

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

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

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KNOWN FOR ETERNITY

by M. A. Brawner

Let's begin by thinking about a young person who was brought to one of the Lord's true Churches. This person was lost. The gospel sounded out to them and the members of the Church testified of the rich blessings of soul salvation. So, this young person came under deep conviction and went to the altar to pray. While feeling the weight of their condition, they called out to the Lord from the depths of their heart and found sweet relief. The feeling of peace came over their hearts like nothing they had ever experienced. Shortly thereafter, they presented themselves to be baptized to become a member of one of the Lord's Churches still preaching and practicing as the Lord first instructed them. So, here we have a person who went from being lost to being a Church member. Let's now consider how they lived as a Church member.

This young Church member was committed to serving the Lord in the Church. They wanted to know more about the One who had died in their place and saved their soul. For a few years they came to Sunday School and attended Church. When the Church had a revival, they made every effort to be there. If a special meeting was held for the Church's anniversary, this young member attended. Then someone special came along in their lives, and they wanted to get to know them better. A chance to train to get a job presented itself, and they desired to be able to support themselves. Marriage and children and work and homes all entered their lives. It wasn't long until having an excuse to miss Church services became as common as finding a reason to attend. The entanglements of life came between this Church member and them serving the One who loved them and died in their place. If this pattern of life continues for this Church member, do they expect that they will be recognized as one of the Lord's faithful through all eternity? They are born again, so they will be in heaven. But what will they be known for there? Eternity is coming and how those in

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SANCTIFIED BY THE TRUTH

by H. B. Little

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17. The Lord prayed this prayer for His church on the night He was betrayed. He desired for His church to be sanctified—to be holy, or set apart. Seeing that Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever, Heb 13:8, He still desires our spiritual separation from this world. And we can only fulfill His will for us through the truth—which is the word of God.

Let's consider how the Lord wants us to be separate from the world. Does He desire that we physically remove ourselves from the rest of society? No. Consider Paul's instruction to the Corinthian Church. “I wrote unto you...not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether...for then must ye needs go out of the world.” 1 Co 5:9-10. Paul was opposed to the idea of us removing ourselves from society. We are to be in the world, yet not of the world.

Our separation from the world is a spiritual separation. God desires for us to live holy lives though the world around us lie in wickedness. Consider Peter's instruction to the Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire. “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation,” 1 Pe 1:15. This word conversation means our mode of life, conduct, behavior, or deportment. We should lead lives such that the world sees a difference between our conduct and theirs.

How is this accomplished? We are sanctified by the truth. Our conduct is not regulated by the whims of society. Our standard of right and wrong comes from the holy word of God. What if we abandon God's word as the moral standard? What if we accept societal consensus as that standard? We will be conformed to the world and will cease to be holy unto the Lord. It is the truth that sets us apart.

Let's consider another way that God's people are to be separate from the world. Consider Lev 18:1-4.

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CHURCH MEMBER EVALUATION

by R. W. Briley

This article will review many of the topics found in the Church Covenant. All Old Fashion Missionary Baptist Churches have a copy displayed on the wall near the pulpit. The covenant states “what we will do” as a Church member. The Church Covenant is not a substitute for the Word of God. The Church Covenant lists many of the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God concerning a Church member as a servant of the Most High God in His Church and our daily walk with our Savior and Redeemer. Since our Lord has so honored His Church to designate her as His “Bride” and has purchased her with His own blood, we would do well to study and learn about her in the Word of God guided by the Master Teacher, God the Holy Spirit. The local Church of the true and living God is a part of the Kingdom of God.

At least once a year in the secular workplace, our supervisor completes a review or evaluation of our progress. In some areas we may have excelled, other areas we may not have grown, and in some areas we may have been deficient. Depending on these results, we may be rewarded with an increase in pay, our pay may stay the same, or maybe we will be terminated. With this thought in mind Church member, prayerfully complete this evaluation using the plumb line of the Word of God. Jesus said in Mat 7:20, wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

For you to be a member of the Church, you must possess soul salvation. After the Lord saves your soul, the Holy Spirit will lead you to join the Church. When you present yourself for Church membership, the pastor will ask you to relate your experience of soul salvation. The pastor will often point out the Church Covenant that you are entering into a covenant with the local, visible body of Christ in the Church. The Church Covenant lists many of the requirements for a Church member, for an in-service, servant of God based upon the Word Of God. Upon meeting at

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heaven will be known is being determined by their faithfulness, or lack thereof, to the Lord here and now.

I'm thankful to be able to say that I'm an old-time Baptist. Being a Baptist, let me say that we are committed to the teaching that once a person is truly born again, they will always be born again. We live without fear of returning to the spiritual condition of being lost, dying, and going to hell. This is made clear here in order to make sure confusion is avoided by what is about to be written regarding the child of God in eternity. Let us be sure that this article presents that all born again people have escaped hell forever.

Now we should stop and think about what the Bible teaches us regarding being in the family of God verses being in the Lord's Church. The Bible points out that a person must first be in the family of God before they can enter the Church. However, being born again does NOT place a person in the Church. Children of God must be brought into the Church through that Church's baptism in order to be part of the Lord's Church. There is no way around it. There is a difference between children of God who are outside of the Church and those who are inside of it. This difference is true here in time and will also be true in eternity.

Consider some scriptures where we find the distinction between the saved outside the Church and those inside the Church in eternity. To do this, we will look at that time in eternity after the new earth and the new heaven are created. The city of the new Jerusalem is seen coming down from God out of heaven. After providing details about the city, we find this written: "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it," Rev 21:24. FOR COMPARISON, we also consider: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city," Rev 22:14. Notice that the verses from chapter 21 point out that the saved walk in the light of the city. This puts them on the outside of it. However, chapter 22 reveals that there is another group of born again people who "do His commandments." The child of God who

does the commandments of God begins by following Him in baptism into His Church. Baptism into the Lord's Church is the first act of obedience any child of God will carry out in service to the Lord. If the child of God has not even been baptized, they in no wise will be able to enter the new Jerusalem. They will be in heaven, but for all eternity they will be known for failing to "do His commandments." All through life as a saved person, with the commandments of God at hand, they failed to do them. Therefore, for all of eternity, they will be unable to enter into the new Jerusalem. This is a legacy any child of God should want to avoid.

Let's take this farther along the path of distinction. Consider distinctions between children of God who have actually become members of the Church the Lord established. Faithful Church members have invested much time, energy, prayers, and other labors for the Lord in the Church. They plan their lives around Church meetings to be sure they can be present and support the Church's efforts. Time is spent to learn how to keep the ordinances as the Lord entrusted them to the Church. Efforts are made to mortify the works of the flesh while cultivating the fruits of the Spirit. Their concern for lost humanity and the spread of the gospel is obvious. In these ways, it is apparent that the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is their top priority. They are the ones the Lord talked about when He said, "And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me," Luke 9:23.

On the other hand, there are lackadaisical members of the same Church. They truly are born again and have baptism that is as valid as the one the Lord received at the hands of John the Baptist. However, they obviously allow things in life to come between them and serving the Lord. Regular Bible study and prayer is foreign to them. They are unable to explain how to keep the ordinances. Efforts are not made to mortify the works of flesh nor cultivate the fruits of the Spirit. Witnessing to the lost and spreading the gospel has occupied very little, if any, of their time. They attend Church when there is nothing else taking place that they want to do. All of the evidence adds up to reveal that other matters in life were of a higher priority than serving the Lord in the Church He called them to be members of. They remind us of these words of the

Lord: "And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say,"? Luke 6:46

Let's consider this difference between members as we read about one of the Churches found in the Bible. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels," Rev 3:4-5. FOR COMPARISON, we also consider: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city," Rev 22:14.

The Church of Sardis had two sorts of members in it based on what is contained in the verses cited here. Some are referred to as "worthy" while others apparently come short of that mark. Those who are in the "worthy" category will have the honor of walking with the Lord in white. In eternity, the multitudes will look appreciatively upon those walking with the Lord, clothed in white raiment. They are those who "do His commandments" so they "may enter in through the gates into the city." This is how everyone should want to be known for all eternity. What a blessing that will be!

The second group are of the lackadaisical sort. They had equal opportunity in their life to serve the Lord but were lukewarm at best. They will be denied entry into the city. They will miss the honor that could have been theirs. For all eternity, they will be known for letting things in life hinder them from serving the Lord faithfully in His Church. What a shameful way to be known for all eternity!

It is time for honest and sincere self-examination. If we have so let the world come between us and serving the Lord, let us get this corrected in the "here and now" in order to positively impact how we will be known in all eternity. The Lord daily offers His hand of grace to help us do so.

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MEMBER EVALUATION

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the water's edge, the Church will administer baptism, the first ordinance of the Church. Baptism is a picture of a burial, an immersion in a watery grave, and a resurrection. A member of the Church has a responsibility to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to be a faithful church member.

It is Church member evaluation time. What does God expect of a Church member? This is a self-examination based on God's word. Be honest. God knows ALL your thoughts and actions. You say, why should I complete this evaluation? Maybe you have not noticed the state of the Church in the year 2022. Where are the Church members on Sunday, the Lord's day, Bible Study, prayer meeting, annual protracted meeting, and business meeting? The following topics, in no particular order, are for evaluating a Church member found in the word of God. Read the accompanying scripture before answering each topic.

1. Do you believe, love, and obey ALL of God's word? John 15:8-11
2. Do you forsake the assembling of yourself together with the Church, for scheduled services at the meeting house? Heb 10:25. David said in Psa 122:1, I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.
3. Do you attend Church for worshipping God, or for entertainment and satisfying the desires of the flesh?
4. Are you a prodigal Church member? Luke 15:17-20
5. How would you rate your prayer life? Eph 6:18. The greatest asset of a Church member is prayer. The prophet Isaiah said, in 56:6-7, God's house is a house of prayer. ALL Church members should be praying people.
6. Are you praying for your will, or God's will to be done? Jesus prayed in Mat 26:39, 42 for the Father's will to be done. Or are you praying to consume it upon your own lust? Jas 4:3
8. Are you holding fast, without wavering? Heb 10:23. Or are you like a leaf floating down the stream of time carried along by the current?
9. Are you provoking your brothers and sisters unto love and good works? John 15:8-12, Heb 10:24
10. Are you abiding in the Vine? John 15:1-5. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall

know them. Mat 7:20

11. Are you the salt of the earth? If the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Mat 5:13
12. Is your light upon the candlestick and giving light unto ALL the house? Maybe you have hid your light under the bushel. You should be aware. God may be about to light your fire. Mat 5:14-16, Psa 119:105.
13. Do you love the world? I John 2:15-17, Jas 1:27, 4:4, Rom 12:2.
14. Are you presenting your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service? Rom 12:1-5, Heb 13:15-16, Eph 5:1-2.
15. Are you unequally yoked together with unbelievers? God says come out from among them and be ye separate. 2 Cor 6:14-18.
16. Have you went out from the Church to serve other gods (Satan's gods)? Deu 13:13
17. Are you continuing with one accord and assembling together with the Church? Acts 1:14.
18. Are you continuing steadfastly in the faith and doctrine of God's word? Acts 2:42
19. Do you fear (reverence) God? Pro 1:7, Deu 10:20, Psa 33:8.
20. Do you have a proud look, lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies and sowing discord among God's Churches? God hates these things. They are an abomination unto Him. Pro 6:16-19
21. Are you meditating upon God and His word every day? Psa 1:1-2, 19:14, 119:97.
22. Are you praying, reading and studying God's word every day? How many minutes each day? 2 Ti 2:15. You may say this passage is intended for a pastor or preacher. I say it's for ALL Church members. 2 Ti 3:16-17.
23. How full is your spiritual cup or thimble? Col 1.9, Eph 5:18-20, Eph 3:16-21. Today's vehicles have a fuel gauge with a low fuel warning light and beeper. Is your spiritual level warning light sounding? Don't ignore it. Turn back to God. He will fill you up.
24. Are you walking worthy of the Lord unto ALL pleasing? Col 1:10.

25. Are you fruitful in every good work? Col 1:10. Eph 2:10 says, For we are HIS workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. In my opinion, this nails down the whole duty of a Church member who is a servant of God. Ecc 12:13, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

26. Are you increasing in the knowledge of God? Col 1:9-12, Pro 1:5, Pro 2:10, 2 Pe 1:8.
27. Are you seeking the wisdom of God? Pro 2:1-5.
28. Are you mentioning God to others as you travel through your day?
29. Do you love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might? Deu 6:5.
30. Are you keeping ALL God's statutes and commandments? Deu 6:2.
31. Are you teaching ALL God's statutes and commandments to your children and grandchildren? Deu 6:2, Eph 6:4, Psa 78:1-8, Pro 4:1-13, Col 3:20-21, 2 Ti 1.5, Mat 28.20. If you fail to teach your children, Satan will teach them. 2 John 1-4, failure to teach our children is sin.
32. Are you forgiving one another? Col 3:13, Mat 18.21-22
33. Are you harboring hatred for another Church member? Do you have hurt feelings? Are you mad at a brother or sister in the Church? It's time to get glad. Mat 7:1-5, Mat 18.15-22, Mat 6:14-15.
34. Are you promoting unity or sowing discord among the members of the Church? Pro 6:19
35. Are you following the LORD in building up the Church or are you helping Satan in his attempt to destroy the Church?
36. Have you put on the new man? Col 3:12-25
37. Are you giving ALL diligence in growing in the ways of the Lord? II Pe 1:5-8
38. Are you clothed with the whole armor of God ready for battle? Eph 6:10-18.
39. Are you seeking those things which are above? Col 3:1-25
40. Are you holding forth and getting the word of life out to your children, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and acquaintances?

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SANCTIFIED BY THE TRUTH

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And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God.

The Lord gave His religious practices (ordinances, governments, judgments, etc.) to His holy people, Israel. With the giving of this Law, Moses told the people that these practices were the Lord's. They were not Israel's to do as they saw fit. They were to be carried out the way they were given. Israel wasn't to look at the nations around them and borrow from their ways. They weren't to get the Sanhedrin together and establish new ways to "keep" God's law. Christ rebuked the Pharisees for this very thing. He told them, "ye reject the commandment of God, that ye make keep your own traditions." Mark 7:8. As long as Israel adhered to God's word, they were sanctified by the truth. But when they did what was right in their own eyes and conformed to the world around them, they ceased to receive the blessings of God.

Just as Moses delivered the Old Testament teachings to Israel, the Lord Jesus delivered the New Testament teachings to His church. Consider John 17:6-8, 14.

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me...I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

The Lord gave His religious practices to His holy church. These teachings belong to God. They are not ours to carry out as

we see fit. We must carry them out the way that they are taught in the New Testament. We cannot get a group of men together and establish a new way to "keep" the faith. We are a separated people unto the Lord because we have adhered to the faith, which has been forever memorialized in the Holy Bible. If we intend to remain a holy people, we must contend for that faith once delivered to the saints by the Son of God. Jude 3.

BAPTISTS & THE BIBLE

The following is an excerpt from John T. Christian's *What Baptists Have Done for the World*. Brother Christian (1854-1925) was a first-rate Baptist. He was a preacher, author, and educator. His two-volume *A History of the Baptists* is a thorough and insightful ecclesiastical history. Brother Christian was thoroughly acquainted with our Baptist heritage. Below, he lauds the Baptists and our strict adherence to the Bible for doctrine and practice. He thought it to be among our greatest contributions to the world. He writes:

Baptists have stood for the supreme authority of the Word of God. They do not acknowledge the binding authority of creeds, Their Confessions, from that of Schleithem to the New Hampshire, are valuable as literature and as a historical statement of truth. They do not recognize as authoritative the historic practices of the church nor appeal to the decrees of the councils. The sayings of the fathers are no more than historical statements. Their appeal is not to the "fathers," but to Jesus Christ and the Apostles. Their sole recognized authority is the written word of the eternal God. All a Baptist desires to know upon any point of faith is, is it taught in the New Testament, and when God's mind is known on a point nothing more is needed. They think the Bible is a plain book, designed for common people, and may be understood by all. They do not think that it requires commentaries and an infallible Pope in order to understand Christian duties. They think the Bible is the impregnable Rock of Ages and stands four-square against every wind that blows; and, to use the words of another, "We congratulate ourselves that our campaign document is the most widely-circulated book in the world."

MEMBER EVALUATION

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41. Are you a servant of God? Are you ready and willing to work in God's vineyard? In the year 2022, very few Church members are willing to work. God says, NO WORK, NO EAT! 2 Th 3:10-11

Many of the evaluation questions are similar. I trust the questions will stir up our pure minds. Is God happy with your evaluation, or is God gonna take you out behind the wood shed for a come to Jesus talk? I pray you will be honest in your assessment of you as a Church member. We must remember that we are three people: the person we think we are, the person other people think we are, and the person that God knows we are. In my study and preparation of this subject, I bow at the throne of grace begging God to forgive me for my sins, failures, transgressions, and iniquities. O how I have failed as a Church member! This study and evaluation of a Church member, most likely, was just for me.

For the Church to still be worshiping God at the Church you are a member of when Jesus comes again, we must be following ALL God's statutes and commandments. Church member, what will you leave behind? Are you praying for our successors, praying that God will call preachers, pastors, deacons, Sunday school teachers, song leaders, piano players, prayer warriors, public witnesses and altar workers to fill the shoes of those gone to heaven? Are you watching and praying? God is long suffering, the old ship of Zion is passing by and Jesus is standing at the door knocking. Church member let Him in now! In John 14:15, Jesus said, If ye love me, keep my commandments. Also in John 14:23, Jesus answered and said, If a man [man, woman, boy and girl] love me, he [they] will keep My words: and my Father will love him [them], and we will come unto him [them], and make our abode with him [them]. Mat 7:20, wherefore by their [your] fruits ye shall know [be known of] them. Without Jesus you can do nothing.

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