

The intent of the cross of Christ was to bring you close more than make you good. He, indeed, will produce good in you, but through forgiveness of sins, you are his, and he is yours.

—Ed Welch

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)

64. Q. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A. Before the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-14); and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath (Ps. 118:24; Mt. 28:1; Mk. 2:27, 28; Jn. 20:19, 20, 26; Rev. 1:10; Mk. 16:2; Lk. 24:1, 30-36; Jn. 20:1; Acts 1:3; 2:1, 2; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2).

65. Q. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day (Ex. 20:8, 10), even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days (Ex. 16:25-28; Neh. 13:15-22); and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship (Lk. 4:16; Acts 20:7; Ps. 92:title; Is. 66:23), except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy (Mt. 12:1-13).

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Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

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THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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JUSTICE, JUDGMENT, AND THE JOYFUL SOUND

Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance. (Psalms 89:14-15).

True believers, this one included, love to be drawn out in worship and praise. One hymn writer expressed it well in speaking of the joyful sound of saints on higher ground. He may have been reading here. Psalm 89 is a mine from which precious treasure and experience may be brought to the heart of true believers. We consider select portions early in the Psalm that speak to us of reason to rejoice in Him. In verse 1, the Psalmist sings of the mercies of the Lord and makes known the faithfulness of the Lord. In verse 5, he declares that the heavens shall praise the wonders of the Lord. In verse 6 we are told that none in Heaven can be compared unto Him, and in verse 7 we are told that “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.” But the issue of God’s justice and judgment are never laid aside in the interest of mere celebration. Rather they become the basis for our joy as we see them honored by Christ and their demands met for us in Christ. To behold the justice and judgment of God apart from mercy and grace is a most terrifying experience. Without a consideration of justice and judgment the Gospel would not sound joyful. The joyful announcement is that God has accepted the saving work of Jesus Christ after having received justice and judgment for all who believe on Him.

The thought of “habitation” speaks to us of establishment, permanence, and the character of His government, His Throne. In some of the

preceding verses we have noted the exercise of His sovereignty. He rules the raging of the sea. The heavens are His to order and direct. He has scattered His enemies with a strong arm. All of creation is His to do with as He pleases. But we are directed to the higher thoughts of justice and judgment. And it is there that we note a precious paradox – justice and judgment dwelling with mercy. The integrity of God demands justice. The holiness of God demands judgment. It is essential that we see ourselves as subject to both so, that we may fully understand our need for mercy. Only in God’s realm can justice cohabit with mercy. Men lay aside justice and judgment to show mercy. How often do we read of a sentence being commuted or justice being denied in some other way for any number of reasons. This is never done in the court of heaven, before the Judge of all the earth. God honors justice and judgment alongside mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are often reminded of these words: *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. (Psalms 85:10).* We are made to think on such passages and reflect on what truth reveals in us as well as what it revealed to us. For example, the truth as to what truly constitutes repentance and what is required to atone for sin. And easy believe-ism continues to be widespread.

Our Lord pressed the Pharisees on the matter of mercy in this way: *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous,*

but sinners to repentance. (Matthew 9:13). Of course, He was referring to their efforts to offer their works which could avail nothing in the sight of God. He might well have referred to them as the self-righteous whose works were born out of pride and were filthy in the sight of God.

We have heard the Joyful Sound – Jesus Saves, Jesus Saves! How we have enjoyed singing that hymn over the years. What a delight to hear it sung. What is the joyful sound? It is the sound of praise to our Redeemer God. It is that sound that stirs our own hearts whenever we hear it. It is the reaction that is sounded forth at the report that God is glorified, and that salvation is accomplished and claimed in Christ our Lord. There is Love, Mercy, and Grace attributed to God alone. There is peace, pardon, and forgiveness bought by the blood of Jesus Christ and delivered and made effective by the Holy Spirit. Justification (justice satisfied with regard to us) is fully declared in Him as our substitute, and it is He that received the judgment due His people! It is the shout of victory that is heard in a victorious battle cry. See 2 Corinthians 2:15-16. It is the sound of the Trumpet that sounded Jubilee when all debts were discharged, and restoration was made. It is the proclamation of liberty for the captives: *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the*

captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; (Isaiah 61:1). In short, it is the “glorious Gospel of Christ.”

The manifestation of this blessing is clearly confirmed in such declarations as “my sheep hear my voice.” They know the sound. They obviously delight to hear that sound. They walk in the light of His countenance -- *The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them. (Numbers 6:24-27).* And we are ever mindful of the words of John as he would press these words upon us: *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7).*

In verse 16 that follows we learn that those who know the joyful sound rejoice in His name all the day. We compare this to contrived religious fervor. Furthermore, they are exalted in righteousness. It is before God. They know the Lord as their strength - *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:13).* Those who know the Joyful Sound, the Glorious Gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord experience the favor of God and have as their defense none other than the Holy One of Israel. There is mercy with the Lord. Do you know the Joyful Sound? *bhs*

Enough to Get Rebellious People Into Trouble

God has created a beautiful world that is full of wonders, and these wonders serve a purpose—they are meant to evoke awe, which in turn is meant to provoke worship. This was the experience of King David, who said, “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” (Psalm 8:3-4).

It is difficult to think great thoughts of ourselves as we gaze into a starlit night sky or stand before the Matterhorn. In this way, David studied God's creation, marveled at what he saw, and was stirred to worship.

Yet for all the beauty of creation and all it communicates to us, God has deliberately limited its message. Through creation God has revealed "his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature" (Romans 1:20). But through creation, God has not revealed his plan of salvation. He has not revealed how sinful man can be reconciled to a holy God. For that, there must be another kind of revelation.

Hence, Daryl Wingerd can say, "To put it in simple terms, general revelation provides enough knowledge of God to get rebellious people like you and me into trouble, but not enough to get us out of it. We need something more." Indeed, we do. -Tim Challies, *Blog April 7, 2024*

While I very much appreciated the article cited above, it might have been better if the plan of salvation had been appended to it. Just to have quoted the precious words of Paul to the Ephesians: *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:1-10). Bhs*

Death is the last and best physician. It cures all diseases and sins--the aching head and the unbelieving heart. Sin was the midwife which brought death into the world--and death shall be the grave to bury sin! O the privilege of a believer!

--Thomas Watson

Heaven is the highest link of the saint's happiness. As there is no intermission in the joys of Heaven--so there shall be no expiration of them. When God has once planted His saints in paradise, He will never transplant them, "they shall be forever with the Lord!" -Thomas Watson