

Christ did not come to make sinners savable but actually to save them. He did not merely open a door for salvation, he carried his people through it. He laid down his life that sinners might live. —Jeremy Walker

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)

27. Q. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of prophet in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation (John 1:18; 1 Pet.1:10,11, 12; John 15:15; and 20:31).

28. Q. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of priest in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice (Heb. 9:14, 28) and reconcile us to God (Heb. 2:17), and in making continual intercession for us (Heb.7:24, 25).

29. Q. How doth Christ execute the office of king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself (Acts 15:14, 15, 16), in ruling (Is. 33:22), and defending us (Is. 32:1, 2), and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies (1 Cor. 15:25; Ps. 110 throughout).

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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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THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (John 14:6-8).

These words were uttered by our Lord in answer to a question by Thomas. Like many others I have often repeated these precious words without giving any thought to the context in which they were spoken. To do so does not affect the truth that is spoken. The words flow easily from us as we think upon the person and work of our Blessed Lord. Like many other familiar passages this ease does not promote meditation and reflection upon the implications of these words and perhaps we lose something. It is good to know and to memorize such passages and the glorious truth being expressed. It is better to be suitably affected as we bring them to mind. It is certain that those to whom they were spoken did not immediately grasp the deeper meaning at that time. Spiritual illumination would be forthcoming, and they would rejoice at them even as we do now.

The first eleven verses of John 14 are often cited at funerals and at other times when words of comfort are in order. In fact, it was the intent of our Lord to prepare the Apostles for troubling times to come. The immediate reaction of the disciples was that of consternation at the things they were hearing in that they were discouraging and would soon appear tragic to them. The tendency of men is to look to immediate circumstance and project an outcome based on human observation. As God's children we are ever directed to look to Him and

believe Him and so walk in faith regardless of visible circumstances. The aim of the Lord here was to direct their attention away from the world and the things that were occurring there and to encourage their remembrance of His words and to think about who He is!

The opening words of this chapter is in fact a command to just stop it – that is being troubled in heart because of the things they were hearing of betrayal, denial, death, and resurrection. The answer was to be found in proper perceptions of God and of Christ. Probably these things were intended as imperatives – that is they were being directed to believe God (as revealed in the Old Testament) and to believe in Him as well as being equal with God. He had constantly referred to being sent by the Father and being the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. He would then endeavor to point them away from the immediate to that which was to come. That would include a description of Heaven as His Father's house, and that it was of sufficient capacity for all, and that He was going to prepare a place for them. Our tendency is to plan things to accommodate us; that to which we go shall have been fully prepared and perfectly suited to each individual member of the redeemed family of God. He was quite specific that it was not just a place; it was a place for Him to be with them and with us.

The fact that our Lord said that He was going, and that they knew where He was going and the way, provoked Thomas's question. Since he was limited to considering things in this world, his question was reasonable to him. It seemed that Thomas (and probably the others) couldn't separate himself from earthly considerations of Christ and His purpose. His thoughts may have been of another location on earth, and he wanted to know where. The simplistic thinking of Thomas was, "if I don't know where, how can I know the way?"

It is here that a most precious "I AM" (or perhaps three of them) is brought to bear. Athur Pink saw that Adam had a threefold relation with his creator. That consisted of communion, knowledge, and life. He continued that man's need is threefold: reconciliation, illumination, and regeneration. We would parallel these thoughts with, The way, the truth, and the life. He is indeed the Way. He does not merely show the way (as many persist in attempting). He is the Way. He is the way to God, the means of reconciliation with God. He is the way across the great gulf. He is the only way to true blessedness in the presence of God. He entered by a "...new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh..." As a result, we have "boldness to enter in the holiest by the blood of Christ." He further declared, "I am the Truth." He is the full and final revelation of God to man and in the process, He reveals the awful truth about man. He is the embodiment of truth to us and in us. Paul wrote, *There is none that understandeth, there is none*

that seeketh after God. (Romans 3:11). Christ in us overcomes that lack in us. And He is the Life. He has delivered us from death, He is the giver of eternal life: *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. (John 5:21).* And it is He that manifests and characterizes the very nature of the only life that is of God in every way. In all these things He is exclusive and there is none other.

Like the others Philip lacked the level of faith to understand what Jesus had just said. He may have been asking for a theophany such as had been seen in the Old Testament. But Jesus had revealed Himself to them as God manifest in the flesh. He had done so by declaration. His identity in unity with the Father had been stated. They had been eyewitnesses to His power that could only be attributed to His deity. In verse 7, He challenged their failure to identify Him with the Father. They should have seen the essence and the character of the Father in Him. "Henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him."

Certainly, all these are words of comfort to the believing heart. We are reminded that, *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. (2 Corinthians 1:20).* It is here that He declares His deity and thinks it "not robbery to be equal with God." There is no belief in God apart from believing in Christ as well. How sweetly must all this have been when these men were empowered by the Holy Spirit to lay hold on all these things. How precious does this appear to all who "love His appearing." *bhs*

It's Okay To Just Pray

I have yet to meet the Christian who has mastered prayer. In fact, I have yet to meet the Christian who feels like much more than a beginner in the school of prayer. Though I know many who pray, I know few who are convinced they really understand prayer. In a strange way, I find it heartening to learn that even one of my most trusted and respected theologians has declined to write a book on the

subject and wondered, “Who can write or speak at any length easily on the mystery of prayer?”

I am thankful that we do not need to understand prayer in order to pray. At least, we do not need to exhaustively understand prayer in order to pray. We do not need to have an answer to every question or a resolution to every mystery. The biblical command is not to figure out prayer or iron out every dilemma of prayer, but simply to pray.

I take that to mean that we should not allow our lack of understanding to lead to a lack of prayer. We should not allow our confusion to excuse hesitation. Instead, we should press on in obedience and faith—obedience to God’s clear command and faith that prayers are meaningful to God. We should press on in earnest prayer, in confident prayer, in constant prayer, and in all kinds of prayer, trusting that God loves to hear them and act upon them.

It has been my experience that the path to a deepening understanding of prayer does not lead through libraries as much as through closets, and not through reading as much as simply through praying. You can learn about prayer in a sermon, but it’s in a prayer meeting that you really learn to pray. Books and sermons have their value, of course, in teaching us to pray. God’s book has the greatest value of all. But we learn the most about prayer as we actually pray. Prayer is its own guide, its own instructor. Or, perhaps better said, the Spirit teaches us not so much through our questioning or searching but through our praying. He guides us and instructs us as we pray.

And so the task of the Christian is not first to understand prayer, though may be a very good thing, and not first to solve prayer, which I suspect is an impossible thing. Rather, the Christian is to pray, knowing that part of the beauty of prayer is that even if we aren’t confident in how prayer works, we can have confidence in the one who tells us to pray. Even if we haven’t resolved the dilemmas and solved the mysteries, we can trust the one who issues the command and who insists that he hears and responds to our prayers. Our task, our calling, and our joyful duty is to pray. –Tim Challies, (BLOG, January 2023)

MY DOCTRINE

The Lord Jesus Christ said “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me” (John 7:16).

Some men might say – if they were honest, “My doctrine is mine, for I invented it.”

Many men might say – if they were honest, “My doctrine is that of the man I follow.”

God’s ministers imitate Jesus Christ in saying “My doctrine is not mine, but His who sent me.”

– Daniel E. Parks