forgotten it, it's alright now and one needs not do anything about it. Poor memory, on our part or anyone else's, does not provide the forgiveness of sin.

4. Moving to a new locality does not erase sin.

5. Sin is not forgiven simply because people who know about it understand the circumstances and sympathize, saying they understand and don't blame one for doing what was done.

6. Ignorance does not excuse sin. While the Lord teaches that those who sin in ignorance "*shall be beaten with few stripes*" (Luke 12:48), He, nevertheless, teaches they will be beaten! There is a responsibility to know what is right and wrong.

7. A clear conscience does not guarantee a clean soul. Paul, even while persecuting the church, had a clear conscience (Acts 23:1); yet, he later referred to himself in that activity as the "*chief*" of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15).

8. Sincerity alone is no assurance that sins are forgiven. Again look at Paul who said: *I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*" (Acts 26:9).

9. Following the doctrines men have originated, and submitting to their rituals, manuals and disciplines, will not furnish the forgiveness of sin.

Sin is transgression of God's law and only obedience to God's commands will take it away. It matters not whether men are aware of one's sin and/or hold it against him. It is to God we must answer in the final judgment.

Gospel Guide

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*Editor's Note: Richard England was editor of the Fulton County Gospel News from 1962-1967. He did an excellent work in that role and currently edits another fine little paper called the Gospel Guide. That paper is also free and you can write to the address above and request to be added to their mailing list.*

## HOW DO YOU CARE FOR A NEW BABY?

by Allen Webster

Babies are wonderful inventions, don't you think? To bad they don't come with an owner's manual! Wouldn't it be nice if they were like ovens (self-cleaning) and car batteries (maintenance free)?! Most parents learn to take care of their first baby by trial and error. They learn what works and what doesn't. And they do a fine job.

God has a family, too, and it's called the church (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19. 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17). A healthy church has babies. One can only get into God's family by birth, as Nicodemus learned (Jn. 3:1-5). At the time of a person's baptism he is like a new baby (new creature, 2 Cor. 5:17). Paul even talked about going through "labor pains" (travailing) until Christ could be formed in the Galatian Christians (Gal. 4:19). Babies in the church, just like in "real life," need different treatment than mature adults. Just how do you care for a baby Christian?

**BABIES NEED LOVE.** New babies need to be "mothered." Paul wrote, "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not

the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us" (1 Thess. 2:7, 8). Mature Christians need to be willing to "spend and be spent" for the good of the young. They need to be able to feel the genuine family love God's people have (Jn. 13:34, 35).

New babies also need to be "fathered." They have been begotten by the one who taught them the truth (cf. 1 Cor. 4:14, 15; 1 Pet. 1:23-2:3), but in the same context (as above) there is another sense of "fathering" used. "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:11, 12). A father's love prompts him to exhort, comfort, and charge his children. [To take another figure, Paul was the obstetrician who brought the new converts into the world and then he became the pediatrician who took care of their needs in early childhood.]

**BABIES NEED THE RIGHT FOOD.**

Paul sometimes became frustrated because older Christians were "still on the bottle" (1 Cor. 3:1,2; Heb. 5:12-14). Implied in this, though, is that baby Christians are to be fed with that which is easily digested (cf. 1 Pet. 2:2). They are not yet able to understand the "weightier matters of the law." They need to learn the "basics" (of the church; about the nature of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit). They need to learn the "dangers" (of denominationalism, indifference, worldliness, and false doctrines). They need to learn the "how-to's" (how to teach others; how to study and worship; and how to live faithfully day by day).

Christian parents who have the joy of having their children become God's children need to feed them "the bottle" at home. Daddy needs to get out his Bible and teach Junior the fundamentals of the faith - why we do what we do and when and how. Mama needs to get out her Bible and sit with the new baby and feed him or her as carefully as she did when he/she was a babe in arms. Preachers need to remember that there are babies in their audiences and aim some lessons their way. Elders need to remember that their flocks have lambs that need a special kind of food and see to it that they receive it (Acts 20:28). Bible teachers keep the babies in mind in preparing their lessons.

**BABIES NEED PROTECTION.**

Young converts are like lambs that must be carried in His arms (Isa. 40:11; Jn. 21).

In the Arctic regions, the unprotected young of two species of grazing animals – the caribou and the musk ox – are easy prey for packs of Arctic wolves. Since there are no forests in which to hide, their survival depends entirely upon adult protection. The adult musk oxen form a circle with their calves inside. A wolf does not stupidly throw himself against their sharp horns. The caribou not only form a protective circle around their calves, but the ring of adult animals constantly race around the closely packed calves so that the attackers must breech a "circle saw" of antlers and flailing hooves (Echols).

In a less dramatic but more important way, mature Christians must form a protective circle around their "little ones" who cannot survive the battles of faith without help. Satan is going to try especially hard to steal the saved sheep during the first few months (1 Pet. 5:8). They have a little faith, but there is so much lacking (1 Thess. 3:10). Like newborn infants, they need care. Like tender baby plants, they need cultivation (1 Thess. 5:14). They need protection from false doctrine (Eph. 4:14), false teachers (Mt. 7:15), and evil companions (1 Cor. 15:33). Paul compared his protection of the Corinthian church to a father protecting his engaged daughter from seduction (2 Cor. 11:1-5).

**BABIES NEED TRAINING.** The church is a kind of nursery where children are born into God's family and helped to mature. A new convert, like a baby, must learn to do everything. They need to learn how to pray, study, behave, think (as a Christian), teach, participate in classes and worship acceptably. They need instruction (1 Cor. 4:14-17). This training involves exercise. Christians exercise by practicing good works (2 Thess. 2:17) and growing in godliness (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Physical and spiritual members lose strength if not used (Heb. 5:14). This instruction may include discipline (1 Cor. 4:21). Growth is the primary aim of instruction (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18; 2 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 6:1-3; Eph. 4:11-13). The process of growth is not complete until the seedling has become a sturdy, fruit-bearing tree (Col. 2:6,7) and the baby has become a full-grown man (Eph. 4:11-13).

How do you take care of a baby? Follow the owner's manual – God's Holy Word.

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*Creativity is the art of taking a fresh clean look at old knowledge.*

## Is Baptism An "Outward Expression Of Inward Grace?"

by Marvin Rickett

The Calvinist treatment of baptism is that it is an "outward expression of inward grace." Some of the denominational creeds contain this statement. Many religious people hold this view of baptism as a part of their faith. Is this a correct view of baptism?

What is meant by the statement that "baptism is an outward expression of inward grace?" It is just another way of saying that baptism is administered "because of" remission of sins, that one is saved before he is baptized, that one is saved at the point of faith and then is later baptized as good Christian work. This doctrine says that God's grace has already entered the person's heart and bestowed salvation upon him, and then he obeys the command to be baptized as his first good Christian act. The purpose of this baptism is to declare to the world that God's saving grace is already dwelling within his heart.

Our question is: "Is this what the Bible teaches? Does the Bible anywhere give the purpose of baptism as 'an outward sign of inward grace?' Does it anywhere teach that one receives saving grace prior to his baptism? If so, where?"

The proponents of this theory have labored mightily to get Acts 2:38 to say "be baptized because of remission of sins, but no reputable Greek scholar will translate it that way. They all translate it "for," "unto," "into," "in order to." The verse actually teaches that baptism precedes one's receiving the saving grace of God.

They also labor mightily to reduce the baptism of Romans 6:3, 4 to a mere "picture" of past salvation. They say baptism reflects the accomplished reception of saving grace and baptism merely pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ which brought it about. However, even a casual examination of this passage shows baptism is a present participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. When we participate in the death of Christ, we contact the cleansing blood which He shed in His death. When we participate in His resurrection, we then obtain newness of life. Jesus received newness of life when he arose from His grave. We obtain newness of life when we arise from the watery grave of baptism. We do not have newness of life before we are buried! Therefore, we could not have had inward grace before baptism.

Other scriptures make impossible the doctrine that the purpose of baptism is an outward expression of inward grace. Acts 22:16 says that the purpose of baptism is to wash away sins: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." But if one came to baptism already having inward grace, he would have no sins to be washed away.

Peter said, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21). If one had saving grace within, then he was already saved and baptism did not save him. If he is saved at the point of baptism, as this verse teaches, then baptism is not an outward sign of inward grace.

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The adherent to the false theme of this lesson would have the verse say, "He that believeth is saved, and shall be baptized (as an outward expression of inward grace)."

The proper understanding of the purpose of baptism is important. It is the difference between whether one obeys God or disobeys God. One is not saved before he is baptized. If he is baptized believing that he was already saved, he has not obeyed God and is still lost in his sins. Rather than baptism being an outward sign of inward grace, it is the action of faith by which the saving grace of God enters the person's life, cleanses his heart with the blood of Christ, and brings newness of life to his soul.

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## GOD IS!

by Darrell Broking

In Psalms 71:19 the psalmist declared, "O God, who is like unto thee!" Time and time again the Bible instructs us as to Whom God is. Jehovah said of Himself, "I am God, and there is none else, I am God and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9-10). Power, might, and strength, why these are not synonyms of God, for these things emulate from His Divine Nature.

In the long ago Pharaoh wanted to know who the God of the Hebrews was. Through the mighty hand of God, Moses began to instruct the Pharaoh. As the Egyptians were pursuing the Hebrews near the Red Sea, Jehovah sent words of comfort to His people. The Lord said, "the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen." I imagine that Jehovah's lesson really sunk in as Pharaoh and his army were being covered by the Red Sea. On that day water saved some and destroyed others.

Traveling through the darkness of the world, where would we be without God? He is light (1 John 1:5), and His Word is the only lamp able to direct our steps (Psalms 119:105). Man's "think so" will never equal God's say so. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). I wonder if Pharaoh will quote this verse throughout eternity?

In a world of hatred, would we not be overcome with malice and suffocate from the fumes of man's unrighteous indignation, without the one true God? John informs us that God is love (1 John 4:8). God loved the church before her inauguration (John 3:16; Romans 5:8-9). Therefore, He spared not His only begotten Son. We live in a day in which man draws iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope (Isaiah 5:18-24). Many today call evil love, and love evil. Nevertheless God's love endures. The righteous will endure with Him in truth (John 14:15; 15:14). Pharaoh can testify to the fact that He will spare not the unrighteous. You see, our God of love is also a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The Bible contains many lessons as to the nature of God. He is not unjust (Hebrews 6:10), nor is He the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Contrary to the beliefs of many, God is not mocked (Galatians 6:7)! God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9), merciful (Deuteronomy 4:31), jealous (Nahum 1:2), and our judge (Psalms 75:7; James 4:12). He is man's salvation (Psalms 68:20), his defense (Psalms 59:9), and his only hope (Titus 1:2). David was able to say, "my heart standeth in awe of thy word" (Psalms 119:161). Today, with our sixty-six inspired books, we should declare, "my heart melts under thy awesome word!"

Some today are asking, "Who is God?" for the right reasons. Some, like Pharaoh, ask out of contempt. Others ask not at all. Those searching for the truth today will find it (John 8:32). Man can know that God Is, and he can hide himself in God before it is too late (Colossians 3:3). Today, water has its part in saving the obedient, just as it did in Pharaoh's day, and in Noah's day (1 Peter 3:20-21). One day everyone will know that God Is! (Philippians 2:9-11)

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### I WILL DO MORE

I will do more than belong — I will participate.  
I will do more than care — I will help.  
I will do more than believe — I will practice.  
I will do more than be fair — I will be kind.  
I will do more than forgive — I will work.  
I will do more than earn — I will enrich.  
I will do more than teach — I will inspire.  
I will do more than give — I will serve.  
I will do more than live — I will grow.  
I will do more than be friendly — I will be a friend.

- William Arthur Ward

*Loving means to love that which is unlovable, or it is no virtue at all; forgiving means to pardon the unpardonable, or it is no virtue at all; faith means believing the unbelievable, or it is no virtue at all. And to hope means hoping when things are hopeless, or it is no virtue at all.*

*Parents do not bring up children any more — they finance them.*

### GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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