

Faith, we see, is neither more nor less than a sincere belief of the truth. So the divine word defines it. "These things were written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, you might have life through his name." But then it may be said of faith—as of love to God, of desire after him, and of hope and joy in him—by their fruits you shall know them. They are all distinguished and discerned to be true and genuine—by their attendants, and the way in which they are manifested. --John Fawcett

The Baptist Catechism (Keach's Catechism)

1677

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Q. 4. What is the Word of God?

A. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, being given by divine inspiration, are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

(2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Isaiah 8:20)

Q. 5. How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God?

A. The Bible evidences itself to be God's Word by the heavenliness of its doctrine, the unity of its parts, its power to convert sinners and to edify saints; but the Spirit of God only, bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in our hearts, is able fully to persuade us that the Bible is the Word of God.

(1 Cor. 2:6-7, 13; Ps. 119:18, 129; Acts 10:43, 26:22; Acts 18:28; Heb 4:12; Ps. 19:7-9; Rom. 15:4; John 16:13-4; 1 John 2:20-27; 2 Cor. 3:14-17)

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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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A PRECIOUS HERITAGE

Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 54:16-17)

The promises of God are precious treasure indeed. And what a delight to discover from time to time that which speaks wondrously to our heart in such a way as to inspire confidence in our Blessed Lord. Such becomes even more special when we are enabled of the Spirit to lay claim to it as our very own. Those assurances received in such a direct manner deliver us from generalizations and direct us to a loving personal encounter with our God. We might easily think that this was a promise given through the prophet to the Nation of Israel in view of impending troubles. But the full realization of what is written here comes as an outcome of the redeeming work of Christ and that includes me and enables the claim to this precious heritage.

Isaiah 54 follows the precious picture of redemption set before us in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Especially are we made to think of the fact that “He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied” and of the many which shall be justified, “for He shall bear their iniquities.” So, despite that which was prophesied concerning what lay ahead of Israel, there is a cry of victory and success. In the very first verse, the directive is to “Sing, O Barren...” Fruitfulness and prosperity would surely follow. They are directed further to “Enlarge thy tent...” In verse 4, we read that they would not be ashamed or

confounded. (We are reminded of Romans 1:16). And then those precious words, *For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. (Isaiah 54:5)*. Not only does the Lord declare His intimate identity with His redeemed, but He also declares Himself as Redeemer and as sovereign over all the earth.

The purpose of God would not be realized in the way one might hope. There would be a time of forsaking, but that would pale in the consideration of the mercy that was to follow (v. 7). This would come to pass as the enemies of righteousness would oppress and seem to gain the victory. In trying to discern the purpose of God here we are reminded of: *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)*. It would ultimately come to pass that “thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children (v. 13).

Having declared in v. 15 that the enemy would gather against them, He assures them of their fall. The words of verse 16 reveal to us what the enemies of God will never see until it is too late. Even now we witness the assembly of haters of God and the truth that we hold dear

seeking various devices against Him and against His anointed. As we have witnessed in other places The enemies seek out their methods only to be frustrated by the purpose of God. We read of conspirators who would stop the rebuilding of the Temple: *Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations. (Ezra 4:12).* They were prevented at every turn. We remember the elaborate attempt of Haman to destroy the Jews and witnessed divine providence prevailing to thwart the evil purpose. Here we are reminded that it is the Lord who created the one who would form the instruments of war designed to be used against the servants of the Lord. And furthermore, it is He who has created the very ones who would oppress and seek to destroy the redeemed of the Lord. That which He has created He will control and cause to serve His purpose. To be sure what they do they do of their own volition and out of their own evil motives.

The efforts of the wicked are then declared null and void. In reference to "Every weapon," John Calvin wrote, "He again infers what has been already said, that wicked men, even though they exert themselves to the utmost will gain nothing; for their attacks are guided and restrained by the secret purpose of God. He makes use of the word "every," meaning by it that wicked men will have the means of attempting many and diversified methods for destroying the Church, but their efforts shall be fruitless for the Lord will restrain them." Calvin further suggested that the reasoning was to try the patience of believers. As to "every tongue,"

Calvin wrote, "Not only do they revile, and slander, and defame the servants of God, but as far as lies in their power, they extinguish the truth of God, and alienate the hearts of men from it; which ought to distress more than if life were taken from us a hundred times."

These rise up in judgment. They are daring, they are bold in their wickedness, they hold out what pretexts that are believable to the unregenerate in order to turn hearts against God and against His servants. But that which is possessed by the righteous is their heritage. Calvin observed again that "there is nothing of which the Lord's servants ought to be more certain of than of His constant guardianship and preservation, by which He defends them from all dangers." Truly their righteousness is of Him and as such cannot be contested. So, it is that when under attack the righteous flee to Him and realize safety.

Robert Hawker sweetly wrote: "And oh! thou blessed, glorious, gracious Husband of thy people! we would hail thee as our maker, redeemer, surety, husband, friend! Thou art indeed the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth! Thou art indeed, in one and the same moment, our Ishi [my Husband], our Jesus; for thou hast said, I am married unto you, saith the Lord; and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. Bring all thy redeemed, Lord, where thou thyself art, to behold thy glory, for thou hast said, where I am, there shall my servant be."

In these times of ferocious enemies of the truth may we be preciously encouraged by the promise of our Lord's precious presence with us – It is our Heritage. *bhs*

"Believing, repenting, and the like, are the product of the new nature; and can never be produced by the old corrupt nature. The heart is shut against Christ: man cannot open it, only God can do it by His grace." --Thomas Boston

GODLINESS HONORS GOD

Apart from Christ, we will never deserve to be called children of God, but we can still disgrace the calling we have been freely given — or we can adorn our precious calling with an ambitious godliness. “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works . . . so that in everything [you] may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” (Titus 2:7, 10). Our lives can become a wild, grace-filled bouquet laid upon the saving and sufficient work of Jesus — a worthy reflection of his love, his cross, his power, his worth.

Again, Paul says, “[We pray] that our God may make you worthy of his calling . . . so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:11–12). This is the worthiness of another world. As it grows and spreads in a redeemed life, it doesn’t welcome praise to itself, but gladly bows to worship Christ. The worthiness God finds in us glorifies the greatness of Jesus.

Our worthiness proves his worth, not ours. Why? Because worthiness in us is an evidence and expression of his grace. God makes us worthy “according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” We strive for a worthiness that draws others’ curiosity and admiration not to ourselves, but to him. We want them to think, *Someone who lives like that must know something about life, about reality, about God that I don’t yet know. I want to know what they know and love like they love.* —Marshall Segal

Richard Sibbes from *THE SOUL’S CONFLICT WITH ITSELF*.

“The way is, instead of discouragement, to search all the promises made to the church in these latter times, and to turn them into prayers, and press God earnestly for the performance of them. Then we shall soon find God both cursing his enemies and blessing his people out of Zion, by the faithful prayers that ascend up from thence. In all the promises we should have special recourse to God in them. In all storms there is sea room enough in the infinite goodness of God for faith to be carried with full sail. And it must be remembered that in all places where God is mentioned, we are to understand God in the promised Messiah, typified out so many ways unto us. And to put the more vigour into such places in the reading of them, we in this latter age of the church must think of God shining upon us in the face of Christ, and our Father in him. If they had so much confidence in so little light, it is a shame for us not to be confident in good things, when so strong a light shines round about us, when we profess we believe 'a crown of righteousness is laid up for all those that love his appearing,' 2 Tim. 4:8. Presenting these things to the soul by faith, setteth the soul in such a pitch of resolution, that no discouragements are able to seize upon it. 'We faint not,' saith St Paul. Wherefore doth he not faint? Because 'these light and short afflictions procure an exceeding weight of glory,' 2 Cor. 4:17.”