

It is only as we realize the truth of a living Christ, that our hearts are satisfied. We crave a personal friendship which will come into our life with its sympathies, its inspirations, its companionship, its shelter, its life, its comfort. All this, the living Christ is to us.

--J. R. Miller

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. 17. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

(Gen. 3:6; Eccles. 7:29; Rom. 5:12)

Q. 18. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

(1 John 3:4; Rom. 5:13)

Q. 19. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

(Gen. 3:6, 12, 13)

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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 MORE SURE WORD

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

What a contrast we see in comparing the early accounts of the life of Peter with the wisdom coming forth from him in his epistles. We recall his tendency to argue with the Lord which continued right up until the eve of the crucifixion. He would have refused to have his feet washed by the Lord. He vehemently denied that he would ever deny the Lord. And yet, we read of his very quick denial of the Lord as he observed the trial. Even following the crucifixion, he would show resentment toward John and was again rebuked by our Lord. Here, however we witness the tenderness and wisdom of the beloved Apostle and one who was preparing to die well. It had at this time been revealed to him that he “must shortly put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.”

Peter’s all-consuming burden at this point was that those to whom he wrote would be able to keep in remembrance the things they had been taught. (See verse 15). In order to shore up their confidence and embolden their faith he would point to the matter of divine revelation. He first directed his attention to refreshing the memory of his readers. (See verses 12-15). In the previous epistle he preciousy reminded them of the sovereignty of God in their salvation and pointed to the precious outcomes of regeneration: *Being born again, not of*

corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter 1:23). He had shown them of their standing before the Lord and had encouraged them as strangers and pilgrims. Secondly, He rehearses the eyewitness account of our Lord’s transfiguration. We note a freshness in these words that indicate that it was as real to him late in his life as it was when he first saw it. There were no “cunningly devised fables” here. Kistemaker wrote, “in the third section he reveals the certainty, origin, and source of Scripture.”

Many will respond to attempts to open the Word to them by quoting (or even misquoting) this passage. They endeavor to hide behind the thought in such a way as to suggest that either nobody has a right to declare the Word or that one opinion is as good as another. Once, in debating an issue with someone I simply read a passage from the Bible. They responded by saying “that is just your interpretation.” I suspect that they may have heard the truth of the matter and just would not allow it to unseat some pet doctrine of their own. It is to be feared that many begin with some system or belief and then go to the Scripture looking for something to support it. There have been times in my own experience that I have embraced some thought only to realize that it had not arisen from the

Word. In some cases, it was found that it did proceed from Scripture. In others, I have had to put the thought aside and start over.

There are differences among the commentators as to the meaning of "no private interpretation." Some hold that the meaning is that no prophecy of Scripture is of one's own interpretation, while others see it as a matter of the origin. That is, that the prophet's writing was not expressing his own ideas. As to the first, we understand that men tend to wrest the Scriptures to their own ends. *As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:16).* From the Old Testament we read: *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:16).*

In following the line of Peter's thought here his intent is to reassure them as to the authenticity of the Word rather than to warn against misuse of it. Again, we look to the Old Testament and are reminded of the words of Moses: *And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. (Numbers 16:28).* As we think of divine inspiration of the Word we are often directed to, *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8:20).* In Paul's instruction to Timothy he would remind him that "All scripture is given by inspiration of

God." It is literally "God-Breathed."

As to the first position here, men have never been restricted from seeking to know the meaning of Scripture. Christ told the Pharisees to "search the Scriptures," but they should expect to find Him there. In defense of the second position John MacArthur wrote: "The Greek word for interpretation has the idea of a "loosing," as if to say no Scripture is the result of any human privately, "untying" and "loosing" the truth. Peter's point is not so much about how to interpret Scripture, but rather how Scripture originated, and what its source was. The false prophets untied and loosed their own ideas. But no part of God's revelation was unveiled or revealed from a human source or out of the prophet's unaided understanding."

It was as these holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak and to write these precious truths. And so, it continued with the New Testament writers in such a way as to assure that the precious Gospel we read in the Bible did not originate from the spurious ideas of men. Peter identified the writings of Paul as Scripture. Thus, Peter expresses the importance of this thought by writing "Knowing this first."

"The Apostle joins the Spirit of power and a sound mind together (2 Timothy 1:7). Holiness in practice depends much on sound judgement. Godliness is the child of truth, and it must be nursed by its own mother. "Desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby."" William Gurnall.

May we be reminded that our Lord prayed that we be sanctified by the Truth and added "Thy Word is Truth." We have the more sure Word. *bhs*

Dying well is one of the good works to which Christians are called, and Christ will enable us who serve him to die well, however gruesome the physical process itself.

—J.I. Packer

Why are we still here?
Mark 5:18-20

Why has our Savior left us here? He has already made us completely worthy of heavenly glory. Has he not? Colossians 1:12-14 tells us that he has.

So why has he left us here? I have been pondering that question a good bit lately. I cannot answer it fully. But I have found an answer that satisfies me in Mark 5:18-20. There we read about the Lord Jesus healing the maniac of Gadara. When the poor man was made to know the Lord Jesus and his grace, he desired to be with him. But the Master denied him that great joy for some time for a very noble and good reason.

“And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.”

What a wonderful change grace had wrought in this man. He who, but a short time before, was a terror to everyone, was now so heavenly composed that he desired never to leave his blessed Savior. Is that not the case with you, who have been called out of darkness into light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God? Surely, having once tasted that the Lord is gracious, we cannot but long to be “absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” Yet our Savior says, “No, not yet.” Rather, he tells us to go home to our lost friends and speak forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Our Lord Jesus has left us here until God’s appointed time shall come to take us home to glory. Our God and Savior must have his witnesses upon earth, as long as the earth remains. None of us shall live upon this crumbling ball of clay too long. But... “Mortals are immortal here, until their work is none.”

What mercy! What grace! What condescending godness! Our God has put the treasure of his gospel in us earthen vessels, choosing to employ you and me to tell other eternity bound sinners what great things the Lord has done for us and how he has had compassion on us. Let us wait in contentment, happiness, and overflowing gratitude, telling out the good news of redeeming love and saving mercy all the days of our appointed time, until our change come. Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, for now, to abide in the flesh is more needful. When we are no longer needed here, we will be with him there, in that “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!”

Oh, eternity bound sinner, make certain that you are in Christ! Let every child of God take comfort with regard to those who have gone to heaven. — “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord!” And be assured, weary pilgrim, that your weary, troublesome life will end soon and that it will end well (2 Corinthians 4:17-5:2).

--Don Fortner (1950 – 2020)