

Christ grabs his pastors by the heart; he doesn't twist them by the arm. He wants men with a holy ambition for the office, men with holy dreams about feeding and leading the flock, men willing and eager to stretch themselves to do what the calling requires. —David Mathis

### The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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

5. Q. May all men make use of the holy scriptures?

A. All men are not only permitted, but commanded and exhorted to read, hear, and understand the holy scriptures (John 5:38; John 17:17,18; Rev.1:3; Acts 8:30).

6. Q. What things are chiefly contained in the holy scriptures?

A. The holy scriptures chiefly contain what man ought to believe concerning God, and what duty God requireth of man (2 Tim. 1:13; 3:15,16).

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#### Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

# THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

## THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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### BUT THOU, O GOD

*A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. (Psalms 3:1-3).*

Over the years this Psalm has often been graciously brought to my mind. It has been for me a “go to” passage when the needs described here have beset me. Comfort and assurance are to be found in that we are reminded that the Lord our God is sovereign over all and is personally engaged for all that call upon His name. The Lord’s people are often distinguished by their confidence in Him in times of trial. We are reminded that the reviving of the Lord usually occurs in the most terrible of situations. Just such a situation is referenced in the title of this Psalm. (We would note that not all Psalms have titles and some question the inspiration of them). We would endeavor to enter the experience of David in this terrible ordeal and draw from it as the Lord should so lead and even to look to the greater example in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ our Lord.

It is in the realization that only the Lord can make the positive difference with us that gives us such confidence that sustains His people in all their trials. The narrative that is referenced in this Psalm is sad to say the least. See 2 Samuel 15-17. Absalom, the rebellious son of David had been exiled from his father over another terrible issue. This was a cause of grief for David, and he had longed for reconciliation. It seemed that reconciliation had been achieved, but Absalom proceeded to undermine the authority of David and stole the hearts of the people. He plotted a

rebellion and the conspiracy grew and included many of the trusted servants of David including Ahithophel who foreshadowed Judas. The scene is sad as David departs Jerusalem barefoot and with his head covered and amid the insults of those such as Shimei. Of course, we know the outcome of it all and even this was sad for David. Through it all he loved his son.

It is important to note that the confidence of the enemy was that David would be destroyed and believed that there was no help for his soul. How quickly they had forgotten the bravery of David in everything from the lion and the bear to Goliath and his many battlefield exploits in the defense of his beloved Israel. The most serious thing they forgot was the that he was the choice of God as their King and the love that David had for his Lord.

So, we read of his confidence in the Lord in verse 3. Again, we are reminded of the difference God makes. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. (1 Thessalonians 1:4).* “A shield for me (or about me.” As a military man David knew the importance of such things. Perhaps he may have been reminded of the Lord’s words to Abraham: *After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. (Genesis 15:1).* In that these words were inspired by the Holy Spirit we might well conclude that David, as well

as Paul, understood the “shield of faith.” His was more than a bodily defense. We cannot help but note the humility of David as he received the appointment of the Lord. When Shimei (a descendant of Saul) was cursing David and throwing stones and dust on him, he refused the offer of one of his men to kill the offender. Even then the Lord was a shield around him.

The Lord was his glory. It is hard to think of being glorious at such a time, but this went far beyond what he had realized in life. He had been elevated from the sheepfold to the throne in the kingdom of Israel; from being the lowly shepherd boy to the “sweet singer of Israel;” from one without hope to being “a man after God’s own heart.” Here we would understand that David would relegate all glory to God, it was the Lord’s presence that was glory to him. Spurgeon wrote that “David knew that though he was driven from his capital in contempt and scorn, he should yet return in triumph, and by faith he looks upon God honoring and glorifying him.” He adds that the Lord is “the lifter up of my head.” It may well be that he was looking to his restoration to the throne. And it may well be that he is referring to the head being bowed in sorrow and suffering. In any event, the next verse tells us that he was heard out of the Lord’s Holy Hill.

It is well that we fast forward at this point some things concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. We would note that His ministry began in obscurity, proceeded to popularity, and then came the intensifying of the opposition that had

been there all along. The betrayal of Ahithophel was referenced as brought fully to bear in Judas Iscariot – His own familiar friend. David had, no doubt, felt somewhat abandoned during his ordeal in all this. It was but a lonely band that accompanied our Lord to the Garden, but soon they would leave Him in fear. The enemy gloated over the apparent accomplishment of their purpose. They were sure that there was no help for Him as they nailed Him to the cross. But the ultimate abandonment came as we hear the agonizing cry from the cross, “...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” but then came from what seemed to be defeat the cry of accomplishment – “It is finished.”

The prayer of our Lord was heard and answered: *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; (Hebrews 5:7).* But then our Head was lifted up and we joyfully sing “Up from the grave He arose.” He then is able to lift up the heads of all who, like David, suffer the rigors of this life in whatever form they appear.

As the Psalm continues David reveals that, having cried unto the Lord (v. 4), he was able to sleep (v. 5). Some think that this was after the ordeal had ended but the indications are that it was during the ordeal that he slept and awoke to the realization that the Lord had sustained Him. After all, our Lord slept soundly during the storm. We may do likewise. *bhs*

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### THREE VIEWS OF DEATH – Joel Beeke and Christopher Bogosh

There are three views of death in our culture. The first view regards death as natural and it should be sought and embraced. This often leads to abandoning life prematurely—that is, to “undertreatment.” The second view regards death as a disaster that must be avoided at all costs. This view often leads to making physical life the highest good of life, that is, life itself has more intrinsic value than anything else. This view sees little or no redeemable qualities in suffering and does

everything possible to keep everyone alive to the last possible moment at all times regardless of the emotional, spiritual, and financial cost. The result is often “overtreatment.” The third view regards death as a real evil, the result of man’s moral rebellion, while also recognizing that death can be conquered by means of God’s triumphant grace in Jesus Christ. This view understands that Christians embrace real victory in death, such that even death cannot separate them from the love of God in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:38–39). The result of this view is usually “proper treatment” that avoids both “undertreatment” and “overtreatment.”

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God’s Work and Ours – John Owen and Lee Gates, *Daily Readings from John Owen*

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13 In Deuteronomy 10:16, the Lord commands the Israelites to ‘circumcise the foreskin of their hearts, and to be stubborn no more’. The circumcising of their hearts was a part of their obedience—it was their duty to do so, in obedience to God’s command. And yet, in Deuteronomy 30:6, he affirms that ‘the LORD your God will circumcise your heart ... so that you may live’. So, it seems, the same thing, in different respects, may be God’s act in us and our duty towards him. Ezekiel 18:31 says ‘Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O House of Israel?’ The making of a new heart and a new spirit is here required under a promise of a reward of life, or a great threatening of eternal death. So this must be a part of their duty and obedience. And yet, in Ezekiel 36:26-27, God affirms that he will do this very thing that here he requires of them: ‘I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.’ In how many places, also, are we commanded to ‘Fear the Lord!’? No one will deny this is our duty. And yet in Jeremiah 32:40, God promises that he will put his fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him. Faith and repentance are also expressly attributed to the free donation of God. He ‘granted to the Gentiles repentance that leads to life’ (Acts 11:18). Faith is ‘not of ourselves, it is the gift of God’ (Eph. 2:8). We pray that he would give us what he commands us to have.

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Whatever thy grief or trouble be, take every drop in thy cup from the hand of Almighty God. He with whom “the hairs of thy head are all numbered,” knoweth every throb of thy brow, each hardly drawn breath, each shoot of pain, each beating of the fevered pulse, each sinking of the aching heart. Receive, then, what are trials to thee, not in the main only, but one by one, from His all-loving hands; thank His love for each; unite each with the sufferings of thy Redeemer; pray that He will thereby hallow them to thee. Thou wilt not know now what He thereby will work in thee; yet, day by day, shalt thou receive the impress of the likeness of the ever-blessed Son, and in thee, too, while thou knowest it not, God shall be glorified. E.B. Pusey –cited by Elisabeth Eliot in *Keep a Quiet Heart*