

THE STILLER OF STORMS

Levi Sides, Jasper, AL

Life is not always sunshine. Into each life some rain must fall. Some days will be dark and dreary. On the voyage to the peaceful shores of Heaven, God's people will encounter stormy weather.

When the disciples of Jesus set out to cross the Sea of Galilee, "They took Him even as he was in the ship" (Mark 4:36). Journeying with Jesus is what the Christian life is all about. "And there arose a great storm of wind, that the waves beat into the ship, so it was now full" (Mark 4:37). Simply because we journey with Jesus does not make us immune to storms and conflicts. Until we reach "the other side," we will experience threats, troubles, and testing. The Christian life is not a picnic; it is a battle. Its symbol is not a cushion, but a cross.

In the midst of the storms, God's people are secure. The guaranty of their peace and victory lies not in their ability to cope, but in His presence and power. He is able to see them through. Jesus delivered His disciples from the storm and they were filled with awe, saying one to another, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark 4:41).

As the *Sleeper*, how very human Jesus is seen to be! As the winds howled, and the waves mounted, and the boat filled, "He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow" (Mark 4:38). The Bible tells of two men who slept during storms at sea. One was Jonah, who was worn out from *dodging* the assignment God had given him. The other was Jesus, who was worn out from *doing* the work appointed Him by the Father. As the *Sleeper*, His full and true humanity is clearly evidenced.

As the *Stiller of Storms*, His full and true divinity is clearly evidenced. Exhausted physically He may have been, but exhausted spiritually He never is. This one is more than a mere man; He is the God-man, as fully and truly God as He is man. As the unique Son of God He was able, and is still able, to still the angry storms of life. The love and power of Jesus are unfailing. "And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39). The calm was as great as the storm. The peace that Jesus gave was as deep as the waves were high.

What should be our reaction to the storms of life? First, storms of life bind disciples to the Master. When this storm arose on the Sea of Galilee, it caused the disciples to turn to Jesus. Second, storms of life will bind brother to brother. Often best of friendships have been made in a hospital room because of the common bond of suffering. Third, storms of life will strengthen our character. If you help the little baby chicken out of the shell, it will die. A tree once protected, suddenly left to stand alone, will be blown down by the wind in its branches. Fourth, the storms of life reveal the power and compassion of the Savior.

PRAYER

Father, we pray not for the withholding of the storms of life, but rather for the strength to endure them, and the knowledge that all things work together for good to them that love You, to them who are the called according to Your purpose. In Christ's name. Amen.

WOT

EDITORIAL

THE LAW OF CHRIST

It is sometimes said that the Old Testament was all law and no grace, while the New Testament is all grace and no law. One does not have to search very long before he realizes the fallacy of such a statement. It is foolish to assert that there was no grace under the Old Law. Every time an animal was sacrificed, God was extending grace to man, for man should have been made to die for his own sins. God graciously allowed the innocent animals to be sacrificed in place of sinful man. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8), as did all faithful followers of God in the Old Testament. Is it the case that those who live after the cross are not bound by any law before God? Does following Christ free one from the restraints of all law? Again, one does not have to search the scriptures long before he is confronted with the fact that a Christian is under obligation to fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

Christ is King of kings, and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). As king, he rules over his kingdom, the church (see Matthew 16:18,19). As with any kingdom, the kingdom of Christ has a law by which its citizens must abide. There are terms for entrance into the kingdom, and there are laws by which each citizen must live if he/she desires to remain in good standing with the King. Should a citizen of the kingdom (a Christian) refuse to be guided by the law of Christ, he then forfeits his fellowship with God and with every faithful citizen of the kingdom of God (2 John 9-11).

There are many today who charge that Christ sets us free from the bondage of following law. Some see no harmony between law and liberty. To have liberty, they would argue, is to be free from the burden of law. To be bound by law, then, is to have no true liberty at all. It is true that by obedience to the truth we are set free (John 8:32), but from what are we set free? Free from law? No! Free from sin? Yes! A kingdom void of law is nothing more than chaos and anarchy. Such is not an accurate characterization of the kingdom of God's dear Son. If it were true that we are under no law today, but only under grace, then all could boast of sinless perfection. The Bible teaches that sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), and that where there is no law there can be no sin (Romans 4:15). Yet, to boast of be-

ing sinlessly perfect is a claim that we cannot (Romans 3:23) and must not (1 John 1:8-10) make. It is possible to commit sin today, therefore, there must be some law which we transgress in so doing. That law is the law of Christ. While many may find no agreement between law and liberty, the Bible and those who follow it will have no trouble harmonizing law and liberty. James does just that when he states, "But whoso looketh into the **perfect law of liberty** [emphasis mine, SPM], and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25). In order to be pleasing to God, we must be those who not only look into the perfect law of liberty, but continue in it. Indeed, the law of Christ is the perfect law of liberty. By adhering to its precepts, one is set free from the dominion of Satan, from the power of sin, and from the bondage of the fear and dread of the grave (Hebrews 2:14,15). James summed up succinctly the nature of Christ's law when he called it the "royal law" (James 2:8). The law of the Lord is superior to any other law man may follow, and is worthy of every man's allegiance, from the lowly pauper to the mightiest of kings. The law of Christ is king of all law, and as such we must make sure to follow it without hesitation.

What, then, are the requirements for entrance into the kingdom of Christ? The Lord is the Savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23), which is the church (Ephesians 1:22,23). Into the church the Lord places every saved person (Acts 2:47). Therefore, it is imperative that one become a member of the Lord's body, for outside of the church no man will be saved. The greatest question any person could ask is, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). The first requirement for salvation, for entrance into the Lord's kingdom, is faith. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus stated that, "If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Another requirement for entrance into the body of Christ is repentance. God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). Our Lord made repentance necessary when he said, "I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise per-

ish" (Luke 13:3). It is necessary as well to confess our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, just as did the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:37). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). Jesus taught that if we did not confess him before men, he would deny us before the Heavenly Father (Matthew 10:32,33). Many would follow the law of Christ up to this point, but would balk at going any further. However, an entrance into the kingdom of the Lord will not be granted until one complies fully with the law of Christ. Jesus remarked, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). He would say the same thing when he taught, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). While men may say that one does not have to be baptized in order to be saved, Jesus teaches otherwise. The door to the kingdom of God's dear Son will be forever barred to those who refuse to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Herein is God's law for entrance into the kingdom of Christ. There are also laws by which its citizens must continue to abide if they desire to be pleasing to their king. We must assemble together to worship the Lord as he has directed (John 4:24). We must lead holy and blameless lives (1 Peter 1:15). We must help those in need (James 1:27), and do good whenever we have the opportunity (Galatians 6:10).

Before drawing this article to a close, I feel it necessary to sound out a word of caution to those who would spend time in study of the New Testament. Oftentimes when the word "law" is used, it has reference to the Law of Moses (or the Old Testament as a whole), and it is often set in contrast to the law of Christ. The law of Moses is inferior in every way to the law of Christ, and those who would contrast these two laws (particularly in the books of Romans and Hebrews) spend much time pointing out the shortcomings of the Old Law.

All of us should have the attitude toward the law of Christ that the psalmist had toward God's law. "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7). If we are to be truly blessed, then we will meditate upon the law of the Lord day and night (Psalm 1:2). May we ever say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8).

WOT

TO BUILD A BRIDGE

Eva Nell Brown Naramore

To build a bridge will take some time,
A pattern and a willing mind,
Foundation steadfast on the Rock,
With faith and work to lay the block.

On yonder side is heaven's shore,
From here to there cement to pour.
It must be mixed with hope and love
To span the space en route above.

While some are building, some must learn
Which wood to use and which to burn.
But from beginning to end
Flaws to look for are flaws of sin.

A crack or break could cause a fall.
The gospel makes a steady wall,
Approved and stamped with nail-scarred hands,
If we obey as God commands.

A deep ravine, a bottomless pit,
A dangerous fall if blocks don't fit,
A vision of the saved or lost,
Without a bridge, so great the cost.

We're supplied with a set of tools.
There's one blueprint and perfect rules.
There's no exemption from God's plan;
We each must lend a helping hand.

Together we can build a bridge
That's safe to walk above the ridge.
The work complete gives peace of mind,
But we must build while we have time.

A bridge that's strong, secure, and straight,
For each to cross, the trip to make,
Will be a bridge, its worth untold,
Joining firm to the street of gold.

CAN A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN BE A FREE MASON?

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Probably all of us have at least heard of Free Masonry. We have seen their temples, their lodges, and have heard of the good things they accomplish for the community. But most likely, many do not know that Free Masonry is a religion, and that many of its tenets go against what the Bible teaches. Notice a few points about the Free Mason religion and make a decision, not from emotions, but based in evidence. Although it will make reading more tedious, I will enclose all of the sources for each quote so that you may verify them for yourself.

First, Masonry claims to be a religion. "Every Masonic Lodge is a **temple of religion**; and its teachings are **instruction in religion**" (Pike, Albert. Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, 213). "**This [Masonry] is the true religion** to the ancient patriarchs; which Masonry has taught for many centuries, and which it will continue to teach as long as time endures" (Pike, Albert. Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, 214). "As Masons we are taught never to commence any great or important undertaking without first invoking the blessings of deity and this is because **Masonry is a religious institution**" (Mackey, Albert. Manual of the Lodge, 40). Those who say Masonry is not a religion go against their own leaders who undeniably claim that it is. What does the Bible say? "There shall be ONE FOLD and ONE SHEPHERD" (John 10:16, emphasis mine, MR). Unless Masons can prove they are the one fold spoken of by Christ, then they are a false religion. "There is ONE BODY" (Eph. 4:4, emphasis mine, MR). That one body is the church which Jesus founded upon His ascension to heaven (Col. 1:18; Matt. 16:18).

Second, Masonry claims to be the greatest institution ever raised. "No institution was ever raised on better principles or on a more solid foundation than that of ours, which takes the Holy Bible as its cornerstone; nor were every more excellent rules or useful maxims laid down that are inculcated in the several Masonic Lectures" (Taylor-Hamilton, Monitor of Symbolic Masonry, 58). What does the Bible say? The Lord's church is the greatest institution ever raised. Christ promised to build the **church**, not the Masonic Lodge (Matt. 16:18). Jesus purchased the **church** with His blood, not the Masonic Lodge (Acts 20:28). God adds the saved to the **church**, not to the Masonic Lodge (Acts 2:47). God receives glory

in the **church**, not the Masonic Lodge (Eph. 3:21). Christ is the head of the **church**, not the Masonic Lodge (Eph. 1:21,22). Christ is the Savior of the **church**, not the Masonic Lodge (Eph. 5:23). The **church** is built upon a solid foundation, not Masonry. The church was built upon Christ (Eph. 2:20). Paul wrote that no other foundation can be laid (1 Cor. 3:11). Is Hirim Abiff and the institution of Freemasonry greater than Christ and His church?!

Third, Masonry teaches that one can go to heaven just by being a Mason. "May we practice Thy precepts in the rigid observance of the tenets of Freemasonry, that we may finally obtain Thy promises, and find an entrance through the gates into the Temple and City of our God" (Masonic Manual). What does the Bible say? "I am the way the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Jesus is the only way to the Father. Not only that, but when one is saved in Christ, he is added to the rest of the saved in the church, not to the Masons: "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them...praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:41,47).

Fourth, the titles the Masons give their leaders are blasphemous. The Head of the Blue Lodge is called "the Worshipful Master." The Bible clearly condemns this: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. 23:8-10). Along these same lines, among the Shriners, which are higher degrees of Masons, the grand master is referred to as "Potentate." It is almost as though they went to the Bible and tried to rebel against its commands! Speaking of Christ the Bible says: "Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and **ONLY POTENTATE**, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15, emphasis mine, MR). The Bible clearly teaches that Christ is the only Potentate; so why in the world would anyone even consider calling a mere human "Potentate," placing him on the level of our Savior?

Fifth, Masonry openly embraces all religions. "Masonry is the universal morality which is suitable to the inhabitants of every clime, to the man of every

creed" (Morals & Dogma, 161). It gets even worse: "We utter no word that can be deemed irreverent by one of any faith. We do not tell the Moslem that it is only important for him to believe there is but one God, and wholly unessential whether Mahomet was His prophet. We do not tell the Hebrew that the Messiah whom he expects was born in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago; and that he is a heretic because he will not so believe...Masonry, of not one age, belongs to all time, of no religion, it finds its great truths in all" (Morals & Dogma, 524). "The Bible is used among Masons as a symbol of the will of God, however it may be expressed, and therefore, whatever to any people expresses that will may be used as a SUBSTITUTE for the Bible... Whether it be the Gospel...the Pentateuch...the Koran... the Vedas...it everywhere Masonically conveys the same idea" (Can a Christian be a Mason?, 19). Can a faithful Christian be a part of a religious group, such as the Masons claim to be, that accepts those who openly embrace false teachers and false religions?

Sixth, Masonry claims to be able to prepare one for eternity: "The common gavel is the instrument made use of by the operative masons to break off the superfluous corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builder's use; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons are taught to make use of it for a more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our minds and consciences of all vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting us, as living stones, for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (Duncan, Malcolm, Revised Duncan's Ritual, 41). **Nothing** can lead one to heaven except the teachings of the New Testament through Christ (John 14:6).

The danger of these false teachings can clearly be seen. If one accepts the tenets of the Masons, he will believe that he is saved through their teachings. However, the Bible says otherwise. Only when one follows the teachings of the Bible can one be saved through Christ. As members of the body of Christ, we desire to put off anything that would get in the way of our faithfulness to our Savior. If an honest person will examine the extreme contradictions between Freemasonry and the Bible, he will leave the Masonic Lodge.

WOT

FLY KITES

J. T. Bolding

When boys and girls fly kites in play,
They reel them in at close of day;
Not so with words in anger said:
These go right, their hurt to spread.

So let us each and every day
Be mindful of the things we say,
And guard the thoughts within the head
To stop regret at time for bed.

FREE BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

If you would like to study the Bible in the privacy of your own home and at your own pace, enroll in a free Bible correspondence course. All materials are free of charge, and you are under no obligation to continue the study. Brother Hap Johnson will be glad to get you started in study of God's word today. Request your free study by writing to the church office at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, 35501. You may also call us at (205) 384-6446.

SALVATION WITHOUT BAPTISM?

Rod Halliburton, Camden, AR

Can we be saved from our sins without being baptized (immersed in water)? This question is of great significance as it relates to the eternal destiny of our souls. Admittedly, we can go to a number of different sources for our answer. Some will go to their preachers, their family members, or trusted friends. But friends, the question of whether or not we can be saved from our sins without being baptized is too important a question for us to rely on other men for the answer. This question demands that we go to the Bible for our answer. When we set aside all preconceived ideas and prejudices, all human creeds and all doctrines of men, we learn that the Bible teaches that no person living under the New Testament can be saved from his sins without being baptized.

Was Jesus Mistaken?

Friends, the devil wants us to believe that we can be saved from our sins without being baptized. He even has men working for him who preach that very thing! But if we can be saved from our sins without being baptized, Jesus was mistaken when he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). The word "and" is a conjunction that joins belief with baptism. Belief without baptism, or vice-versa, will not result in salvation. Some men want to rewrite the Bible, making Mark 16:16 read, "He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized." Rather than believe the devil's preachers, I choose to believe the words of my Savior Jesus Christ.

Was Peter Mistaken?

Friends, the devil wants us to believe that we can be saved from our sins without being baptized. But if we can be saved from our sins without being baptized, then Peter was mistaken when he preached his sermon on the day of Pentecost. When those present heard Peter's preaching concerning Christ, they were pricked in their hearts and asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Listen to Peter's answer. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). There's that conjunction again – the word "and." Those present on the day of Pentecost were commanded both to repent and to be baptized for the remission of sins. Repentance without baptism, or

vice-versa, will not result in salvation. Also notice Peter's use of the phrase "for the remission of sins." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, page ninety-four, indicates the purpose of the baptism referred to in Acts 2:38 is "to obtain the forgiveness of sins." Also notice that the phrase, "for the remission of sins," is the same phrase Jesus used in Matthew 26:28 when he said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Would anyone dare contend that Jesus shed his blood because our sins had already been forgiven? Would anyone dare contend that Jesus shed his blood in order to show the world that our sins had already been forgiven? Of course not! Jesus did not shed his blood because our sins had already been forgiven, but in order that our sins could be forgiven! Likewise, Peter did not command those present on the day of Pentecost to be baptized in order to show the world their sins had been forgiven. Peter commanded those present on the day of Pentecost to be baptized in order to have their sins forgiven! Friends, rather than believe the devil's preachers, I choose to believe the inspired words of the apostle Peter.

Saved Outside of Christ?

Friends, the devil wants us to believe that we can be saved from our sins without being baptized. But if we can be saved from our sins without being baptized, then we can be saved outside of Christ. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). But no man can be saved outside of Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The devil wants us to believe that we can be saved from our sins simply by praying the sinner's prayer, but the idea of praying our way into Christ is not in the Bible. It can't be found! There is not one example anywhere in the Bible of an alien sinner being forgiven of his sins by praying the sinner's prayer! A person is translated into Christ when he is baptized into Christ. Every time the phrase "into Christ" appears in your Bible, it is always preceded by the word "baptized", without exception. Rather than believe the devil's preachers, I believe that salvation can be experi-

enced only by those persons who are in Christ!

Saved Without Christ's Church?

Friends, the devil wants us to believe we can be saved from our sins without being baptized. But if we can be saved from our sins without being baptized, then we can be saved without being a member of Christ's church. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13). Because we are baptized into Christ's body and because Christ's body and Christ's church are one and the same (Ephesians 1:22-23), we know we become members of Christ's church by being baptized into his church. Because Christ is the savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23), we know that only those persons who are in Christ's church are saved. Therefore, we know that only those persons who have been baptized have been saved from their sins. Friends, also notice that the conditions of salvation and the conditions of membership in Christ's church are the same. The idea of a person being saved and then later "voted into the church" is not found anywhere in the Bible! Men often try to make a distinction between the conditions of salvation and the conditions of membership in Christ's church. Some people teach we can be saved from our sins (and thus be in heaven) without being baptized. But oddly enough, many of these same people will not allow us to be a member of their church unless we have been baptized. Seems odd, doesn't it? What do you think about a group of people who makes it harder to be a member of their church than it is to go to heaven? Friends, rather than believe the devil's preachers, I choose to believe that salvation can be experienced only by those persons who are in Christ's church.

Saved Before Sins Washed Away?

Friends, the devil wants us to believe we can be saved from our sins without being baptized. But if we can be saved from our sins without being baptized, then Saul (later known as Paul) was saved before his sins were washed away. When the Lord appeared unto Saul on the road to Damascus, the Lord told Saul to go to Damascus where Ananias would tell him what he must do. Do you remember what Ananias told Saul? "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). No friends, Paul was not saved before his sins were washed away in baptism, and neither are we. Rather than believe the devil's preachers, I choose to believe that salva-

tion can be experienced only by those persons who have had their sins washed away in baptism.

Was Peter Wrong Again?

Friends, the devil wants us to believe that we can be saved from our sins without being baptized. But if we can be saved from our sins without being baptized, the apostle Peter was wrong when he taught that baptism saves us. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21). Friends, did you notice Peter's words? Baptism doth also now save us. That's right, baptism doth also now save us! Some people want to eliminate baptism as a condition of salvation by noting that baptism is a figure. But friends, baptism is not a figure of our salvation; baptism is a figure of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Those persons who eliminate baptism as a condition of salvation eliminate the necessity of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Those persons who make light of baptism make light of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Just as the waters of the flood served as a dividing line between death and salvation in Noah's day, water baptism serves as a dividing line between spiritual death and salvation today. Rather than believe the devil's preachers, I believe the inspired words of the apostle Peter.

Conclusion

What must we do to be saved from our sins? We must hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). We must believe the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16). We must repent of our sins (Acts 2:38). Repentance is a change of mind brought about by godly sorrow, resulting in a reformation of life and is accompanied by restitution whenever possible. We must confess our faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:32-33). We must be baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38). Yes friends, no matter what the devil's preachers may say, the Bible teaches that we cannot be saved from our sins without being baptized. In fact, every time the Bible includes the words baptism and salvation in the same sentence baptism always comes first, without exception. A person who has not been baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of his sins is a person who is still lost in his sins.

WOT

ASK A BIBLE QUESTION

QUESTION: Voting for our next president is getting closer. What should I be considering, as a Christian, as I make preparation to cast my vote?

ANSWER: Christians are citizens of two kingdoms: Heaven and Earth (Co. 1:12-13). These kingdoms are in constant conflict with one another (Mt. 6:24; Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 Jn. 5:19). Christians have the responsibility of supporting civil government (Mt. 17:24-27; 22:21; Mk. 12:17); however, their ultimate allegiance must be to the kingdom of Heaven (Acts 5:29; Phil. 3:20). Every Christian should reflect God's kingdom in their life (Mt. 5:13-16). The privilege of voting is granted to those of good standing in this country (Constitutional Amendments 15, 19 & 26). Casting our vote is an expression of good citizenship (Acts 23:1). We are instructed in God's Word to obey civil authorities (Rom. 13:1), pray for political leaders (1 Tim. 2:1-2), honor political leaders (1 Pet. 2:17) and serve as salt and light in this crooked and perverse generation (Mt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15). Therefore, voting should reflect our recognition of civil responsibility (Rom. 13:1-7) and spiritual convictions (Phil. 1:21). Furthermore, voting should be done based on Biblical orientation, not party affiliation. Your voting should be done with God as the audience (1 Pet. 3:12) and the Word of God as your guide (Jn. 12:48). Casting your vote should be preceded with much prayer (1 Thess. 5:17) and serious thought (Phil. 2:5). Since Christians have the opportunity to choose leaders, we should vote for those with the highest morals and greatest amount of godliness. We **MUST** examine each candidate's beliefs as to their understanding and commitment to Biblical truth and issues such as, homosexuality, abortion, bio-medical issues, ethnic conflict, etc. We should vote for those that are in agreement with Christian teachings and will protect Christian principles. Remember, voting is a moral issue.

—Mark N. Posey
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