
THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR

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I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.
Revelation 22:16

Foreign to Whose Field

“Here in Lithuania, I would say that the greatest obstacle we have is the perception of the people based on the government. The government has defined the Baptist religion as a non-traditional religion. Essentially only the Catholic, Jewish, and Russian Orthodox religions are considered traditional. By being labeled non-traditional, most people see the Baptist religion as simply another cult. We are lumped together with all other non-traditional religions (such as Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.) This means that we not only have to overcome ignorance about what our true beliefs are, but we also have to overcome prejudices (and this can be very difficult).”

- Missionary to Lithuania¹

I am sure that this statement could be generally used on many a mission field, even here at home. I like the point that Rev. Richard A. Ciarrocca of Pilgrim Fundamental Baptist Press made when he said, “No matter where it is, it’s the Lord’s entire harvest field and it’s all foreign missions.” We are and will be addressing more and more many of the same situations that our overseas (foreign) brethren have been facing for years, here in our

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Joshua – Character Sketch

“Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;” - Joshua 23:6

These are some of Joshua’s final words, which sum up his life experience and the character that God built in him over the years.

In the very beginning of Joshua’s command over God’s people, the LORD spake unto Joshua three times in an encouragement for him to be strong and courageous (1:6, 1:7, 1:9). It is also interesting that in chapter 1 and verse 18 that the Israelites themselves attempted to encourage Joshua to be “strong and of a good courage”. It appears that although Joshua had been prepared by God through Moses for the work he had for him to do, he too as we do, had a weakness. However, we see that God’s “strength is made perfect in” Joshua’s “weakness.” (2 Cor 12:9)

One thing to take note of is that although Joshua questioned God after his defeat at Ai, (v.7:7-9) we never read of him disregarding the commands of God. Each and every time that God commanded, Joshua obeyed. This should not be surprising, considering Joshua’s high regard for the “word of the LORD”. This was also revealed in chapter 8 and verse 35, where “There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel.”.

Joshua was a man who took charge under pressure, and had the respect of the people to go with it. He was not a lazy man; in fact many times we are told that Joshua “rose early in the

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Samson – Character Sketch

Once again Israel “did evil in the sight of the Lord” (Judges 13:1), and again God called a Judge to deliver them. This time however, God prepared one from birth as a “Nazarite unto God” (13:5). To be born from what appears to be a Godly Father and Mother. Manoah, a man of prayer (13:8) so wanted to be sure of the Lord’s direction that he requested clarification of God’s instruction. Manoah’s wife also seemed to understand the mercy, grace and fairness of the Lord (13:23). By verse 24, it seems as though Samson was being raised according the commands of God (13:5) by these God fearing parents as we see that “the child grew, and the Lord Blessed him”.

“... every man did that which was right in his own eyes. “ Judges 17:6

This seems to be one of the legacies that Samson left behind. A mighty man (14:6, 14:9, 15:8, 16:3, 16:29) who’s true strength was not of the physical, but was spiritual, and was given by the “Spirit of the Lord” (13:25, 14:6, 14:19, 15:14). This strength was provided through the faithfulness to his Nazarite vow, which he took lightly. On at least one occasion he even disrespectfully deceived his parents regarding these vows (14:9). Samson was full of good intentions; however, he was also a reckless man.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1 John 2:16

It seems that he was most definitely reckless in the area of the “lust of the flesh” (14:1, 16:1. 16:4), and his failure to maintain his distance from the things “of the world”. These two weaknesses would eventually lead to his demise (16:30).

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Saul – Character Sketch

The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! 2 Sam 1:19

Saul, a man of extremes, whose rise was as mighty as his fall.

Extremes were the theme throughout his life, beginning immediately upon his call to office by lot at Mizpah. In 1 Samuel 10:22 we see that Saul "hid himself among the stuff", for he was afraid to stand before his people as the LORD's chosen king. However, soon after that in chapter 11 and verse 6 when "the Spirit of God came upon Saul" and "his anger was kindled greatly" for the tidings which he heard of the Ammorites, he reacted with strength and without fear. And because of this "the fear of the Lord fell on the people" (11:7). The latter, seeming to be a more dangerous situation, causes us to wonder about Saul's reaction to the two events. This theme would paint a picture of Saul's life from this beginning until his untimely death.

As we see in 1 Samuel 9:2, Saul was "a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." This was his outward appearance; however, it is not long before Saul's true character was seen, and proved to be one of disobedience, impatience, and impulsiveness. Strangely enough, he was even cowardly at times, which later forced him to make decisions that he would not likely make otherwise.

Saul's impatience became a real problem for Samuel when we see his need to reprove him for not waiting for him and acting on his behalf in the office of a priest (10:8) in 1 Samuel 13:8-11. Samuel reprovved Saul by clearly stating that he

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morning”. We see in chapter 5 and verse 14 that Joshua knew of the holiness of the LORD. We see that he was a man of his word, as he saved Rehab and her family (6:25). Although at least once he became “dismayed” (8:1) in his obedience to the Lord’s command, he knew that the Lord “is good” (Psalm 107:1) and “his way” was the best way. Joshua knew that the work of the Lord was serious business as he encouraged the people of Israel to sanctify themselves early on in their campaign (3:5). Many commentators have stated that it is “difficult to form an estimate of Joshua’s character”, however, I beg to differ. Joshua’s loyalty to the LORD was forefront and uncompromising. We see through his actions that he was a man after God’s own heart and will.

“a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.” Acts 13:22



“Salvation”
The Father thought of It:
Jesus bought It:
The Holy Ghost wrought It:
Satan fought It:
Thank God I’ve got it. (How about you?)
-Copied

Many of his actions should not be surprising to us, because he was a powerful man with a determination for justice and the popularity (16:2) and heroism to accompany it. Any man with these attributes might easily find innumerable temptations.

With all of his faults, he was a man who continuously received God’s blessing (13:24), protection and provision (15:19). Samson ultimately repented and turned back to the Lord (16:28). Is it not wondrous that when he did, as when we do, God is always waiting with open arms to quickly and completely forgive? †

Solomon – Character Sketch

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? (Ecclesiastes 1:1-3)

This is Solomon’s life experience summed up in just three simple verses. Unfortunately, many Christians look back on what activities their time, energy and money were spent, asking this same question. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

Solomon’s life was filled with nobility, humility, honor, integrity, wisdom and yet his desires and foolish pride led to probably one of the greatest tragedies. Why are we so surprised, that just as every other, this tragedy begins with compromise? (1 Kings 3:1)

Some commentators have stated that “the wisdom for which Solomon is so celebrated was not of a very high order; it was nothing more than practical shrewdness...” With this I must disagree. I believe that Solomon was sincere, and that God, recognizing this sincerity gave him “a wise and an understanding heart”(1 Kings 3:12). But just like so many others, the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16) influenced his thought process. This inevitably influenced his decisions and actions.

An Example of Submission

Someone inquired of a deaf and dumb boy why he thought he was born deaf and dumb. Taking the chalk he wrote upon the board, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

- D.L. Moody

own back yard.

Specifically, I believe that two of the major religions that we will be driven to contend with, as they gain greater approval from society is Islam and our old adversary, the Catholic Church. As we see Mormon's trying harder and harder to be noticed as mainstream Christianity, we also see the Catholic Church on the same heading. We now have Catholic groups who have labeled themselves bible believing Catholics, charismatic Catholics (Many of whom have an emphases on Universalism), Pentecostal Catholics, Zen Catholics and yes, even fundamental Catholics.

As a matter a fact, one person has stated that "Some Evangelicals are now saying that Roman Catholics are no longer considered to be a mission field since they are 'Christians'." This comes from a non-fundamental source, however they have even recognized the problem.

As a matter a fact, the catholic community has evangelized to Christians many times without them even knowing it. Take the ecumenical group Promise Keepers for instance, who's founder, Bill McCartney, accepts Catholics as Christians and sees no reason to evangelize them. We are talking about a religion that is one of "willful disobedience". This has and continues to play a large role in their acceptance. Where else can you knowingly sin week after week, and each week be given some (false) security of forgiveness simply by partaking of the Eucharist. What an obstacle that this may seem to be as we witness to the catholic community and prayerfully attempt to show the majority of them that they are lost and headed for hell.

Getting people to pray a prayer is not the problem, getting them to believe on Jesus (in their head) is not the problem, getting the to "accept" Jesus is not the problem. The problem is getting them to recognize the realization that they are lost and coming to the point of repentance, so that the Holy Spirit can do the work of regeneration. Not through the sprinkling of water upon the head, but by faith (Acts 15:7-9, Titus 3:5, John 5:24). This is an obstacle with many religions and cults including the Church of Christ, Episcopalians, Seventh Day Adventist, Mormons as well as many Lutherans.

However, those birthed Roman Catholic may not be our largest mission field much longer. In an article written by Abdullah Al Araby, entitled "If Islam Ruled America" he made the statement that, " It is a matter of time before Islam will become the religion of the majority. America, then will be labeled an " Islamic country ... " How far off will that be you ask? As reported by Christianity.com, "Some public schools in California are promoting the Islamic religion" today. However, these same schools are treating Christians as "simply another cult", sound familiar?

The course on Islam is one of the 11 units of a state-approved course on "World History and Geography." The young, impressionable students are required to wear Muslim robes, read the Koran, study the lives of Islamic prophets, learn the Islamic "Five Pillars of Faith," choose a Muslim name, write Islamic phrases in Arabic, chant "Praise to Allah, Lord of Creation," pray "in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful," conduct a jihad or "holy war" via a game, and organize a make-believe journey to Mecca. Handouts include a description of Mohammed as an extremely moral man, even though history debunks this. The textbook, which is titled "Across the Centuries," presents Islam in an entirely positive manner, while at the same time depicting Christianity in an entirely negative light. Protests by parents have so far been ignored by school officials. Wise Christians do not send their children to the public school system to be trained in pagan philosophy and to be immersed in the vile youth culture that exists on the campuses of American public schools today. "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33).

This is only half the battle here on the home front. It is only coupled by the increasing influence of the occult in our society and even more so among our children. There is a host of television programming that is very effectively dulling the spiritual senses of our young people. To mention a few, there is "Honey I Shrank the Kids (The Series), whereby the dead are brought back to life, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Charmed, and yes once again in the headlines, Harry Potter.

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.
- Deuteronomy 18:10-11

Television programming such as this, coupled with the anti-Christian sentiment in the public school system and the blending and watering down of churches today is rearing up young people who at best put our Lord Jesus Christ in the same category as Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy and the Easter bunny. This is becoming more evident each year in the vacation bible school program when we have to begin with the basics of whom Jesus is and why He is different, and why He is real.

Then we have television channels just for the women such as the Oxygen™ channel who have such programming as the "Dream Doctor" and who openly promote Pantanjali's Yoga Sutras (the Eightfold Path). This practice is being widely studied and practiced today here in the United States.

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ANOTHER TESTIMONY OF A COMPROMISED INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH

The following was sent to me by Buddy Smith, missionary to Australia, in response to the testimony we published recently by Brian Snider of his recent visit to a deeply compromised "fundamental Baptist" church:

We encountered the same thing the last time we were home on furlough. I had been concerned about a church in Huntington, W. Va. for some time. Years ago it was called Souls for Christ Baptist Church and was a live church. In recent times they had changed their name (can't remember what it is now) and begun showing the Jesus film. When we visited there in 1998 we saw their display table covered with Promise Keepers materials, they had a "praise team" leading the singing, and singing CCM. They had photos of their members in ministry and one of them was working with Campus Crusade. Modern versions were everywhere, and the pastor was just about the only person to speak to their missionary of 28 years. So I wrote him and asked the church to cease our support as we are preaching against the very things they are doing. I told him I believe missionaries are supposed to represent the churches that send them. When that ceases to be the case, there needs to be changes. He wrote back to say he thought we should continue as things were, as the church was still sound in doctrine, and we needed the support. I wrote back and asked again that our support be stopped, and it was. It is unlikely anybody in the church ever knew about our concerns. The people we knew there thirty years ago are all gone. I expect we will come across more and more of this in time to come. And I'm inclined to think missionaries will need to give more consideration to tent making in order to support themselves. We are.

Thanks for printing Bro. Snider's letter.

God bless,
Buddy Smith, Missionary to Australia
smiles@tpg.com.au

May 23, 2002 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143)

"Happy is that people, whose God is the LORD."

Psalm 144:15

According to this Psalm, children are happy when there is proper parenting, workers are happy when the fruit of their labour is plenty and everyone in a community is happy when there is peace.

The fountain of such happiness is found in our text verse. When we are happy in the Lord, we experience a holy contentment in His provision. True happiness rises and falls on our relationship with the Prince of Peace.

You may have many things today, but without God, even in laughter there is sorrow. You may have very little, and yet can still rejoice in an all-sufficient Saviour.

We are so blessed in America. May we find our joy in Christ. Blessings can come and go; the only true constant in life is the Blessor. Rejoice in Him!

Shining Light Baptist Church – Monroe, NC - www.SLBC.net

Solomon Continued

He begins in the right direction, desiring the sincere milk and seeking the things that were pleasing unto the Lord (1 Kings 3:9-10). However, just as Solomon stated himself, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (Ecclesiastes 7:8)

As I read Psalms 127, I realized even more so that Solomon knew the value and the responsibility we have to our children. And nevertheless, we see the results of his actions, his legacy revealed, in Rehoboam. Josephus has stated that Rehoboam was a proud and foolish man, and that he "despised the worship of God, till the people themselves imitated his wicked actions" This was the end of the matter! Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. (Ecclesiastes 12:8)

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:24

†

Saul Continued

did not keep "the commandment of the LORD" and that he "hast done foolishly" (13:13).

We see Saul's disobedience in 1 Samuel 15:9 when "Saul and the people spared" those things of Amalek's in which they were instructed in chapter 15 and verse 3 to "utterly destroy".

Saul was a man that seemed to be easily swayed by the things around him. This was compounded by the obvious fact that he sought favor in the eyes of men, more than he was concerned about God's displeasure with him.

To leave Saul in this condition would not be fair. He indeed was a man that was honorable and noble, however, as King Solomon so clearly stated in Ecclesiastes chapter 7 and verse 8 "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." Saul's end was one where "the Spirit of the LORD departed from" him and "an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him". An end whereby he found himself in complete rebellion against the LORD, inquiring and seeking counsel with wizards (28:7-13), and one which ended in suicide (31:4).

Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.
Jeremiah 2:1

†

Good Advice

STUDY the Bible through. Never begin a day without mastering a verse from its pages.

PRAY it in. Never lay aside your Bible until the verse or passage you have studied has become a part of your being.

WORK it out. Live the truth you get in the morning through each hour of the day.

PASS it on. Seek to tell somebody else what you have learned.

- Copied

“The Sutras form the basis of much of the modern yoga movement. Yoga's numerous health benefits, its potential for personal and spiritual transformation, and its accessibility make it a practical choice for anyone seeking physical, psychological and spiritual integration.” - Oxygen

However it would not be complete without their call for tolerance, as they stated “that we should call other people on their insensitive statements”. How insensitive would they perceive it, if we confronted them with the Gospel that labeled them as sinners bound for hell? (Romans 3:23, Revelations 20:15)

Need Advice? The Oxygen™ channel will offer the services of “The Princess”: She's loud, she's opinionated, she's smart and she's pretty sure she knows you better than you know yourself. No, she's not your mother or your inner child: She's Princess, and she's ready to tackle all your sex and relationship woes.” Who needs a Saviour when they have “The Princess” who know them better than themselves and is ready to feed the flesh. By the way, I don't recommend that you visit any of these sites for yourself.

What we are seeing here in the United States is only a glimpse of what missionaries have been working with around the globe for years. I have been told of first hand accounts of the acts of the witch doctors in the jungles of Venezuela, and indeed that seems so grim. However, I believe that “the day is at hand”, and that we will begin seeing more of this in our own back yard. The day that Fundamental Biblical Christianity becomes seen by most people as “simply another cult” will so be upon us. Whether we want to believe it or not, we are labeled by many already as a non-traditional religion. It is only a matter of time before the government steps in and backs this position.

Are we living in an age different than any other? Once again, a simple study of the Word of God, will make it very clear as to the past, present and future of this type of activity. Have we not seen in scripture the past errors of many others that fell into this same snare? Should we expect anything different in the yielding to the truth since “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”? (Jer 17:9) And with that deceitfulness and wickedness, every man will do that which is right in his own eyes. Have we not been warned that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” (2 Tim 3:13) And that “as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matt 24:37)

“We are living in a humanistic empire dedicated to one world socialism and polytheistic ecumenism.”

Many preachers and people in general are still trying to label the United States as a Christian country. The meaning of Christian is Christ like, to be faithfully striving in the power of God to be more like our Saviour Jesus Christ. Maybe I am blind to this in our country, but I personally do not see this as a ground swelling movement, even in and among many of our Independent Baptist Churches.

Based upon the First Amendment (Religion and Expression) of the Constitution of the United States, we are afforded the freedom of religion in this country. That is, we are not forced to worship any specific god. However, I have to wonder how much our failure to be faithful in proclaiming the Gospel has attributed to the numbers of people that in their search for the truth, are not led to Jesus Christ but to the many false and hopeless religions, cults and occults.

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TALIBAN BAPTISTS

Recently I read a report by a preacher who attended a Baptist Bible Fellowship (BBF) meeting in Salem, New Hampshire. He observed that many of the speakers mentioned "new winds" that are blowing among fundamental Baptists.

They warned of those who worry about such things as the way women dress, long hair on men, rock music, and contemporary praise. Those who still preach against such things (and they are few indeed) were called "Taliban Baptists." I wonder if Paul was a Taliban Baptist? He wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 that long hair on men is a shame and that long hair on women is a glory. If hair and such things don't matter, why is that in the Bible? My friends, there are indeed new winds blowing among fundamental Baptists, and they are the winds of error spoken of in Ephesians 4. They are the winds of compromise and worldliness. They are being stirred up by the hot air blowing from the mouths of preachers who have traded the good fight of faith for a comfortable, popular ministry. I regularly hear from men and women who are brokenhearted because they cannot find a strong church in their area. They have visited church after church, and all they can find are compromising pastors who do not want to rock the boat. These families want to raise their children in the paths of righteousness and biblical separation, but the churches undermine their teaching and woo the children toward the world.

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www.Born2Serve.org
Fax: 856-358-1876
Email: editor@born2serve.org
Editor: David C. Mills – dmills@born2serve.org

Yet Another Compromising Church, On the Slippery Slope

TO THE CONGREGATION, OUR FELLOW BELIEVERS:

Having committed much time and attention to the issue of drums and worship, we would like to share our outcome.

1. The human voice is the most important instrument.
2. All instruments are acceptable for taped accompaniment of special music.
3. The organ, piano and keyboard are the "every service instruments."
4. Drums are not forbidden in worship.
5. Drums are not to be featured more than any other instrument. There are not to be any drum solos.
6. Instruments such as the trumpet, accordion, flute, and now drums, are to be used on occasions as the Director of Music decides.
7. The Music Committee will seek advice of the Board of Deacons concerning any uncertain areas in music used for worship.

There remains an issue yet to be resolved concerning spiritual qualifications for individuals leading in worship and music. We express deep regret it has been necessary to take such a long time with this issue of drums. The time has been used wisely and worship is indeed a major topic worthy of such consideration.

In Christ,
The Board of Deacons and Pastor

Foreign Field from page 7

"Don't give me your excuses! Everybody has a hard area, everybody has a fruitful area."

As any prospective missionary seeks to gain a greater knowledge of the spiritual challenges on the mission field today, we must always remember that we are "in" the mission field at all times. I like the sign that I saw recently as I left the parking lot of a church, which read, "You are now entering the mission field". I would also add that in these days, even when we are sitting in the pew at church, we are indeed "in" the mission field. We must also remember that as times wax worse, we are simply the proclaimers of the Gospel message. The Holy Spirit is the one that does the work.

"behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." (John 4:35)

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