

The standard of the world, and the standard of the Lord Jesus--are indeed widely different. They are more than different--they are flatly contradictory one to the other. Never be satisfied with the world's standard of Christianity! --J. C. Ryle

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)*

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).

30. Q. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition (Luke 2:7), made under the law (Gal. 4:4), undergoing the miseries of this life (Heb. 12:2, 3; Is. 53:2, 3), the wrath of God (Luke 22:44; Mt. 27:46), and the cursed death of the cross (Phil. 2:8); in being buried (1 Cor. 15:3,4), and continuing under the power of death for a time (Acts 2:24, 25, 26, 27, 31; Mt. 12:40).

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 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

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THE DIVINE INVITATION

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)

What a most precious description of the invitation that all who know the Lord are to give to those who do not. The Spirit, the Bride, and He that heareth are in concert in addressing themselves to particular persons. The obvious implication is that they are to come to Christ, not to some place designated by men.

I read that D. L. Moody defined the “whosoever wills” as the elect of God and the whosoever will not’s as the non-elect. I am not sure of the intended meaning of Mr. Moody, but it certainly rings true in the light of the Word of God. In any event the statement embraces the thought that any willingness in men is vindication of divine choice. As we will see, the will of men to come to Christ is in no way in conflict with the sovereignty of God. It rather acknowledges the sovereignty of God.

The tendency of men has been to treat this as a matter of chance or salesmanship. They dilute the thought by dealing with it in such terms as “it is all up to you.” This is unadorned scripture and thus there is no place for human additions. This is what we say to men – come to Christ. The only condition that the scripture lays down here is to be willing. There is no such thing as one coming to Christ who is not willing. But we must not see in this that God is dependent on the will of men to do as He wills. God never subjects Himself to the will of man. This would be the case if God wanted to do something and could not because a man was not willing. This invitation is not in conflict with, Psalms 115:3,

But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

This very gracious invitation points to a positive response. That is, that such a person comes and takes of the water of life freely. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. See John 7:38 “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Our Lord added that He was speaking of the Holy Spirit. It is evident that the action is continuous. This is not a onetime act designed by men. Rather it is the action of an ongoing life with all the evidence that salvation has come to such a person. How does such a one come from among those who are dead in trespasses and sins come to act so willing?

God does not act against the will of men. But He does act upon men. Paul wrote, Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. God did not make them will, but He worked the conditions that made it happen. Thus, the Psalmist declares, Psalms 110:3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power... Such a willing person, having seen his sinful estate gladly embraces Christ and by faith claims the merits of His blood as his only hope. He then freely partakes of that new life in Jesus Christ. This willingness does not come through the devices of men, but God is pleased to use the agency of men to spread the word that salvation is free.

The term “whosoever” does not cast God as merely hopeful. It is rather quite specific and

addressed to particular individuals. The invitation is addressed to him that is athirst. This assures the genuineness of need. It should warn those who deal lightly. To come in any way but hungering and thirsting for righteousness would be mockery of the grace of God. The one who is athirst knows that only in Christ is there life and that no arbitrary designs could be accepted of God. "Whosoever" finds its meaning in those who take of the water of life freely.

We never lose sight of the fact that our Lord declared, in no uncertain terms, "Ye must be born again." It is that which is learned when one is awakened to a thirst that can only be relieved in coming to Christ. His words to the woman at the well in Samaria were: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. (John 4:10). When she realized who He was she did just exactly that, and the evidence of living water within was immediately apparent in her life. Until awakened to her desperate need she was debating the proper place to worship. When the Philippian Jailor was awakened from despair, his immediate need was expressed in his cry, "What must I do to be saved." Again, in his answer, and Paul's response, continuous action is implied – a taking of "the water of life freely."

How often have we witnessed good statements concerning the grace and the

graciousness of God contradicted by then telling men that God is willing but not able apart from them allowing Him to act. Not to mention the many unbiblical additions they make to further cloud the minds of those to whom they speak. When we have neither precept nor example in the Word of God, we should not be doing it.

Natural thirst may be brought on by several things and I am told that it is extremely miserable. Certainly, a lack of sufficient water to sustain normal bodily functions is understood. And we have all experienced thirst because of stress or anxiety. We might be reminded here of that suffered by our Lord on the Cross. I have never heard a preacher, in giving a so-called invitation ask, are any here "hungering and thirsting for righteousness." Are any here thirsting for relief from the stress caused by the awful burden of sin that is upon you? Or can you echo the words of the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalms 42:1-2). To such that are found in that way the call is clear. Come and drink; be continually drinking of the "water of life."

As we have heard and have come, let us be faithful to cry, as did our Lord, come and drink!
bhs

READ THE SCRIPTURES ALOUD

"Philip ... heard him reading the prophet Isaiah." (Acts 8:30)

The Ethiopian was reading aloud, pronouncing each word clearly and distinctly. This we know because the evangelist heard the Ethiopian reading, and recognized that he was reading from the prophecy of Isaiah (53:7f).

Reading God's Word aloud is the best way to read it in your private devotions.

Reading the Scriptures aloud fixes your attention on them. Your mind may be prone to wander from the Scriptures if you read them silently.

Reading the Scriptures aloud requires concentration on every word. And "Every word of God is pure" (Proverb 30:5). Every word in God's Word is a word of God and important.

Reading the Scriptures aloud aids your memory of what you read. Many report that they have read through the entire Bible and yet have little knowledge of its contents. This may be true because they read God's writings like they read man's writings such as newspapers, magazines, novels, textbooks. They silently scan or speedread through them. God's Word deserves more reverence than that.

It is not necessary to read the Scriptures loud enough for anyone else to hear you. You may read the words inaudibly but yet loud enough for your heart to hear them. And your own heart should be your foremost audience when reading God's Word.

– Daniel E. Parks

From correspondence on December 13, 2020

Oh, to be able to remember that we are Christ's by purchase and preservation and by possession. In 1648 Thomas Shepard (1605-1649) preached a sermon on "The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking Forth upon the Indians in New England" and in his Preface he declared, "The utmost ends of the earth are designed and promised to be in time the possessions of Christ.... This little we see is something in hand, to earnest to us those things which are in hope; something in possession, to assure us of the rest in promise, when the ends of the earth shall see his glory, and the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ, when he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him (Ps. 22:27; Rev. 11:15; Ps. 72:8-11). And if the dawn of the morning be so delightful, what will the clear day be? If the first fruits be so precious, what will the whole harvest be? If some beginnings be so full of joy, what will it be when God shall perform his whole work, when the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9, 10) and east and west shall sing together the song of the Lamb?" Wow! I wish I had said that! It is dark now but dawn will break soon. –Ron Rumburg

The Lord wanted a man named Cornelius to hear the good news about Jesus Christ—that whoever believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins. In order to share this wonderful news, God chose what seemed an inefficient way and an unqualified person.

The reason why offers insight into God's inefficiency in our lives.

The Lord's Inefficient Plan at Caesarea by the Sea

In order for Cornelius to hear the gospel, the angel told him to dispatch some men more than 35 miles south to Joppa. There they would find Simon Peter and bring him back to Caesarea.

But two other options would have proved far more efficient:

1. The angel could have given the message to Cornelius. After all, the angel would have expressed the message perfectly—and immediately!

2. Philip could have shared with Cornelius. This option makes total sense. After all, Philip was an evangelist, and he already lived right there in Caesarea (Acts 8:40; 21:8)!

God's choice made no sense. Why make such an inefficient plan? Why chose someone four days away and far less qualified?

Because God wanted to do more than change Cornelius' life. He wanted to change Peter's. God wanted to do more than work through Peter. He also wanted to work in Peter. Same true with us. –Wayne Stiles