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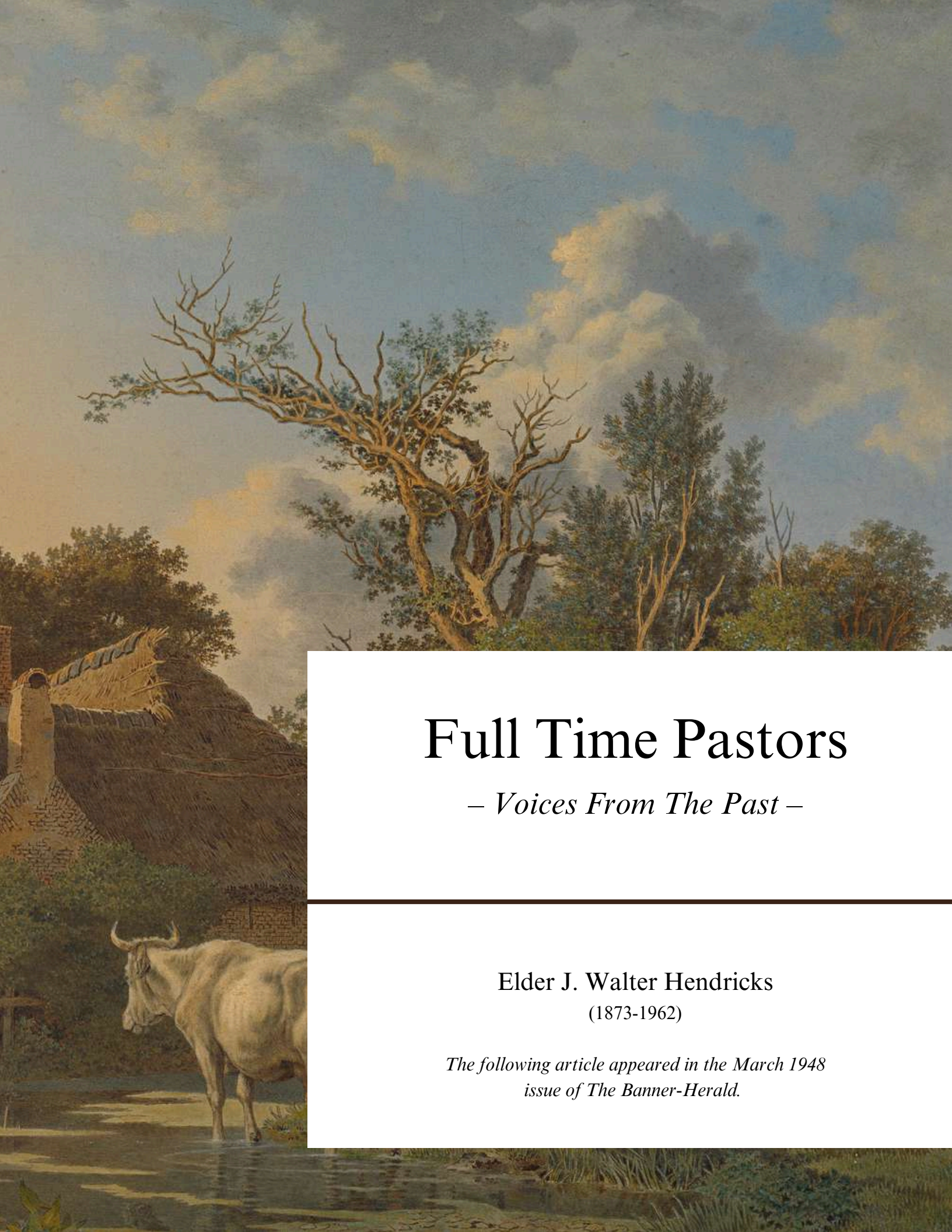

Full Time Pastors

– Voices From The Past –

Elder J. Walter Hendricks
(1873-1962)

The following article appeared in the March 1948 issue of The Banner-Herald.

The following article appeared in the March 1948 issue of the Banner Herald. It was written by the editor of the Banner Herald, the late Elder J. Walter Hendricks. At this time, many of our churches did not have full-time pastors. Elder Hendricks was a visionary in that he saw the need for there to be full-time ministers of the gospel. Today, we still have such a need. There are goodly number of our ministers who are in their retirement years who are still serving as full-time pastors. There are others, because of health concerns, who have had to retire from full-time ministry. So, in the not-too-distant future, there will be many more churches that will be without a full-time pastor. We praise God for his goodness recently in laying upon the hearts of men to enter the ministry. Steven Drawdy and Kirk Cavanah have been recently ordained. May God bless us with more men who would ably serve Him by serving as pastors to His people. Let us pray, as Elder Hendricks writes, that the LORD would be pleased to add more laborers to the fields that are ready for the harvest. - Elder Dean Robbins

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The time has come when more of our churches should have full time, settled pastors. This has been said again and again, and very well said; but it needs to be said yet more. You may come back at me and say, there would not be enough preachers to go around; some of the churches would have to do without. This argument is easy to meet. Where did we get the preachers we have now? Are they God-given? If not, they should be set aside; but surely they are God's gifts to His dear people, to His churches. If God gave these, will He not give more if we need them and ask Him? "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2). "This is the way, walk ye in it." I we should need more preachers, the Master of the harvest could give them to us.

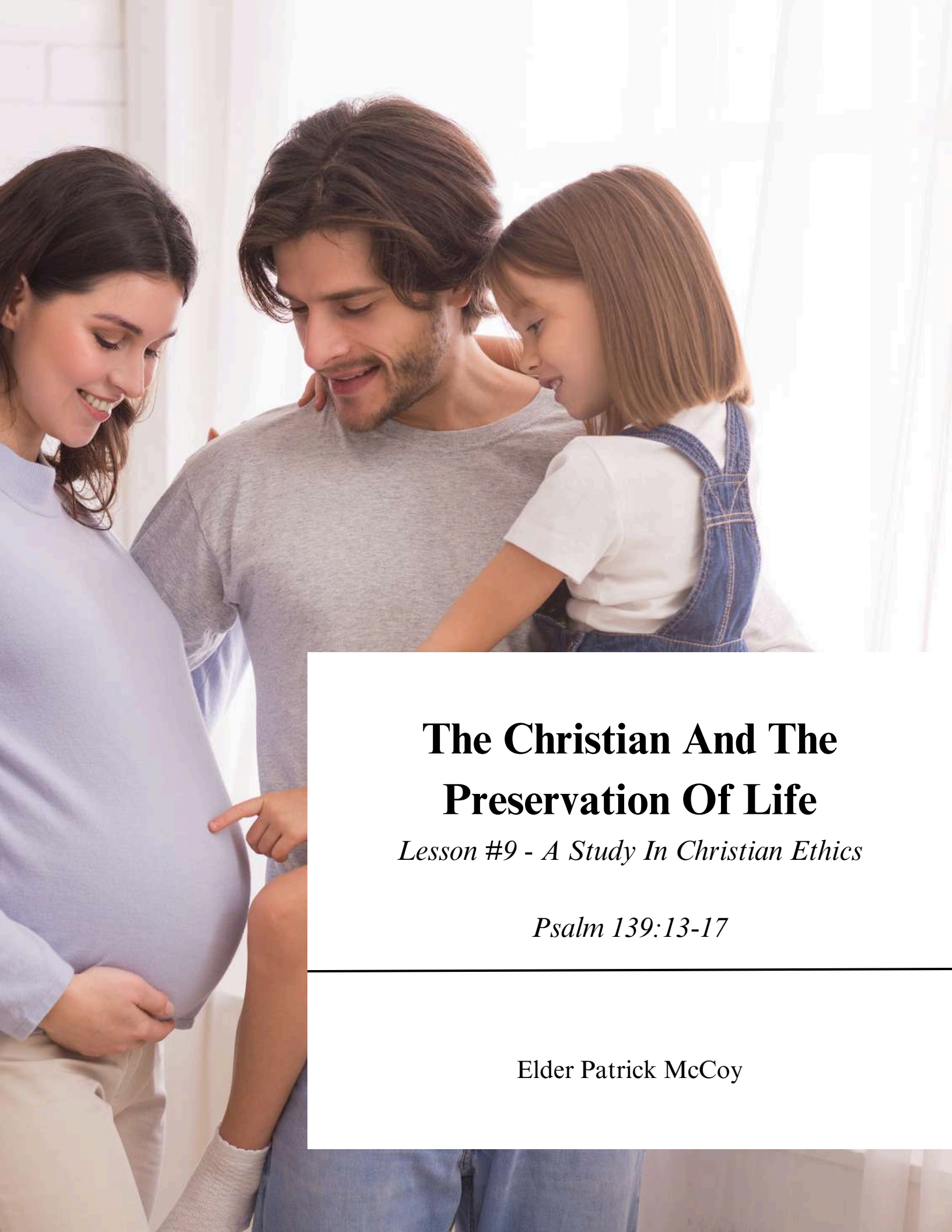
If every church is to have a settled, full-time pastor, we shall need better preachers, those that have more versatility, such as can preach the same congregation every Sunday two sermons and keep up the interest of the people. A little praying might help that situation some; but hard study and close application on the part of the preachers, with much praying, would be very necessary. Usually when a preacher studies up a good new sermon, he peddles it all around the circuit and back, preaching it his four or five churches; but when he has to face the same congregation twice every Sunday, that one sermon business is out. He can not repeat very often. Some good faithful brother will get him by the hand and work it up and down like a pump handle and say: "Brother, you preached that sermon last August." And will his face be red then?

If any of the preachers oppose the idea of each church having a full-time pastor, you may know at once that such preachers are one-sermon preachers, too lazy to dig up any more. If the churches oppose this plan, they are not willing to pay the price necessary to put on this program. Some of you folks better keep mum; I have nailed you down.

Of course, we all know very well that this system could not be adopted by all the churches at once; but more of them could and should adopt it, and others could begin to get ready for it.

Could a country church adopt this plan? Yes. How? Let the preacher take a course in scientific agriculture, let him buy a good farm level, let him study the poultry and livestock industry, and let him lay out terraces and drains, and give advice and help in solving the farm problem. Let him have a little patch or two of his own, let him raise some fruits and vegetables, but let this just be enough to keep him healthy and strong. Let this be his hobby. But let the main work be in the church on Sunday, and out among his members the other days, living and laboring with them, loving and serving them in every possible way. This thing would work if the preacher and the members would work it. Lord, open our eyes that we may see.

We are living in a new day. We must meet the demands that are upon us. We must make the same old gospel truth fit the lives and hearts of the people in this complex, machine age. Now let me see you rub that out.



The Christian And The Preservation Of Life

Lesson #9 - A Study In Christian Ethics

Psalm 139:13-17

Elder Patrick McCoy

Daily Devotions:

Monday	Life's Beginning	Genesis 1:27
Tuesday	Fearfully Made	Psalm 139:13-16
Wednesday	A Time For Everything	Ecclesiastes 3:1-3
Thursday	Murder	Exodus 20:13
Friday	Satan's Work	John 10:10
Saturday	The Giver Of Life	Acts 17:25
Sunday	Breath In His Hands	Daniel 5:23

Memory Verse: Genesis 1:27

Devotional Reading: Psalm 139

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 139:13-17

Introduction

The taking of life is abominable. It is a welcome alternative to take time to revere life—in all its ways. I've struggled over writing this lesson. It's painful to do the research. I would like to pretend such horrific things do not happen in the world I live in. Murder, euthanasia, abortion, assisted suicide are all too common today.

Sometimes I Feel So Useless

It's easy to become numb to it all, to ignore the whole issue of abortion, genocide, euthanasia, human cloning and genetic manipulation. Sometimes it is comforting to be the ostrich with your head in the sand.

You can be pro-life and still stand on the sidelines. "I'm against abortion, euthanasia, cloning and genetic manipulation, but it's not my fight". That's a dangerous attitude. Who will fight for the unborn or the aged? We all have a voice and there is a platform to express it. Not in a hateful and judgmental way. Yes, in a vigorous and alarmed manner. It's not a sin to be outraged at wrong.

Point of Discussion:
Why is "the ostrich" syndrome a bad attitude to take?

There are many thorny issues raised by the debate over sanctity of life. What about the brain-dead on life support? Or, the terminally ill racked with constant pain? Shouldn't the serial killer pay with his life for his crimes? Each of these issues, and others like it, raise a debate that can sometimes sound correct on either side of the issue. We should hear both sides, but we must pray for discernment to know God's truth. If you research these issues you may discover that good intentions may actually result in the wrong outcome. Where the scripture is clear we must stand on the scripture.

There is the current debate over stem cell research and human cloning. Even if science can do it successfully and without dangerous side effects there is still the moral issue to address.

Point of Discussion:
It's certainly wrong to take life. Is it right to create life?

I think the answer to that is: We are not God. Man may play creator and destroyer, but we are not the divine architects.

One of the arguments against pro-lifers is that individuals have the right to choose whether to give birth and even when to die. Those making that point are, in essence, correct. We do have the right to choose. Missing from this argument are the consequences of free choice that are morally wrong. Sure, we all have freedom of choice. You see where we are because of Adam's choice.

Sanctity Of Choice?
Proponents of killing, be it abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty or war are not revering the sanctity of life. Instead, they are putting the freedom to choose their own actions ahead of the right to life. Their position is "sanctity of choice" rather than "sanctity of life".

Point of Discussion:
According to scripture (you research) what is taught about abortion, euthanasia, death penalty, and war.

One of the passages in the Bible that makes me squirm is about King Herod ordering the killing of all two year old boys and younger in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16). It was his attempt to eliminate the "new" King of the Jews. Herod was quite paranoid. He would kill anyone who stood in his way, so the order isn't surprising coming from him.

In our world today there is still so much killing. The last century was the worst in recorded history. The way we are starting this century could make a cynic out of anyone. What's the message being sent in our society? I'm afraid it's that life is not that important. In the name of personal choice we dishonor creation.

And we are surprised when kids shoot up schools and mothers drown their children? It's an incredible individual challenge to be faced with decisions that are life and death. However, each decision must be made based upon the word of God.

Sanctity Of Life
In respect to theology and ethics the sanctity of life refers to life being sacred or holy, and is an important Christian value. In addition to condemning the act of murder, sanctity of life rules against all suicide, abortions and so-called "mercy killings", which deny this inviolable property of life. In regards to Christian and Jewish theology, a biblical basis of the sanctity of life often appeals to the following biblical passages: (Genesis 1:27) (Psalm 139:13-16). We will be referring to these passages in our study.

"Bioethics" is a term coined nearly 30 years ago to describe the process of examining the ethics involved with emerging medical technologies and biological research. Bioethics is interdisciplinary, bringing together medicine, law, philosophy and public policy.

Bioethics covers a wide range of topics, including abortion, reproductive technologies, genetic intervention, stem cell research, physician-assisted suicide and end-of-life medical decisions.

Practically speaking, bioethics often touches us where we hurt the most: in illness, infertility and unexpected medical (and sometimes moral) difficulties. For Christians, bioethics is also an attempt to know what the Bible says about these issues and how God would have us respond.

The Sanctity Of Human Life

Focus on the Family's Fourth Guiding Principle states –
"*We believe that human life is of inestimable worth and significance in all its dimensions, including the unborn, the aged, the widowed, the mentally handicapped, the unattractive, the physically challenged and every other condition in which humanness is expressed from conception to the grave.*"

Human life is sacred. You've probably spoken these words in one form or another in an attempt to explain your pro-life view on issues like abortion and euthanasia. While respect for the sanctity of human life is the foundation of the pro-life movement and a founding principle of Focus on the Family, what does this respect look like in the real world? How can we as Christians incorporate this reverence for human life into our daily lives?

What Is The Sanctity Of Human Life Ethic?

The sanctity of human life is first described in the Bible in Genesis 1:27. Scholars note that being created in the image of God (imago Dei) means more than having certain abilities and attributes. It means that humans are the images of God, regardless of what they can or cannot do. To bear the image of the Creator is a privilege extended uniquely to humans. No other "creation" of God can make this claim. Humans are the only part of God's creation described as being in the image of God. Christians don't believe we look like God. They believe being in the image of God means that we are somehow special, we have something of God's nature in us - or at least the capacity to show God's nature.

Since we embody God's image, the sacredness of our lives, and the dignity it demands, is based on something beyond our characteristics or abilities — it is rooted in the essence of God Himself. This image or likeness of God that is present in each human life is not tangible: you cannot see, touch or smell it. It's part of the mystery of life.

Discussion:
How is man created in the "image of God"?
In what ways does man exhibit the image of God?

The value of each person is firmly established on the basis of the nature of God, who is the quintessence of dignity and holiness. Every human life, Christian or not, is sacred and of inestimable value because each life is created in the image of God.

Christians believe all human life is sacred because:

1. God is the giver of life. Ecclesiastes 3: 1-3 says 'There is a time for everything. A time to be born and a time to die ...' Christians believe God gives and takes away life as he pleases.

2. Christians believe God created human life and it should be preserved. Nothing is more important than the life God has given.

3. Every life has a purpose. God destined (or meant) for each of us to be born (Psalm 139: 13-16). He took care when creating us. All life is important and shouldn't be wasted.

4. God decides when life begins and ends. Murder is forbidden in the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:13). It is not acceptable to take away a life God has created ... It isn't acceptable to kill someone else and taking your own life is not considered a good thing.

What Does It Mean To Be Human?

This is a core question as we examine how to embrace the Sanctity of Human Life ethic. To be human means to be part of the human family. To be human is identifiable by species (Homo sapien) and genetic code. Life, biologically speaking, begins at fertilization. We all began with the same raw materials: an egg and a sperm. We are fully human when these gametes unite at fertilization, as nothing else is added to us — only nourishment and time to grow.

This biological definition of human life is critical as society attempts to redefine what it means to be human based on more subjective criteria. Arbitrary standards for determining who is human, such as physical ability, intelligence or age, can shift with the tide of public opinion or cultural trends. Such measures are not reliable for this critical definition.

The biological component of our humanness is as sacred as our souls, as God created and sanctified both. Perhaps the most poignant example of the sacredness of the human body is seen in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, who became human taking on Himself the frail likeness of humanity. By coming to earth as a human embryo and dying a painful death on the cross, Jesus Christ sanctified the entire life process from fertilization to natural death.

What Is Human Dignity?

Human dignity is innate, bestowed upon us by God. It is not based on the ability to care for our selves or competence to complete a task. Being dependent upon others does not cause us to lose our dignity. Dignity is not a characteristic we can forfeit — it is an inseparable attribute woven into the fiber of our being. However, we live in a culture that does not recognize the intrinsic distinction of individual worth. Therefore, we must reinforce the immutable existence of human dignity through the affirmation of those who are dependent and weak. In this context, dignity takes on a second form, becoming a recognized quality in all members of a society. Your dignity is affirmed and strengthened when members of your family and community care for you in a weakened state. Those who love and care for you during times of reduced ability (e.g., senility, incontinence)

declare your dignity and value apart from the tasks you can no longer accomplish independently. Our willingness to serve and be served in this time of physical weakness demonstrates our recognition of human dignity.

Our society's failure to honor human dignity is evidenced in the sentiments of our age. We live in a time when people would rather die than continue living with less than a perfect "quality of life." This attitude is reflected in comments such as, "I would rather die than live in a wheelchair," or, "If I had cancer, what would be the point of living?" Such proclamations are the byproduct of a society that reserves dignity for those who exhibit physical ability and control.

Therefore, it should be no surprise that dependency is looked upon as the ultimate weakness. Disability or end-of-life circumstances potentially situates each of us where we would rather not be: in need of the care and comfort of others. Demanding independence as a criterion for human dignity promulgates a cultural acceptance of solutions such as euthanasia, rather than compassionate care for those who cannot care for themselves.

A common fear among the disabled or terminally ill is that of becoming a burden. In reality, few of us are immune to this fear. We fear losing our independence (e.g., incontinence or using a wheelchair) because dependence is viewed as a weakness.

These fears are based on an unspoken, yet dangerous, understanding in our culture that independence is required for an acceptable quality of life. Human dignity is restored as we counter this view through our witness of caring for each other in our times of dependence and need.

Point of Discussion:
Discuss the above opinion about independence and quality of life.

Who Are You?

Any attempt to reestablish a cultural ethic recognizing the Sanctity of Human Life is incomplete without challenging individual image-bearers to assess their own personal value: Do you know who you are? Do you see yourself as a striking reflection of God's glory, beauty and majesty on the earth? Do you value your own life as sacred, even in light of the limitations of your humanity? Our society teaches that our "self-worth" comes from a variety of sources: productivity, attractiveness, social status and even from within ourselves. Human beings who base their personal value on such transient measures will be disappointed, at best. Self destructive behaviors, ranging from alcohol and drug abuse to non-Biblical sexual relationships, often find fertile soil in the lives of people searching for a God-centered identity. Comprehending who we are as image-bearers of God is the first step in sharing the Sanctity of Human Life ethic in our world.

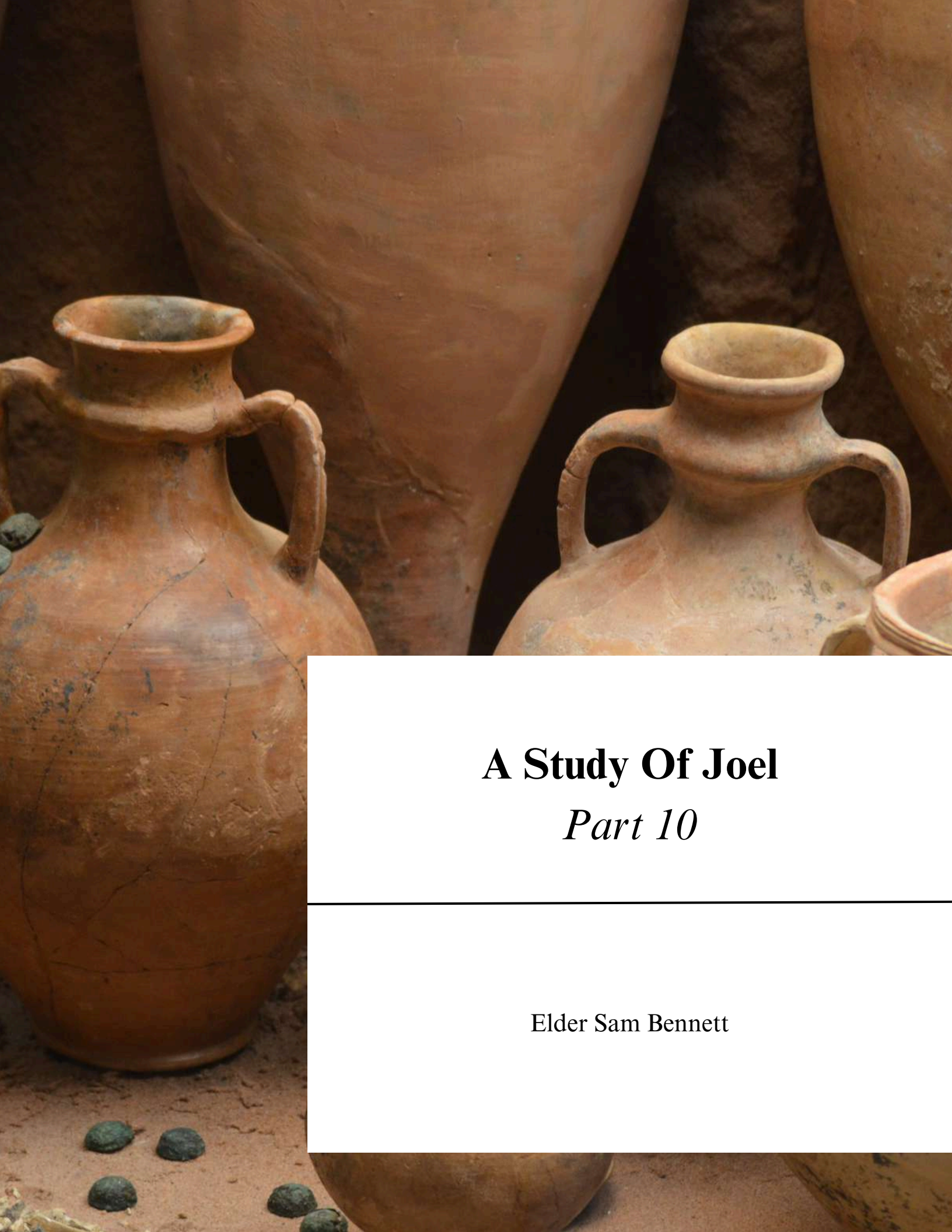
What Can You Do?

Restoration of this life ethic must begin with the church. Even as Christians, we fail to comprehend the value of every human life because we cease to look at each other in awe. We fail to recognize that each person with whom we have contact bears the image of God. We no longer view one another as breathtaking creatures, embodying a touch of the Creator Himself.

Since respect for human life is based on recognizing God as the Creator and humankind as created in His likeness, any nation that abandons God will abandon respect for His Creation. A culture without God cannot recognize the innate value of each human being created in His image. The sacredness of human life becomes virtually impossible to grasp and irrelevant without God in the equation. Unfortunately, confusion regarding the origin of humanity is not confined to the secular culture. Churches must teach the truth about the value of life from a biblical worldview.

Point of Discussion:

Discuss what you as individuals, a class or church can do in your community.



A Study Of Joel

Part 10

Elder Sam Bennett

Our text is in the book of Joel, chapter three, verses one through three. For the sake of context, we will begin the reading in chapter two at verse 28. This is part ten of this series. Perhaps a brief review with a few reminders is in order. We do not have a concrete date for the life and writing of this prophet. It is difficult to discern from this book whether Joel wrote this prophecy before the division of Israel, or before the exile to Babylon. We do believe that Joel wrote of an actual calamity of locusts brought by God as a chastisement on Israel. As this is prophecy, we should also understand that more than one fulfillment is of this prophecy is possible. As concerns prophecy in general, there is usually a near fulfillment that the original hearers would observe, and a far fulfillment that is a future event. That future event is always future from the writer's perspective. That future fulfillment may be in the past from our perspective.

It is also possible that the future fulfillment is still future from our perspective. Generally speaking, the greater fulfillment of any Old Testament is found either in the first coming of Jesus Christ, or His return. In this book of the prophecy of Joel, we find elements of all those possibilities. Remember, the prophets were given a message from God for the people of God. One other element of prophecy that we must keep in mind is that prophecy can be a foretelling of future events, or a forth-telling of current events. Again, in this book of Joel, we find both. Joel explained the four waves of devastating locusts sent by God upon the land of Israel. While some contend that these locusts were representative of conquering empires, others maintain that these were actual voracious, consuming insects that physically devoured every growing green thing throughout the land of Israel.

I believe the latter is the accurate interpretation. While the locust invasion may portend of the coming invasion of conquering empire armies is a possibility, we cannot overlook the plain reading of this prophecy. By this method, we see that Joel has told the people that it was God who brought this plague of locusts. It was not some random "act of nature." The locusts, whether in Joel's day or in our day, belong to God. He will send them to accomplish His purposes wherever and

whenever He so chooses. His purpose in sending the locusts upon Israel in Joel's day was to get the attention of a wayward people. Even the livestock were found gazing soberly on barren land with despairing eyes, wondering what they would eat.

The bark of the grape vines and fig trees had been chewed through the cambium, putting an end to hopes for any harvest of fruit. There would be no wine. The drunkards were forced into sobriety. The farmers had no grain in the fields, and they hung their heads in shame. Most devastating of all, the priests would not be able to offer the prescribed offerings in worship to God. The was food cut off before their eyes, Joy and gladness from the house of God.

Joel's imperative to the priests was that they were to consecrate a fast, gather the people, and sanctify them for a devout, whole-hearted prayer meeting. The people were admonished to cry out to God! Their situation looked hopeless. The storehouses were empty, the barns were broken down. The people then had to admit that God was their only hope!

The first part of chapter two gave a vivid, poetic description of how the locusts had mowed down everything in their path, and left only desolation in their wake. In the second part of chapter two, the prophet called for the people to repent of their sins, and return to God for forgiveness and hope.

It appears from this third division of chapter three that the people did repent. It appears that their repentance was genuine, and acceptable to God. The locusts had served their purpose. The people had relented of their waywardness. Jehovah was zealous for His land, and had pity on His people. As only God can, He restored what the locusts had eaten.

For His own glory, God provided abundant blessings to the point of satisfaction to His people. Beyond that, we have a foretelling of a future event in the promise of the generous outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We know that this was

the foretelling of future event in Joel's day, because Peter quotes from this passage in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, and says with Apostolic authority that the people in his day are experiencing what Joel wrote about centuries before. With those thoughts in mind, and for the sake of context, we will begin the reading at chapter two, verse 28, and read through chapter three, verse three.

Joel 2:28-32

(28) And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. (29) And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. (30) And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. (31) The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. (32) And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

Joel 3:1-3

(1) For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, (2) I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land. (3) They have cast lots for My people, Have given a boy as payment for a harlot, And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink.

Based on what Peter said, Joel has evidently seen beyond his day. What follows from chapter two, verse 28 onward is future for Joel. The Holy Spirit was poured out generously on the people of God on the day of Pentecost. Previously, in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was given in limited measure to small

groups of men serving in specific callings in ministry to Israel. In the New Testament, on the day of Pentecost, we see a new thing happening, or perhaps it is better said that we see an old thing happen in a new way.

God's purpose has not changed. His Spirit is given in ministry to His people. Specifically, in Acts chapter eight, we see further evidence of the Holy Spirit, when Peter and John go to Samaria to confirm the rumors they had heard about Philip's ministry. In Acts chapters 10 and 11, Peter again confirms that the Holy Spirit is present at the house of Cornelius. Each of these events signified that the grace of God had exceed the physical borders and ancestral lineage of Israel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was not confined to a single family or a single ethnic group or a single nation. God has a people in every kindred, tribe, and tongue. The Israel of God is not the biological descendants of Abraham. The Israel of God are the believers who are the spiritual descendants of Abraham. In the New Testament, the true Israel of God is called the Church of Jesus Christ. Well, as Joel saw beyond his time to the Day of Pentecost in Peter's day, so did he also see beyond. If you have not yet rejoiced in the hope as presented thus far in Joel's prophecy, please pay attention to what we read in chapter three. What we read here is eschatological. It is prophecy and it tells of last things. This is the glorious hope of a coming day when all will be put right.

We are currently living through strange days. Evil parades around unashamedly. That which for centuries was considered taboo, is on display for all to see. A minority of deviants who believe they are marginalized, have done their best to make the rest of us believe that their deviant behavior is normal. They demand that we accept their perversions. They celebrate these perversions proudly.

They use genteel words to make their perversions sound normal. For the most part, Western Civilization has been tolerant and even complicit.

We are told that abortion is about women's health. The truth is that abortion is infanticide. We must be honest about it.

Pedophiles are offended by the stigma attached to that term. They prefer to be called “minor attracted persons.” We MUST be honest about this too: Pedophilia is molestation and rape of minors. They should be offended and ashamed about the stigma attached to the term. Their attraction is not normal. It is a sick psychological condition which is said to be incurable. Even the most hardened murderers in prison understand that. Convicted pedophiles are often terminated by other inmates who serve the justice that our justice system is too weak-willed to enforce. One political party is always accusing everyone else of racism, while they are seeking to create privileges based on skin color, ethnicity, or national origin.

We are living in strange times. Our country was founded by Pilgrims who were seeking the freedom to worship God in accordance with their understanding of the truth of God’s Word. Look how far we have come in 400 years. We have gone from finding the freedom to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to having reasonable doubts as to whether our own government might force the church to go underground. Christians came to American looking for the freedom to worship God. Do not take that freedom for granted. It may not be long before we are looking for that freedom again. I do not relish having to alert you to these realities and the possibilities that may soon blossom into reality. I do have good news. At least, if you are a believer it is good news. We may have to endure hardships in this life.

We may have to endure persecution for the cause of Christ. American Christians will not be the first to go through this. Evil has been present throughout the history of mankind. The righteous-minded children of God have always been targets. It is not that the world really hates us individually. The world hates the God we believe in. The world hates what the church stands for.

The world hates that there is coming a day when they will have to face the God they hate. Our Almighty, Merciful, Gracious, Loving God has been patient. He is long-suffering. We find hope in Psalm 2:1-4.

Psalm 2:1-4

(1) Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, (3) "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision.

Joel gives us similar encouragement in his prophecy. As we look at the first three verses of chapter three, we see that the evil that is present in the world around us today is the same old evil that was present in Joel's day. As the people of God, we have this assurance from God that evil will not go unpunished. Oh yes, unbelievers may think that they have escaped God's judgment and His wrath, but Joel tells us otherwise.

Joel 3:1-3

(1) For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, (2) I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land. (3) They have cast lots for My people, Have given a boy as payment for a harlot, And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink.

That is the voice of God. He is the One who is speaking in these verses. Please take note of the personal pronouns I and My. Our almighty God has a plan. It has always been His plan. One day, everyone will see God's plan fulfilled. There are parallels in this prophecy. In the first part of the book, God has seen the wrong committed by His people. They were on the wrong paths, and they were doing wrong things. Jehovah chastised them by sending locusts to get their attention. He was using corrective punishment to bring them back to Himself. He used the spiritual leaders in Israel to call the people to true repentance. Jehovah's

observations are not limited to the wrongs done by His people. Jehovah also observes the wrongs that have been and are being done to His people. When we look at chapter three, we see that God's actions extend beyond the correction of His people to the judgment of His people's enemies.

This is the time of the gathering of God's people unto Himself. The imagery of the captives of Judah and Jerusalem returning from exile in Babylon are symbolic of the sum of God's people throughout the earth. In John 6:37, Jesus said, "***All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.***"

Joel has seen the final gathering of God's people on that great and final day of the Lord. In verse two, we read the promise of Almighty God, "***I will gather all nations,***" No one will be exempt from this gathering. No one will be tardy, and no one will be absent. Jehovah has said that He will gather all nations. All people from every corner of the earth will come to this gathering, because it is God who is gathering all nations to this great assembly. He says that all will be brought down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. If you have ever studied historic maps of Israel, you may have wondered where this valley is. No map of Israel has this valley named on it. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, is mentioned in the books of 1st & 2nd Kings and 1st and 2nd Chronicles. He was the fourth King of Judah. He was said to be a king of great abundance. For the most part, Jehoshaphat was a good king. Herbert Lockyer comments that Jehoshaphat was one of the godliest kings ever to sit on the throne of Judah. However, there is no valley in Palestine named for this once great, godly king of Judah. We have previously noted that names in the Bible have meaning. The name Jehoshaphat means Jehovah is Judge. That should give us a sense of what is coming in God's great purpose for this gathering.

Joel wrote that Jehovah said, "***I will enter into judgment them there.***" This is a place that Jehovah has determined to gather all nations for the final judgment. Why? "***On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations;***"

There is more going on here than first meets the eye. This is the short form of the explanation of God's reason for His judgment of all nations. The forced scattering of Israel by Assyria was a judgment of God brought on Israel through the instrumental work of the Assyrian Empire. God did not cause Assyria to do what they did. Assyria committed atrocities against all the people they conquered. God merely removed His protection from Israel and allowed Assyria to do what they wanted to do. Even though God had chosen to use Assyria to chastise Israel, Assyria was not pardoned for the atrocities they had committed. They were guilty, and they will face the judgment of Jehovah. Joel lists examples of how God's people had been treated. ***They have cast lots for My people, Have given a boy as payment for a harlot, And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink***. Just in case we are not understanding what is being said here, let us use modern terminology. The enemies of God's people were guilty of taking God's people into slavery. The enemies of God's people were guilty of human trafficking. This is a problem that has not stopped throughout history. It was a problem in English and American history, when African warlords hunted down and captured their neighbors and sold them to Europeans as slaves. Thank God, there were good men who saw this as evil.

In both the English parliament and in American government, slavery was recognized for what it was, and was abolished. It is no longer legal for people to buy and sell people as property. However, laws do not stop evil. The practice of human slavery is no longer sanctioned by governments in the civilized world. But that has not stopped slavery. Human beings are still being held as property and sold for all manner of evil acts for the pleasures of wicked men. There is a problem of human trafficking even in the civilized world today. It happens in places where most people do not expect it. It involves people who know better. Influential men in positions of power in government and business are guilty of engaging in human trafficking. The things they have done are unspeakable. Their clients were people of wealth and power. They all thought they could keep things secret, and continue leading public lives untarnished, all while engaging in unspeakable wicked acts in secret.

No one is able to keep anything secret from God. He sees and knows all things. Even the desires of your heart. We may not see evil brought to justice in our day, but we have the promise from God's word that ultimate justice will be done. He will gather all nations for judgment, on account of His people. He will gather all nations for judgment on account of how all nations have treated God's people.

We observed that the language used in this passage is rife with personal pronouns. We see God speaking in first person, as Joel has written the words of Jehovah using "I" and "my." Do you see that? Do you get it? "My" is a 1st person possessive pronoun. God is possessive of His people.

He has a special love for His people.
God's people belong to Him, because God has created them.
God's people belong to Him, because God has chosen them.
God's people belong to Him because He has purchased them.

That is what it means to be redeemed. Beloved, as a born-again child of God, you have been bought with a price. If you are a born-again believer of Jesus, your redemption from the slavery of sin was purchased with the most precious commodity in all the universe.

The blood of Jesus, shed for many on the cross at Calvary was the price demanded by our Father in Heaven to set us free from His impending wrath. If you are struggling with sin and trying to make yourself right with God so that He will love you, stop. You cannot do it. You cannot make yourself acceptable to God. Your best attempts at righteousness amount to nothing more than filthy rags. Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Look to Jesus who has already done all that is necessary. Look to Jesus who suffered the punishment that your sins deserve. Trust in Him and His work as having completed the unthinkable task of saving your soul.

There is a judgment day coming. It is the day of the Lord, when He will gather all nations and judge them for what they have done to His people.

In the introduction, we noted that the wrongs that are committed against God's people are ultimately wrongs committed against God Himself. In Matthew's Gospel 25:41-45, Jesus speaks of these things.

Matthew 24:41-45

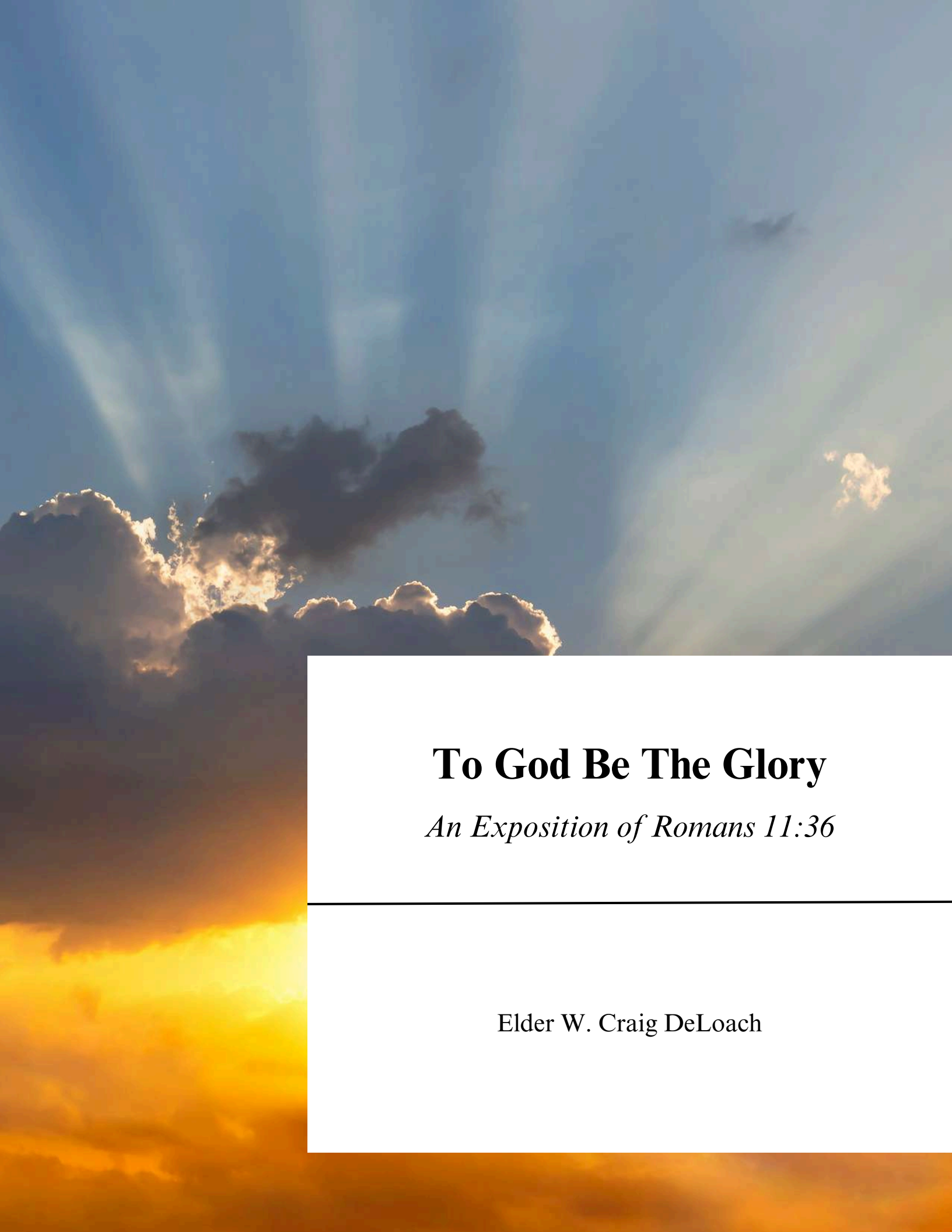
(41) Then He will also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: (42) for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; (43) I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' (44) "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?" (45) Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

We are nearing the end 2025, and we can be certain that there will be struggles ahead. There have been some changes in leadership, and we do have some reason to hope, but do not expect things to change much, and do not expect change to happen quickly. Those who are in positions of power are those who have been in positions of power. Pray for them. Pray that the Lord will use them to glorify Himself.

Romans 12:14-18

(14) Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not. (15) Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. (16) Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. (17) Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. (18) Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (19) Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

May God be merciful to us, and give us grace to follow His commands, and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world around us, for His glory and our good. Amen.



To God Be The Glory

An Exposition of Romans 11:36

Elder W. Craig DeLoach

INTRODUCTION

Romans 11:33-36 are the concluding verses to the apostle's doctrinal treatise; a treatise which commenced in Romans 1 and continued through Romans 11:32. The apostle expresses his amazement at God's ways in a captivating doxological statement in verses 33 through verse 36,

> O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

The term "doxology" comes from the Greek word doxologia, which means "giving glory." As we read through it, we cannot help but to be impressed by Paul's description of the glorious persona of God in all of His perfections. Scripture is much like an onion. It has many layers, and sometimes you need to peel one layer off to see the underlying beauty of the next layer.

There are times when reading the Scriptures that we tend to either rush through them or gloss over them. We think we understand a verse immediately on its face. In doing so we miss the beauty, the content, the essence, the truth expressed therein. John 3:16 is a fine example of this. Those that hold up signs with John 3:16 embossed on them believe it is a verse understood on its face. No further examination is needed. They believe it is offering a universal opportunity for salvation to whoever believes in the Son of God. However, that is not true. I would challenge any who sees John 3:16 this way to attempt to harmonize it with John 17 where Jesus Christ says, ". . . Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to *as many as thou hast given him*" (Emphasis added). Care should always be taken when interpreting Scripture. Rightly dividing the Word of truth requires this.

As we arrive at Romans 11:36, we might be tempted to pay little attention to it, especially considering the profound statements by Paul immediately preceding it. Verse 36, however, will be the focus of this article. At first blush, it does not immediately garner much attention; however, upon closer examination, it is dazzling in its hidden beauty!

You will notice that the apostle uses three prepositions here; of, through , and to. These three prepositions are filled with profound meaning in respect to God, and they in a very simple fashion express His transcendence over all things . Because of that, this verse should arrest our attention and cause us to spend some time peeling back its many layers.

FOR OF HIM ... ARE ALL THINGS

The preposition "of" is translated from the Greek *ek* or *ex* and means "out of" or "from." The point that Paul is making is that God is the source of "all things." When we turn our attention to Genesis 1:1, we plainly see this. Genesis 1:1 reads, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." You have heard of the law of cause and effect. It is defined as "the universal principle that every action (cause) has a specific consequence (effect), and every effect has a preceding cause." By way of example, if I knock over a glass of water and the water spills on the floor, I am the cause and the spilled water is the effect. As God is the Creator of all things, He is the cause of all things. Everything that exists is uniquely His creative fiat. The question we have, based upon the law of cause and effect, is "Who created God?" The Bible does not address God's creator because God does not have a creator. God existed in eternity past; He exists in eternity present; and He exists in eternity future. Therefore, God is the "uncaused cause" of all things. He exists in and of Himself in eternity.

In Genesis 1:1, the word translated "created" is the Hebrew word *bara*. *Bara* is never used of man's making or forming anything. It is always used of God's creative activity. It occurs some fifty-five times in the Old Testament and it carries the idea of instantaneous, miraculous creation. That is, it is the creating of

something out of nothing (ex nihilo). In Genesis 1:3 we read, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." John Philips in his Genesis Commentary says it this way: "God said, 'Light be' and 'Light was.'"

The great theologian John Calvin summarizes the work of the Godhead this way in his Institutes of the Christian Religion:

> To the Father is attributed the beginning of activity and the fountain and wellspring of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel, and the ordered disposition of all things, but to the Spirit is assigned the power and efficacy of that activity.

He further adds, "All of God's actions are trinitarian actions, all of the Persons being essentially involved."

And again, he adds, "We must be careful in making these distinctions and not turn them into strict divisions of activity because the work of one Person is always the work of the other two."

Calvin's statements are supported by Deuteronomy 6:4, which states, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD." LORD is Jehovah, and Jehovah is the great I am and the covenanting God. God, in this verse, is the Hebrew *Elohim.* The "*im"* ending indicates a plurality, and it is therefore referring to all three members of the Godhead. Therefore, as Calvin stated, "All of God's actions are trinitarian actions, all Persons being essentially involved." When the apostle writes "For of him . . . are all things," the trinitarian activity of the Godhead is stated in the simplest of ways.

AND THROUGH HIM... ARE ALL THINGS

Paul is emphasizing God's governance, His administrative activity over His creation. God is transcendent. That means that He is totally different from His

creation. Some have referred to this as "His otherliness." He possesses attributes that we can never possess; omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence, just to name a few. God emphasizes this distinction in Isaiah 46:9 stating, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and *there is none like me*" (Emphasis added).

God is also immanent. He is immanently involved in His creation. The definition of immanent when speaking of God is "permanently pervading and sustaining the universe." Sadly, the philosophical position of Deism asserted the existence of a creator God who is not involved in the daily affairs of the universe. R.C. Sproul comments on the Deist's beliefs this way:

> The deists believed that God was the great watchmaker. In their view, God formed the universe, established its laws, and fixed the gears and machinations of the machine, much as a watchmaker builds and watch. He then wound up the mechanism and stepped out of the picture, allowing the clock to run on its own.

Norman Geisler in his Christian Apologetics wrote: "The deist believes that God made the world but does not 'monkey' with it."

The 1689 London Confession of Faith will have none of this deist foolishness. In Chapter 5, under the heading "Of Divine Providence," it states:

1. God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most holy providence, to the end for which they were created . . .

2. Although in relation to foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything that befalls any by chance, or without His providence; yet by the

same providence He ordered them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

3. God in His ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure.

There are two magnificent examples of God's providential involvement with His creation. There are two passages I want to share. The first is found in Genesis 45:4-8,

> And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Joseph repeats this amazing acknowledgment of the providence of God in Genesis 50:20 stating, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."

Secondly, I believe King Nebuchadnezzar said it best. You will recall in the book of Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar was prideful and lifted up in his own mind. In Daniel 4:29-31 we read,

> [H]e [king Nebuchadnezzar] walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the

> honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

The king had been previously warned in a dream interpreted by Daniel that he would find that he would be driven from men and his

> [D]welling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsever he will (Daniel 4:32).

At the end of Nebuchadnezzar's humility, after his understanding returned to him, the king made this marvelous statement:

> I blessed the most High, and I praised and hounoured him that liveth for ever whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

God through His amazing control over His creation will bring it to its ultimate conclusion. Nothing is out of His control.

AND TO HIM... ARE ALL THINGS

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever amen." God is not only the beginning of all things. He is also the ending, the conclusion, the destination, of all things. Scripture speaks of Him as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. He is where all creation is moving towards. The beauty of this reality is that the corruption of sin, which has plagued

all men and His creation, will be removed. Peter refers to this as "the great consummation." This is found in 2 Peter 3:10-13,

> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

First Corinthians states the necessary changes that will take place in God's chosen people: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53).

Yes, the God of creation has determined the final destination described by Peter in his second epistle (See 2 Peter 3:10-13).

TO HIM BE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN

Paul has ascended this mountain of thought to a glorifying crescendo. This was the pinnacle of his normally indefatigable ability to comment, and he concludes with "to him be glory for ever. Amen." The word "glory" is translated from the Greek *doxa.* This Greek word is defined as "splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace." In the long ago, Moses desired to see the glory of God. This moment is revealed in Exodus 33. Viewing the fullness of God's glory is deadly to the natural man. Therefore, God said to His servant:

> I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,

> and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen (Exodus 33:19-33).

Moses was allowed to see God's "after glow." The "after glow" that Moses was allowed to see was the glory of God as the LORD passed by.

Israel experienced the Shekinah glory of God throughout their existence. The Shekinah glory of God symbolizes His glory made visible. It represented His dwelling with His active presence in the world. Israel witnessed the Shekinah glory as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Moses experienced this glory at the burning bush that was not consumed. Isaiah speaks of God's glory filling the temple in Isaiah 6:1-4,

> In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: *the whole earth is full of his glory*. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke (Emphasis added).

Smoke is the visible manifestation of the Shekinah glory of God. Paul emphatically declared that the light of the glory of God was brighter than the noon day sun in his defense to King Agrippa, "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me" (Acts 26:13). In fact, he declares that he was blinded by the intense brightness of that light (See Acts 9:8). Once again, the Shekinah glory of God is revealed to a man.

The disciples were allowed to see Christ's glory on the mount of transfiguration in Matthew chapter 17. In that passage we read that Jesus "was transfigured before them and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matthew 17:2).

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for glory is kabod. Its meaning is interesting when applied to God's glory. It means "heavy, weighty." It would seem that this one word expresses the "depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" It is an acknowledgement of the great things He has done in creation, salvation, predestinating His chosen people unto the adoption of children and causing them to be made accepted in the beloved (See Ephesians 1:5-6). Beyond that, He has guaranteed them a home in heaven (See John 14:1-3).

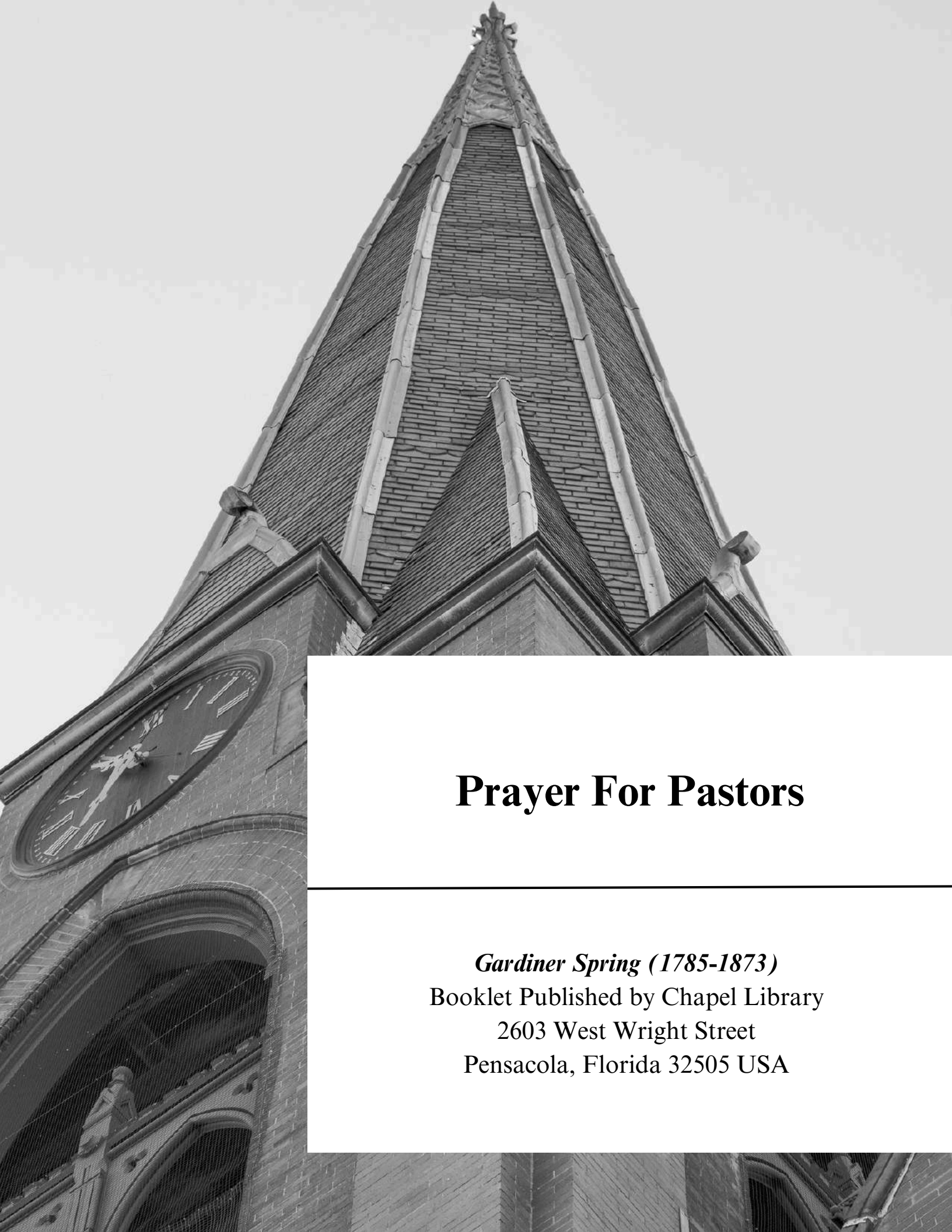
CONCLUSION

Paul concluded his summary with the word "Amen." Amen means "so be it" or "it is true." Fanny J. Crosby's beautiful hymn "To God Be the Glory" is a perfect description of this subject. She captures the thought perfectly as she writes:

To God be the glory, great things He hath done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life gate that all may go in.

[Chorus]
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give him the glory, great things He has done.

To this, we can only submit and agree with Paul and say "Amen."



Prayer For Pastors

Gardiner Spring (1785-1873)

Booklet Published by Chapel Library
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The importance of the Christian ministry con strains us to request one particular favor for it. It is a request in which we feel a deep personal concern: Pray for us. “Pray for us,” says Paul. “Pray for us” is the hearty response from every Christian pulpit in the land and in the wide world. If such a man as Paul requested the prayers of good men—and if, with his giant intellect, his eminent spirituality, and his intimate communion with God and things unseen, this holy man needed this encouragement and impulse in his work—who will not say, “ Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified” (2Th 3:1)!

1. **Encouragement For New Pastors**

It is a delightful thought to a young man entering the ministry of reconciliation that, unworthy as he is, the prayers of thousands of God’s people are continually going up on his behalf to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God. He seems to hear the church of God saying to him, “We cannot go to this sacred work; but we will follow you with our prayers!” He seems to hear many a Christian parent say to him, “We have no son to send to this hallowed vocation; but you go to it, and you shall not lack a place in our prayers!” Many churches of this land have enjoyed the high privilege of sending into the spiritual harvest a considerable number of beloved youths from their own more immediate family. And it has been the custom, gratefully remembered, of such churches to assemble for the special service of commending their young brethren to the care and faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God. How fitting, in every way, is such a service! How full of encouragement to the heart that trembles under a view of the responsibilities of the sacred office! How delightful is this spiritual impetus to a mind almost ready to sink under the consciousness of its own weaknesses! And how unspeakably precious the thought to all who labor in this great work, whether in youthful, or riper years, that they are thus habitually remembered in the prayers of the churches! Let the thought sink deep into the heart of every church, that their minister will be very much such a minister as their prayers may make him. If nothing short of omnipotent grace can make a Christian, nothing less than this can make a faithful and successful minister of the gospel.

2. **The Greatness Of The Work**

We entreat the churches to regard with a more deliberate and devout mind the great work itself to which their ministers are devoted. To explain the doctrines and enforce the duties of genuine Christianity; to defend the truth against all the subtlety and versatility of error; to sustain within their own minds that sense of God's presence, and of those moral sanctions which are revealed in His Word, and that deep and tender impression of the things that are unseen and eternal, that are necessary to give earnestness, and that consistent life and deportment that are necessary to give effect to their preaching; to do this in a way that shall adapt itself to times, places, occasions and characters, and without being disheartened by difficulties, appalled by enemies, and weary of the yoke which they have taken upon them, is no ordinary work. If a people are looking for rich discourses from their minister, their prayers must supply him with matter. If [they are looking] for faithful discourses, their prayers must urge him, by a full and uncompromising manifestation of the truth, to commend himself "to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2Co 4:2). If [they are looking] for powerful and successful discourses, their prayers must make him a blessing to the souls of men. Would they have him come to them in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace, with a heaving bosom, a kindled eye, and a glowing tongue, and with discourses bathed in tears and elaborate with prayer? [Then] their prayers must urge him to pray, and their tears inspire his thrilling heart with the strong yearnings of Chris tian affection. It is in their own closets that the people of God most effectually charge the soul of their beloved ministers to take heed to the ministry they have received of the Lord Jesus.

3. **Pastors Need Prayer**

And who and what are ministers themselves? Frail men, fallible, sinning men, exposed to every snare, to temptation in every form; and, from the very post of observation they occupy, a better target for the fiery darts of the enemy. They are no mean victims the great adversary is seeking when he would wound and

cripple Christ's ministers. One such victim is worth more to the kingdom of dark ness than a score of common men; and on this very account, their temptations are probably more subtle and severe than those encountered by ordinary Christians. If this subtle deceiver fails to destroy them, he artfully aims at neutralizing their influence by quenching the fervor of their piety, lulling them into negligence, and doing all in his power to render their work irksome. How perilous the condition of that minister, then, whose heart is not encouraged, whose hands are not strengthened, and who is not upheld by the prayers of his people! It is not in his own closet and on his own knees alone that he finds security and comfort, and ennobling, humbling, and purifying thoughts and joys; but it is when they also seek them on his behalf that he becomes a better and happier man, and a more useful minister of the everlasting gospel.

4. **An Interest In Their Minister**

Nothing gives a people so much interest in their minister, and interest of the best kind, as to pray for him. The more they commend him to God in their prayers, they love him more, they respect him more, they attend more cheerfully and profitably on his ministry. They feel a deeper interest in his work the more they pray for him. And their children feel a deeper interest both in him and in his preaching, when they habitually listen to supplications that affectionately commend him to the throne of the heavenly grace.

5. **The Results Of Preaching**

The results of the gospel preached are associated with the most important realities in the universe. Indeed, they form a major part of these affecting realities themselves. There are such bright and radiant manifestations of the ever blessed and adorable Godhead where the preached gospel has free course and is glorified. That marvelous display of the divine nature, that progressive development which is in itself so desirable, and in its consequences so endeared to every holy mind, never shines forth with such impressive distinctness and subduing luster, as when the hearers of His truth and grace, proclaimed from lips of clay, indicate that

appearing of His great glory. If God's earthly people had minds as pure as the intellect of the seraph around the throne, with what deep concern and prayer would they watch the course and follow the labors of the humble and faithful ambassadors of the cross, as they proclaim this glorious gospel, and as the effects of their preaching discover new and perpetual exhibitions of the manifested Deity! The effects of their preaching upon the souls of men are nothing less than the savor of life unto life in them that are saved, and in them that perish of death unto death (2Co 2:16). The same light and motives that are the means of fitting some for heaven, abused and perverted, only fit others for hell. Oh, it is at a fearful expense that ministers are ever allowed to enter the pulpit without being preceded, accompanied, and followed by the ear nest prayers of the churches. It is no marvel that the pulpit is so powerless, and ministers so often disheartened, when there are so few to hold up their hands. The consequence of neglecting this duty is seen and felt in the spiritual declension of the churches, and it will be seen and felt in the everlasting perdition of men, while the result of regarding it would be the ingathering of multitudes into the kingdom of God, and new glories to the Lamb that was slain.

6. **A Plea For Regular Prayer**

On his own behalf, therefore, and on the behalf of his beloved and respected brethren in the minis try, the writer craves a place in the prayers of all who love the Savior and the souls of men. We are the dispensers of God's truth and at best fall far below our mighty theme. The duties of our calling return upon us with every returning week and day. They often come upon us with many conflicting demands. They sometimes demand all our thoughts at the very time when we have lost the power of thinking; and all the strength of our affections when we are the least sensitive to them. With these demands can come that gnawing anxiety that exhausts our vigor, prostrates our courage, and drinks up our spirits. And then there are so many disappointments in our work that we need the sympathy of prayer. Our spirit is sometimes stirred within us, and we go forth to our people flushed with the hope of rescuing them from everlasting burnings; and in some unfortunate hour of self-sufficiency, we vainly imagine the work and triumph are

our own. We are instant in season, and out of season. We make a business of preparing for the conflict, sometimes polishing our arrows, and sometimes leaving them rough and barbed. We put on our armor and enter the field with the determination to lay out all our strength, and with the confident assurance that we must [have success]. But what a les son of self-abasement! We cannot convert a single soul. We have piped unto them, and they have not danced; we have mourned unto them, and they have not lamented (Mat 11:17). We urge God's commands, and they trample upon His authority. We urge His threatenings, and they despise His justice. We speak of His promises; they heed not His faithfulness. Of His Son, and they tread Him under their feet. Of His patience and longsuffering, but their impenitence and hardness are proof against them all. We reason and argue with them until the obstacles to their conversion seem to us to rise the higher by every effort to overcome them—until we sink in des pair and cry out, "What mighty power can break these flinty hearts! What omnipotent grasp can rescue these perishing men from everlasting burnings?" O ye blood-bought churches, your ministers need your prayers for the exceeding greatness of that power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead

We have a concert of prayer for the heathen, another for Sabbath schools, and another for the blessing of God upon the distribution of religious tracts. Why shall we overlook the great means of God's own appointment for the salvation of men? May there not be something in the form of a concert of prayer for the ministers of the gospel? If nothing better can be suggested, why may there not be a general understanding among Christian men and Christian families to set apart the morning of every Lord's Day for this great and special object? This was the custom in the family of my venerable father, and it has long been my own. And it is a most precious privilege. The time is a fitting one; and such a service would not fail to exert a delightful influence on the privileges of the sanctuary. "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isa 65:24). Should God give to the churches the spirit of prayer for their ministers, it would be with the purpose of answering it. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer" (Psalm 102:17). It is written, that on every dwelling place of

Mount Zion He will create a fire and a smoke (see Isa 4:5); nor will the altar be profaned, nor the incense less fragrant, if those words of hope are more often upon the lips of those who offer it, "Clothe thy priests with salvation, that thy saints may shout with joyfulness!" (see 2Ch 6:41; Psalm 132:16). Nor is this all. Let the ministers of the gospel be habitually remembered at the domestic altar. "It is no small thing," says a modern writer of our own city, "for any congregation to have daily cries for God's blessing ascending from a hundred fire sides. What a spring of refreshment to a pastor! The family devotions of praying Kidderminster, no doubt, made Baxter a better minister, and a happier man; and it is possible we are reaping the fruits of them in his Saint's Rest, and Dying Thoughts."[1]

7. **Conclusion**

"Ye [then] that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest" (Isa 62:6-7). When the churches cease to pray for ministers, ministers will no longer be a blessing to the churches. Brethren, pray for us: That we may be kept from sin. That we may "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time" (Eph 5:15-16). That our hearts may be more devoted to God, and our lives a more impressive exemplification of the gospel we preach.

1 Thoughts on Family Worship, by James W. Alexander, D. D. No family should be without this most valuable, seasonable, and beautiful volume.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

In accord with the historical position of the Primitive Baptists, the editors of The Banner-Herald subscribe to the scriptural principles stated in the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. The following is an abbreviated statement upon that confession.

- We Believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, inspired and inerrant, and the only rule of faith and practice.

- We Believe in the only true and living God. That there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these three agree in one, are coequal, coeternal, and coexistent.

- We Believe in the total depravity of the entire human family; that is, sin pollutes man's faculties - his heart, mind, and will - and he is unable to recover himself from his lost and ruined estate.

- We Believe in particular, eternal, and unconditional election, the effectual calling of the elect, and the final perseverance of the saints.

- We Believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, the only Savior and Redeemer, and that Salvation is by His grace alone.

- We Believe that believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the ordinances of the church of Jesus Christ. We Believe the only baptism taught and recognized in the Bible is immersion. We Believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial of our Lord's death and should be regularly observed in the church. We Believe that the washing of the saint's feet is an example of humility and service to be observed by the church.

- We Believe that no minister has the right to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper but such as are called by God and come under the imposition of hands by a presbytery.

- We Believe in the resurrection of the just and the unjust; that the just shall be raised, changed, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God, to dwell in heaven forever, soul and body reunited; and, that the unjust shall be raised, soul, and body reunited, and consigned to punishment in hell forever.