

"...there ought to be a sign posted in every Christian bookstore that reads, "The views expressed in these books do not necessarily express the views of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." - Voddie Baucham

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)

40. Q. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death?

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23), and do immediately pass into glory (2 Cor. 5:1, 6, 8; Phil. 1:23; Luke 23:43); and their bodies being still united to Christ (1 Thess. 4:14), do rest in their graves (Is. 57:2) till the resurrection (Job 19:26, 27).

41. Q. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection believers, being raised up in glory (1 Cor. 15:43), shall be openly acknowledged, and acquitted in the day of judgment (Mt. 25:23; Mt. 10:32), and made perfectly blessed, both in soul and body, in the full enjoyment of God (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 13:12) to all eternity (1 Thess. 4:17, 18).

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsj@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

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

Volume 17, No. 20

May 19, 2024

WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (Acts 5:30-32)

These words were the response from Peter and the other Apostles to the orders of the high priest and the assembled council who were ordering them to stop preaching Jesus. Their reply to them began with “We ought to obey God rather than men (v. 29).” Officials had failed in every attempt to silence the message of the Gospel being preached by these men. They had beaten them, imprisoned them, and sought to intimidate them in any way possible. They realized that they were being implicated in the death of Christ and hated the message of the resurrection. Furthermore, people believed the message, and they were fearful of upsetting the people.

There is a natural curiosity with men concerning those things considered newsworthy and often fascination leads them to study infinite details concerning some event. There has never been any greater and more exciting news than that which is contained in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we wonder that it is not readily received by all. Many have suffered and died rather than be silent about the things that have happened, are happening, and will happen that are centered in Christ our Lord. There is nothing that Satan opposes more than this truth and those who bear witness to it. Where then is the excitement to be found when we read: *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels,*

preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1 Timothy 3:16). It would seem that those who have seen and experienced so great salvation would be most excited to tell it at every opportunity and would seek occasion to tell what they know of the wonders of Christ, His grace, and His mercy. We conclude that the example of the early disciples needs to be revived in our day.

They were witnesses despite opposition of basest sort. We ask, who and what are witnesses? They are those who know firsthand the truth of something and account the same to others. The narrative here speaks for itself and is well known. We marvel at the operations of the grace of God in these men who faced down the most formidable opposition to do as they had been commanded. In an earlier encounter they had answered these officials thusly: *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. (Acts 4:20).* There was a mandate from the Lord Himself to witness: *And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:46-48).* It is not without empowerment: *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria,*

and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8). And there was the promise of His presence with them "...and lo I am with you always..." The Holy Spirit accompanied them with mighty works and accreditation!

We consider that which is witnessed – these things. The Apostles reaction to the challenge issued them was to preach what these men considered most offensive aspects of the Gospel – the resurrection of Christ and the fact that they were complicit, if not directly guilty of the death of Christ. "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain..." They knew that they had demanded the death of Christ and now they were hearing that God, with His mighty power, had raised up Jesus and had conquered their only weapon – they had killed Him and He had been raised in victory over death. And that not merely to claim a miracle, but to be a Prince and Savior and a dispenser of repentance and forgiveness to Israel. These men hated the fact that they needed to repent and be forgiven even as others.

Peter's experience remained real throughout his life: *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. (2 Peter 1:16).* And we note that the thrill of knowing Christ never waned with John: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)* *That which*

we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1-3).

What have we witnessed? The further removed a report is from an eyewitness, the more reason we have to question or even hesitate to repeat (Thus, we are warned about gossip...). But if we believe the Scripture to be inspired of God (and we do), then we are learning these things from eyewitnesses. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17).* And this if from the greatest witness – the Holy Spirit Himself. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (Romans 8:16).*

That which faith brings clearly to our vision is the most precious display of love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friends." Thus, we conclude that we, as were they, "witnesses of these things." Peter's words to those in the house of Cornelius were: *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. (Acts 10:43).* We are reminded of the words He has given us, preserved for us on the pages of Scripture, those things that we may faithfully share in that we know, *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63).* We are also, "witnesses of these things." *bhs*

There are at least three reasons we should pray. First, the Bible commands us to pray. Paul tells us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He said "when you pray" (Matt. 6:5, emphasis added), demonstrating His expectation that prayer would be ongoing in a believer's life. Second, prayer reminds us of our dependence on God. Jesus told us to ask God that His "will be done" and to

request “daily bread” (Matt. 6:10, 11). Finally, prayer is the means God has appointed to allow us to express our desires to Him. Paul tells us to “let [our] requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6). We think primarily of this third aspect when we consider prayer, but equally important is remembering our duty to and dependence on God.

When we are afflicted, our prayers should include the three important areas that Job’s did, recognizing the fuller revelation of Scripture we enjoy. First, we need to pray for clear evidence of salvation in Christ, our Redeemer and the rock on which our unshaken faith is fixed. Second, we should pray for the renewal of the inner man, even as the outer man is dying. Our body may be dying and heading to the grave, but we should pray for inward renewal to occur as the Spirit prepares us for a glorious resurrection body on the day of vengeance of our God. Third, we need to pray that the Holy Spirit will equip us to face illness, disease, and death without fear as we believe in the all-sufficient mercy of Christ without doubting, by tightly embracing the end of our faith—the person of Jesus—and by resting in the merits of His righteousness alone for our salvation, just as Job did. – Christopher Bogosh, *Compassionate Jesus*

The Confident Cry of a Child

I have already spoken of God’s adopting love and the joy of knowing we are His children. But look again at what the apostle says of this in Romans 8:15–16. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. I doubt that anything can rival the delight that erupts in our hearts when we finally realize we are God’s children. Here Paul talks about knowing, deep down inside, that God is our Father. It isn’t something we crank up or work out or pull down. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in our spirit. God tells us that whoever believes in Christ Jesus is saved. We believe. And then, as if to ratify, strengthen, and intensify that certainty, the Holy Spirit says to our spirit: “Yes! Yes! You are indeed God’s child. He is indeed your Father!” It isn’t via the text of Scripture that He does this, but directly and subjectively, in and to and on and through our hearts. This unshakable assurance that we are sons and daughters of God is not a conclusion we draw from the fact that we cry “Abba! Father!” Rather, our childlike cry of “Abba!” is the fruit of that conviction. And it’s a confident cry indeed.

– Sam Storms, *The Singing God*

“Think of the Spiritual Disciplines,” says Donald S. Whitney, “as ways we can place ourselves in the path of God’s grace and seek him as Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus placed themselves in Jesus’s path and sought him.” Or as Jonathan Edwards put it, you can “endeavor to promote spiritual appetites by laying yourself in the way of allurements.”⁹ We cannot force Jesus’s hand, but we can put ourselves along the paths of grace where we can be expectant of his blessing. –David Mathis, *Habits of Grace*

THERE ARE BUT TWO LESSONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN TO LEARN: THE ONE IS, TO ENJOY GOD IN EVERY THING; THE OTHER IS, TO ENJOY EVERY THING IN GOD. –CHARLES SIMEON