

# THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

“REMOVE NOT THE ANCIENT LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET.” PROVERBS 22:28

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## SCRIPTURAL REPENTANCE

by H. B. Little

The Holy Bible places great importance upon repentance. This holy book teaches that repentance is a sacred duty required of all the human race. Paul, preaching by the Spirit, said, “God...now commandeth all men every where to repent.” Acts 17:30. The obligation to repent is not bound by ancestry, nationality, or geography. The Scriptures also teach that repentance is essential to the forgiveness of sins. Peter preached, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...” Acts 3:19. Our Lord Jesus taught that all who fail to repent shall be utterly and eternally destroyed. For emphasis, it is written twice, “but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Luke 13:3,5.

Our Savior described the terrible fate of the impenitent, or those who fail to repent, when He spoke of that poor lost soul remembered only as “a certain rich man.” Luke 16:9. The Lord spoke of the man’s final state, “in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” Luke 16:23. This man in anguish of soul begged from the pit of hell for his surviving brothers, “lest they also come into this place of torment.” His desire for them to avoid the same fate, and the means by which they could, are contained in his final words recorded for us, “if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” Luke 16:30. This condemned man knew well the reason for his final destruction: his failure to repent.

Seeing the great emphasis placed upon the blessing of the penitent and the punishment of the impenitent, a question worthy of consideration is: What is repentance? The word repentance found in our English New Testament is translated from a Greek word meaning a change of thought. The meaning of the word indicates that repentance is an inward act. Thoughts originate in the mind or in the heart. Therefore, repentance, too, must occur in the mind or in the heart.

Not only does the origin of the word repentance indicate an inward act, the teaching of the Scriptures confirm it to

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## THE FAMILY OF GOD VERSUS THE CHURCH

by M. A. Brawner

The followers of Jesus Christ who have found His Church are sometimes challenged on what they teach regarding the nature of the Church. Specifically, they are challenged to show in the Bible where a distinction between the family of God and the Church is revealed. This article is intended to share scriptures and brief explanations to accomplish that very task.

Previous articles in this newsletter have been used to establish points which will be considered as settled when used in this article. For example, the word “Bride” will be used to mean the New Testament Church espoused to the Lord as referenced in Ephesians 5:27 and 2 Corinthians 11:2. Likewise, when the “Kingdom” is referenced, it will also be used to refer to the New Testament Church organized by the Lord during His physical ministry in the world and over which He will remain the sole head until He returns for it as in Matthew 11:11 and Luke 7:28. Lastly, God has explained that He has used the “Candlestick” to represent this same New Testament Church in both Old and New Testament scriptures as in Zechariah 4:11 and Revelation 1:20. With these few points established, let’s consider some verses illustrating the distinction between the family of God and the Lord’s New Testament Church.

*Bride Compared to Friend of the Bridegroom - Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. Joh 3:28-29*

These verses make a clear distinction between the Friend of the Bridegroom and the actual Bride. John the Baptist, who was sent from God and called the greatest prophet born of woman, is this Friend. Obviously he was a saved man. However, he was clearly outside of and

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## WHAT MEAN YE BY THESE STONES?

by K. L. Slayton

We find in the 3rd chapter of Joshua that when the Lord brought the children of Israel into the land of Canaan that He caused the waters to be cut off so that “the priest that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.” Jos 3:17

The Lord then instructed Joshua to choose twelve men, one from each tribe, for the purpose of collecting twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan where the priest feet had stood firm. He then instructed him to erect a memorial with the twelve stones. The purpose of this memorial was not left hidden from Joshua but was made plain when the Lord said “That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.” Jos 4:6-7

It would seem that the Lord’s reason for this memorial was two-fold. It was to be a visible reminder to that generation of the miracle that the Lord had performed that day as well as a visible memorial that would cause future generations to ask “What mean ye by these stones?” The Lord wanted to make sure that the fathers told their children what the Lord had done for them.

The principle of parents having a responsibility to teach their children about the Lord and His goodness is taught throughout the scriptures. Parents are commanded to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD.” Eph 6:4. Children must be taught from the earliest age who the Lord is. We must teach them to fear Him and keep His commandments. “Come, ye children,

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**SINGING IN OUR CHURCHES**

by D. S. Patterson

My first memory of my childhood is the preaching of Elder E. G Williams at Long Fork Missionary Baptist Church. Brother Williams was moving back and forth behind the book board preaching with a very loud voice and waving his arms. To a little boy, about four years old, I wondered why he could be so mad. A few years later, I found out that he was not mad but was preaching the gospel in power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. When I was ten years old, the Lord saved my soul lying in the floor in front of the mourners bench at Long Fork Church.

My mother told me that I was singing by the time I could talk, so singing was, and still is, a huge part of my life. I remember, when I was about the age of five, Brother J. C. Halliburton came from Portland, Tennessee to Long Fork Church and taught singing school. I still benefit today from the teaching I received from Brother Halliburton during that school. I still use the things I was taught, because the teaching of music, like the gospel, does not change.

All who attend church on a regular basis know that the first thing we usually do is begin our church services with singing. So, how our services progress from the start depends on how the singing is conducted. I am not trying to be critical of any individual or individuals connected with the leadership of the song service in any church. However, I am wishing for us, as Old Time Missionary Baptists, to look at ourselves in this area. Do we not expect our pastor to study and present the subject of the day to the fullest extent of his ability? And do we not expect him to be in touch with the Lord so that the message would have its effect? Do we pray to the extent that the Lord will help the pastor with his duties of prayer and study of the word?

With that said, should we not educate our people, adults and children, in the art of music? Where would we be without music to start our services and during our altar services and handshakes? Do we sing the same songs over and over again, because we do not know any others? Do we not know enough music to try new songs? These are questions we must answer for ourselves and our churches.

As stated above I have been singing all of my life. I have studied music and still continue to brush up on my music even as old as I am now. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Timothy 2:15. The majority of people that attend church will apply that scripture only to the the preacher, but I disagree. Not only does it apply very well to the preacher, the Sunday School teacher, and the lay member in the study of the Bible, but it applies to the song leader as well.

Yes, I did say the song leader. In the preceding paragraph I asked if we sing the same songs over and over again? If a song leader is not studied, then maybe we do. I am sure the person that plays the piano for our church has taken piano lessons, sometimes for many years, before he or she is able to play in public. Has the song leader taken lessons in music and song leading? If not, he should.

As at Long Fork Church with Brother Halliburton, churches had singing schools every year, for many years, and it paid off. Every church I attended in my youth had excellent singing. They had men that knew enough music to conduct the singing and did not allow the piano to lead the singing. However over the past thirty or so years, our churches have not held singing schools, and it shows. There are summer singing schools in Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas, and other states. There are still qualified people to teach singing schools for your church. Do you send your people to these schools, or do you have singing schools at your church? If not, then why not?

Good song leaders are hard to find today. We are letting the Old Church down by not insisting our people "study to show thyself approved." I have heard folks say that it is too hard to learn. Ask yourself this question. If you are to start a new job, a good paying job to support your family, and you are required to study and know music, would you not at least try to learn for the support of your family? Are we not obligated to support the church as we do our family? These thing I leave with you to ask yourselves.

**A QUESTION FROM THE PAST**

by H. B. Little

In the previous issue of this publication, I wrote briefly on a particular benefit of a Baptist association: its use as an advisory council. Our Baptist forefathers often came together as an association to hear and deliberate questions posed by churches among them. In this manner, they sought to conform their doctrine and usage to the teachings of the scriptures, knowing "Where no counsel *is*, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors *there is safety.*" Pro 11:14.

While every honest reader of Baptist history must admit that our forefathers were not above error (their errors do not justify a present departure from scripture), the advice and answers given by an association provide for us that group's doctrine and practice. In this way, associations queries (questions) are very valuable. For this reason, I intend to regularly share with you a question from the past.

The question for this issue is regarding the nature of baptism. It was posed to the Elkhorn Baptist Association, one of the oldest in Kentucky, in the year 1802 by South Elkhorn Baptist Church. It is, "What constitutes valid Baptism?" The association answered, "The administrator ought to have been baptized himself by immersion, legally called to preach the gospel, [and] ordained as the Scriptures dictate; and the candidate for baptism should make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and be baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, by dipping the whole body in water." J. H. Spencer, A History of Kentucky Baptists Volume 2, CHRAA, 1976, Page 16.

Our Baptist forefathers gave, in plainest terms, the requirements for sound Baptist baptism. The first requirements mentioned are those associated with the administrator, or the person responsible for the act of baptizing. They said he "ought to have been baptized himself by immersion". Immersion means plunging a person into water so he is completely submerged. Also, they said the administrator ought to be "legally called to preach." While Old-Time Baptists have always required a preacher to feel the call of God to carry the gospel, "legally called" may imply a call by a church to the office of administrator. Further, the Elkhorn Association said the administrator ought to be "ordained as the Scriptures dictate." This means careful

consideration ought to be given to the ordaining church and ordaining presbytery of the administrator.

It is no wonder that this Old-Time Baptist association was careful to define what they deemed to be a valid administrator. When this was written, some of the Baptists had begun receiving members who had been immersed upon a profession of faith with little consideration of the person performing the act or the society with the oversight of it. The Elkhorn Association, upon careful and prayerful deliberation, declared their view of the great importance of the administrator of baptism. This doctrine is a landmark of our Old-Time Baptist heritage. It ought to be taught in our churches and maintained in our practice today.

## THE FAMILY OF GOD VERSUS THE CHURCH

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different from the Bride. They were both present at the time when he made this comment, so the distinction must have existed then.

*Spirit and the Bride Say Come; Whosoever Heareth, Let Him Say Come - 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. Rev 22:17*

This verse of scripture gives instructions to four different groups, but attention is only called to the first two. The first instruction is given to "the Spirit and the Bride". The second is to "him that heareth". The Lord Jesus Christ made the spiritual condition of those who can "hear" His Word very clear in such places as John 8:43-44. Those who can "hear" are those who are in the family of God. Yet, in this verse from the Revelation, they are in a different group than those in the Bride.

Least in Kingdom is Greater than the Greatest Prophet - *For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. Luke 7:28*

This verse of scripture is also clear. It makes the spiritual condition of John the Baptist easy to identify. He is obviously a

child of God. The prophets possessed the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet 1:10-11), and those who possess the Spirit of Christ are sons of God (Gal 4:6). Yet, those who are the very least in the Kingdom are greater than John. This places John inside the family of God but outside the Kingdom.

*Place Light on the Candlestick - Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Mat 5:15-16*

In this place, the Lord instructs that two things are to happen in regard to the candle. First, the candle needs to be lit or lighted, ever how one wants to think about it. Next, the lighted candle needs to be placed on the candlestick. When a person is born again, their soul departs from darkness and enters light (Acts 26:18). Once the candle has been lighted, there is no fear of it going out. This is another way of saying, once a person is born again God keeps their salvation so that it is eternally secure (1 Pet 1:5). However, those who possess a lighted candle are called on to place it upon the candlestick and to let it shine from that lofty position. In this, a distinction is found between being in the family of God (by possessing a lighted candle) and being in the Church (placing it on the Candlestick).

*Christ Enters a Person before a Person can Enter Christ - And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Gal 4:6 -and- For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Gal 3:26-27*

In Matthew chapter 23, the Lord Jesus Christ warned Pharisees that their skin-deep religion left them in a state of hypocrisy. To avoid this, the Lord said a person needs to be cleaned up on the inside FIRST, so that their outside MIGHT be clean (Mat 23:25-28). The verses cited from Galatians point out when a person exercises "faith in Christ Jesus" they become a child of God (Gal 3:26). God sends the Spirit of His Son into their hearts making them sons of God (Gal 4:6). So then, a child of God is cleaned up on the inside by the washing of regeneration in the new birth (Titus 3:5), and this places Christ inside them.

However, a child of God enters into the Church body of Christ by baptism (Rom 6:3). It is when a child of God is baptized into the Lord's Church that they put Christ on the outside. Just remember that the Lord teaches a specific order. He said the inside must be clean FIRST, so that the outside MIGHT be clean. To jump straight to trying to clean the outside first is the road to hypocrisy. So then, this example points out a difference between having the Lord on the inside, making one a child of God, compared to a child of God putting the Lord on the outside, becoming a member of His Church.

*Bride at the Marriage Compared to Guests - The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for His Son, Mat 22:2 -and- So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. Mat 22:10*

These verses point out that there is a wedding which will take place out in the future. Revelation 19:6-7 presents the scene of joyous proclamation for this event. There are different parties described who will be at this wedding. It is apparent that there will be a bride who is being wed to the Lord Jesus Christ. There will also be guests. Mathew 22:10 states that these guests are those who are gathered from the hedges and the highways. It is clear that these guests must be born again people. With this in mind, these verses point out a distinction between those in the family of God, who will attend the wedding as a guests, and those in the bride, who will be married to the Lord.

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**SCRIPTURAL REPENTANCE**

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be so. The prophet Ezekiel, decrying the idolatry of Israel and calling for their repentance, described repentance as an act of the heart.

*Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. Eze 14:4-6*

In the passage, the prophet described Israel's worship of idols as being set up in their hearts. In other words, their sin of idolatry was one conceived in the heart. He also declared the means by which the heart should be turned from idols: repentance. Therefore, repentance is a turning of the heart, or a change of the thoughts of the heart.

Another scripture which teaches the nature of repentance is found in the Acts of the Apostles. In Peter's rebuke of Simon Magnus, he said "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Act 8:22. The apostle here implied the forgiveness of Simon's evil thought depended upon a change of his evil thoughts, which were in his heart, coupled with prayer, which also originates in the heart.

Seeing the great importance of repentance and the nature of it being an internal act of the heart, it is tragic that some teach repentance to be a mere reformation. In other words, some teach repentance to be a change of life or a "turning around in the road". While that a change of heart ought to result in a change of life, it is impossible for the two to be the same thing. One is a secret act of the inward man, while the other is noticeable action of the outward man. How can two things so different in nature be one and the same?

Defending the Christian religion before King Agrippa, the Apostle Paul made a clear distinction between repentance of

heart and reformation of deeds. He thus spoke of his obedience to Christ and his message to the world, "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Acts 26:19-20. This passage clearly teaches that repentance and a turning to God should precede works meet for, or worthy of, repentance.

John the Baptist, the messenger of the Lord and a preacher of repentance, also spoke of the difference between repentance and reformation. He taught people to "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." Luke 3:8. John referred to repentance as a tree and the "what shall we do", Luke 3:10, as fruit on the tree. Teaching no difference between repentance and a change of life is like teaching there is no difference between the apple tree and the apple. Similarly, teaching that a change of life produces a change of heart is like teaching the apple produces the apple tree and not the tree producing the apple.

Our Lord and Savior warned against the error of amending one's life without a prior change of heart. He considered it hypocrisy and spiritual blindness. He taught, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." Mat 23:25-26. Christ Jesus, in the plainest of terms, taught outward reformation without inward repentance is as empty as washing the outside of a cup without regard to the washing of the inside.

**WHAT MEAN THESE STONES?**

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hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD". Psa 34:11. Parents are commanded to talk to their children about God on a daily basis. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou

sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deu 6:4-7

Children must be taught that God is who He says He is and will do that which He has promised. They must be taught that they have inherited the sinful nature of their father Adam, must repent of their sins, and have faith in Christ to be saved. Upon being saved, they must be taught to serve and follow the Lord. The first step in following the Lord, after being saved, is following Christ in baptism. As parents, we must be able to answer our children when they ask us "What mean ye by this baptism?"

It seems that the number of children who are getting saved and not following the Lord in baptism is steadily increasing. We must teach our children the importance of baptism. We must teach them that they are commanded to separate themselves from the world and to put on Christ. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ". Gal 3:27. They must be taught these things, because they do not know them already. We must remember that the world around us is doing Satan's work in teaching our children about every sinful thing and convincing them that the pleasures of sin are worth more than the riches of Christ. Could we possibly talk to them too much about the Lord? Considering the amount of influence that the world has over them I would say, in the words of Paul, God forbid!

I pray that this might serve as a call to arms for parents in our churches. Some might say, "I take them to church on Sunday. I let the pastor teach them." I would ask you, "Is that enough?" Can your pastor possibly have the same influence on your children that you do? Does God put the responsibility of teaching your children on the pastor or on you? While the pastor does have a responsibility to feed the lambs as well as the sheep, it does not diminish the parents responsibility one bit. I believe that we all want our children to know God, to fear God, and to love God. More importantly God wants our children and our children's children to know Him, to fear Him, and to love Him. He has told us that the key is to teach them about Him in the home. I pray that we all have the answer prepared when our children ask, "What mean ye by these stones?"