

AFTER THE RESURRECTION

by Lee Scarborough

Scarborough's examination of Christ's resurrection and its implications, covering the credibility of miracles, the empty tomb, resurrection appearances, Christ's glorified body, believers' eternal bodies, His teachings during the forty days, and assurance of eternal life.

14 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 00.4-FOREWORD
2. 01-CHAPTER ONE: MOUNTAIN PEAKS IN CHRIST'S CAREER
3. 02-CHAPTER TWO: CREDIBILITY OF MIRACLES
4. 03-CHAPTER THREE: INFALLIBLE PROOFS
5. 04-CHAPTER FOUR: THE EMPTY TOMB AND CHRIST'S REAPPEARANCES
6. 05-CHAPTER FIVE: THE BODY OF HIS GLORY
7. 06-CHAPTER SIX: OUR ETERNAL BODIES
8. 07-CHAPTER SEVEN: WHAT CHRIST SAID AND DID DURING THE FORTY DAYS
9. 08-CHAPTER EIGHT: CHRIST'S MAJOR MESSAGES DURING THE FORTY DAYS
10. 09-CHAPTER NINE: THE HERITAGE HE LEFT US
11. 10-CHAPTER TEN: HIS TWOFOLD LOVE'S LABORS FOR US NOW
12. 11-CHAPTER ELEVEN: A STUDY IN INTERCESSION (Joh_17:1-26)
13. 12-CHAPTER TWELVE: A STUDY IN HEAVENLY MANSIONS
14. 13-CHAPTER THIRTEEN: A THROUGH TICKET HOME

00.4-FOREWORD

FOREWORD THIS book is not a polemic, nor an apologetic, nor a controversy. It is a devotional study of a pliant believer in God's Word, as it gives to us the marvelous and glorious period in the earthly life of Jesus Christ. To my mind there is not a shadow of a doubt about Christ's supernatural birth, perfect human life, atoning death, bodily resurrection and expected visible return.

- My confession is that I am a sinner saved by grace, a preacher called by His will and Spirit;
- My profession is that I am a humble believer in Him as my Savior and Lord;
- My creed is that the Bible is God's revealed will to men, inspired by His Spirit, that Christ is God's Son, virgin born, sinless, who lived, died, was buried and arose again, according to the Scriptures, for man's sins as their substitute and Redeemer, and is now in heaven, interceding for us and is building an eternal home for His people.

He wants us to carry out His gospel will, present Him to lost men everywhere, and enthrone Him in the hearts and lives of all His people. We are to wait for His return, which will be on some glad day at God's appointed time.

This volume is a reverent study of Christ's immortal forty days between His resurrection and ascension; His appearances, words, deeds, teachings, His glorified body, as we find them set out in the Gospels, Acts and Epistles. It is not a speculation. I do not raise any of the difficulties about any seeming contradictions in testimonies nor about His appearances.

The infallible proofs of the major fact of His resurrection are so great and many that my soul tests in these satisfactory truths. His tomb is empty and He is risen from the dead and is alive forevermore and must and will reign until all His enemies are saved by His blood or are adjudged to their rightful place in His eternity. My hope is that these gathered and analyzed Bible facts about His now glorified body will bring as much joy and strength to all who read this volume as they have to me in this devotional study.

This same Jesus will return, and we shall see Him as He is and be like Him-glorious prospect!

The discussions in the last five chapters do not come directly out of the glorious forty days of our Savior's ministry, but they are so vitally related to things before and after the forty days that the author deems them an important part of the discussion of the theme of this volume.

These chapters are necessary to perfect the picture of our present Savior. It must be remembered that the picture of these forty days cannot be complete if we have in mind only the physical body of the Savior or what He has now in the place of His physical body, the resurrection body. We must, to complete the picture, look at His spiritual personality, His spirit, what He was thinking and what were His plans to do; and a discussion of His whole being would include what He was doing before and is doing after His resurrection and ascension, and this is the justification, I think, for

giving these other chapters outside the boundary of the forty days.

01-CHAPTER ONE: MOUNTAIN PEAKS IN CHRIST'S CAREER

CHAPTER ONE: MOUNTAIN PEAKS IN CHRIST'S CAREER TO STUDY CHRIST you must take the long look backward, in the endless eternity before time began to register, an intensive study of the period we call time, and then a long forward look to the endless ages of eternity ahead. The Bible begins with "In the beginning God . . ."

John, the love letter writer of the Gospels, gives his wonderful record of the inner life of Jesus by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Evidently these two descriptions are about the same great God. Jesus said of Himself, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), and John said of Him, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

His eternal existence is established beyond question in the truths of the Bible. He was the Father's agent in creation, in preservation, in revelation, in the eternal home-building, and in the consummation of all things. HIS PRENATAL APPEARANCES The identity of the personality of these appearances is not sure. Some of them were in the form of angels, some of men; in some it was the Lord Himself that appeared according to the Scriptures.

Hebrews 1:1-3 says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds: Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Evidently, then, some of the following divine appearances were either Christ Himself or His angelic representatives.

- He appeared to Adam as Lord (Genesis 3:8-19);
- To Cain as Lord (Genesis 4:4-7);
- To Abraham as Lord (Genesis 12:7-17; Genesis 18:1-33);
- To Hagar as the Angel of the Lord (Genesis 16:7-12);
- To Lot as two Angels (Genesis 19:1-25);
- To Jacob as "I am the Lord" (Genesis 28:10-19);
- To Moses as God (Exodus 3:4) and as Lord (Exodus 5:1-17);

- To Balaam as an angel of the Lord (Numbers 22:22-35);
- To Joshua as the captain of the host of the Lord (Joshua 5:13-15);
- To Israel as an angel of the Lord (Judges 2:1-5);
- To Manoah (Judges 13:1-23);
- To Elijah as the angel of the Lord (1 Kings 19:4-7);
- To Isaiah as the Lord sitting upon His throne (Isaiah 6:1-5);
- To Ezekiel as the glory of the Lord (Ezekiel 1:26-28);
- To Daniel as one like unto the Son of man (Daniel 7:13-23; Daniel 10:5-21).

These and many other instances of divine appearances are recorded in the Old Testament in which the Lord appeared, giving instruction, courage, comfort, or setting out His program for men.

HIS SUPERNATURAL BIRTH The first great earthly incident in the career of Jesus Christ is the incident connected with His supernatural birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:25-36).

HIS SUFFERINGS IN THE GARDEN

Probably the most tragic pre-crucifixion hour of Christ is what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane, that lonely, dark night while His tired disciples slept at the gate. He calls it "a cup" which He had to drink, a bitter cup in which God had distilled the quintessence of the world's deepest sorrow.

- He drank the cup without faltering or complaining.
- He drank it to its bitter dregs.
- He called it "a baptism" with which He had to be baptized.

In Gethsemane, on Calvary, and in the tomb God immersed Him in the world's darkest grave of the baptism of suffering. Surely that was a peak in Christ's career. He there took the poignant pain out of the darkest suffering for all who believe in Him.

It was the beginning of the price of blood which He paid for the world's redemption.

HIS SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH This was the climax of sin. Sin did its worst, painted its blackest picture, drew forth its deadliest groans and hallelujahed its greatest temporary triumph when it nailed the holy Son of God to the two arms of the cross. Nature protested, the earthquake thundered, the graves opened their doors and the dead came out, the sun and moon and stars turned to blackness as they hid their faces from the death of their Lord; and yet the deadliest of sin's deeds was turned into the brightest light of hope for the sinner's destiny. Here sin did its worst for God's best and God's best did His best for sin's worst.

- Nowhere has sin such a show of guilt.
 - Nowhere has love such a depth of flow.
 - Nowhere has power such a demonstration of effectiveness as in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- HIS BODILY RESURRECTION** When Jesus came according to prophecy and promise

from the grave with a new body, visible, touchable, lovable, and in triumph from death's slimy grip, sin had its heaviest blow and life its climactic glow. Without a resurrection of Christ's body, sin's triumph would have been complete and our doom perfect. No resurrection, no pardon—we are still in our sins. No resurrection, no hope—all the horizons of the soul are midnight darkness. But He arose, He lives, He reigns, with His triumphant, conquering power upon the head of the serpent, and He is ours forevermore. HIS VISIBLE ASCENSION

He not only arose bodily from the grave, but He ascended visibly from Olivet in the sight of His up-looking and loving disciples. He broke all the laws of gravitation or brought in the super-intervention of a higher law, a law of heavenly compulsion. These disciples, not mystified but divinely inspired, welcomed His departure from the highest peak around Jerusalem to the highest peak of the heavenly hills. These disciples saw Him, walked with Him, talked with Him, ate with Him, put their doubting fingers in the nail-riven prints of crucifixion, heard and recognized His voice, saw His demonstrated power and longingly watched Him as He went back home for the divinely appointed task of intercession and mansion-building. HIS PROMISED RETURN The two men in white on the peak of Olivet, as He went up by means of some heavenly airplane, said to His watching disciples, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

- He will come.

- He is coming.

Two thousand years ago it was said, "He is near, even at the door."

Remembering that a thousand years is as a day and a day a thousand years, He is coming and will some glad day appear.

These eight appearances of our Savior, beginning in prehistoric eternity and ending in the last triumphant sound of time's departure, show us briefly the eternal sketch of our Redeemer.

~ end of chapter 1 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

02-CHAPTER TWO: CREDIBILITY OF MIRACLES

CHAPTER TWO: CREDIBILITY OF MIRACLES THE SUPERNATURAL IN CLIMAX THE QUESTION of miracles is an age-long question. It is faced everywhere, in all the areas of life clear back from the beginning of religious history; and as we approach the life of Christ we are faced everywhere with evidences of the supernatural. The attestation of miracles in the ministry of Christ is a very vital matter as to our faith in Him.

If we deny miracles, then we put in the trash heap much of Christ, because His entire ministry is built upon the foundation of the miracles. Paul put the question straight to the face of King Agrippa in Acts 27:8 : “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” The raising of the dead seems to be the climax of the miraculous. Power that can go into the grave and bring its victim out alive has exercised the highest expression of divine power. Miracles are everywhere.

- Creation is a miracle.
- Productivity is a constant miracle.
- Providence is a supreme miracle.

The holding and molding and making of the order of the spheres is not nature, it is God. The secret union of body, mind and soul and their interchanging cooperation is a miracle. Christ, His dual nature, His incarnation, His sinless life, His selfless life, perfect resurrection, is God’s climax in the miraculous.

There are physical miracles recorded in the Old Testament. There are many miracles recorded in the New Testament all of them evidencing power exercised beyond the ordinary routine of nature.

Regeneration is a miracle in spiritual transfusion, a holy mixture of truth, faith, Christ’s redeeming blood, His resurrection power, His divine life. In this spiritual operation performed by a loving Father and the human soul inoculated with the virus of sin, wherein the poison of this sin is taken out and new life and blood transfused into the soul, all this is a miracle.

Prayer is a constantly recurring miracle-a man, humble, trustful, talks to God over a spiritual radio. The answer comes back in the peace of the man’s mind, in some triumph in the life of the man for the glory of God. Christianity is a miraculous triumph in civilization. All of its holy tenets are based upon the incarnation of Christ, a miracle.

- The substitutionary death of Christ on the cross is another miracle,
- The resurrection of Christ’s body another miracle.
- The impartation of divine power to human weakness is another miracle.

Because nature performs its functions steadily and without break does not mean that it is all mere nature. It is God working in an orderly way. A miracle is not a violation of natural law: it is but a friendly interposition of higher law, the constructive law of love. The natural is really supernatural to us and the supernatural is natural to God. God works through nature in an orderly way, but reserves His authority to work in a higher, supernatural way.

In view of the mighty evidences of God everywhere, why should man, so blind to the divine, doubt and become incredulous of God's working in a miraculous way? Why should it be incredible that God should raise the dead, or do anything else that He wishes to do?

If we will approach all the miracles in the Old and New Testaments and all the strange workings of God about us with the hypothesis that God is God, then we solve the problem or at least satisfy the mind of faith as to the handiwork of God in any expression of it, whether natural or supernatural.

SKEPTICISM'S LOOK AT THE RESURRECTION

Skepticism has searched heaven, earth and hell to push Christ off the map. It attacks God's existence and personality, denies His hand in creation and providence, bitterly brands Christ's whole career as an old woman's lie, denies His superhuman birth, His holy life, His atoning death, His victorious resurrection, His ascension, and denies Him the privilege of a return.

It has picked His Bible to pieces and pitted each part against the other and the whole. It has belittled His churches and tried to ruin them from the inside out and the outside in. It has maligned His disciples and blasphemed against His power.

Look at infidelity's attack on the resurrection. It tried to kill Jesus in infancy and a number of times in His earthly life. It put Him on the cross and in the tomb, and all hell broke loose in glee. He arose in spite of infidelity's claims and then it tried to smother Him.

It denied His resurrection and for centuries has tried to impeach the witnesses of His resurrection. The outside infidels and the inside skeptics cloaked in the pious robes of radical criticism have sought and continue to seek to deny all Christian truth.

Infidelity plays upon the ignorance, poverty and lack of culture of the disciples, and their visionary excitement at the time.

It tries to destroy the witness of the writers of the records themselves, saying Luke, Paul and Mark were not eyewitnesses; that Matthew and John did not write the books attributed to them; that Luke and Matthew got their stories from Mark and that Mark's work is not authentic; and that miracles are impossible anyway. Some go so far as to say that miracles are unmoral and reflect on the intelligence of God and man. All such effort is blinded skepticism and flies in the face of the overwhelming, infallible proof.

Christ appeared on probably six days out of the forty to one woman, to several women, to two disciples-Peter at one time and James at another-to two other disciples on the Emmaus road, to ten of the apostles, and again to eleven in a confidential conference room, to seven of the disciples on a fishing trip, then to five hundred on a Galilean mountain, then to eleven or more of the disciples on Mount Olivet. He appeared five times in one day in Jerusalem and at Emmaus,

and then on the sea in Galilee many miles away, and then on a mountain in Galilee, then back in Jerusalem. Afterward He appeared to Stephen, of living, reliable witnesses and billions of dead Christians are God's answer to infidelity's boast, and that answer is that Christ is alive forevermore.

It is said that when Gordon's tomb was discovered some years ago he got some great chemists to test the dirt in Joseph's rediscovered tomb for evidence of decayed human bones. They found evidence of human decay in a hundred tombs around Jerusalem but none in Joseph's tomb.

God's people do not need a chemical test to prove the resurrection. They know by many experimental tests that Christ is not there. He is alive today and in love and pity looks down into the blinded eyes of infidelity. Christ is risen, is reigning, and is coming back some glad day.

It is more difficult not to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ than it is to believe in His resurrection. To deny His resurrection in face of the overwhelming, accumulating strength of testimony is to deny all history and take the foundations out of credulity. A failure to understand and comprehend any incident in life does not justify a denial of life and its mysterious nature.

It is difficult to understand how a good meal of substantial food taken into one's stomach will be translated and transformed into the various parts of the human body, some of it into hair, some into bone, some into blood, some into flesh, some followed up through brain cells into thought and love and power; and yet the mystery of all this action of the human organs of life does not cause us to stop eating. We are surrounded by mysteries. Life itself is a mystery. Why not take the facts of the resurrection of Christ, established by reliable witnesses, and trust Him for the blessings of the resurrection, and glorify the Christ who is risen from the dead?

~ end of chapter 2 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

03-CHAPTER THREE: INFALLIBLE PROOFS

CHAPTER THREE: INFALLIBLE PROOFS GOD'S GUARANTEE OF FINAL TRIUMPH THE ARRAY of testimony gathering about the resurrection of Jesus Christ should overwhelm any sincere soul with the assurance that Christ is risen from the dead. I wish to call into court a long line of reliable witnesses and cross-examine them that the world may view the facts and face the issues of such testimony.

Luke gives his testimony in the introductory words of the two great books which he wrote, his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. In chapter one of his Gospel, verses one to four, he gives a convincing record: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

Notice what he says. He says: "These things are most surely believed among us"; "They were delivered unto us by eyewitnesses"; "I have had perfect understanding of all things from the very first"; "That you may know of a certainty all those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

And then in his introductory words of the Acts of the Apostles, chapter one, verses one to three, he says: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

Here is the dependable testimony of a gentile layman, a physician, a secretary, a sane observer of men.

WHO'S WHO?

Let's see who's who in resurrection testimony.

- There are the immortal Mary's, so effective in the life of Christ, good women, loved and believed in for generations of an enlightened civilization.
- There is Peter, one of the world's greatest preachers;
- James, pastor of a great early church.
- There are two intelligent men with unimpeachable characters who saw Him, walked with Him, and ate with Him.

- There are ten disciples, some of them named, in a closed room with firsthand, eyewitness testimony.
- There are eleven men, grown, with eyes and minds and experiences not given to hallucinations.
- There are seven disciples, most of them named, out on the seashore-no chance for deception.
- There are five hundred people on the mountain top, whom Paul says saw and heard Him.
- There are several other disciples on another mountain in Judea. They saw Him, heard Him, watched Him ascend into heaven.
- Some heavenly men or angels, two at the tomb and two at His ascension, saw Him. This is the witness of heavenly personalities.
- There is Stephen, who testified that he saw Christ standing at the right hand of God;
- There are two other trustworthy preachers of the gospel whose credibility has never been successfully attacked-Paul and John-who saw Him years after.

The value of testimony in all courts of law depends on the credibility and character of the witnesses. If you examine the records of these witnesses, you will find that they were all good people. Their names have been household words in all civilized lands for the passing centuries. If you cross-examine them, you will find that they were eyewitnesses. They had no hearsay testimony.

If we cannot believe these testimonies, is there any reliable testimony in any realm of history?

We reflect on our own sense of historical justification and shame our own credulity if we deny these facts. The historicity and validity of Christ's resurrection are at stake; the most vital, far-reaching facts in all the centuries are tested. If Christ did not rise from the dead, all professed Christians in all these centuries and all the coming years ahead are without hope of eternal life. The awful silence of the grave, the tragedy of all centuries, will be unbroken forever and ever and heaven is a spiritual mirage and all truth is a barren lie if Christ did not rise from the tomb. THEIR TESTIMONY Let's call these eyewitnesses into court.

Mary Magdalene. She was a convert of the rich, suburban district of Capernaum-Magdala, probably a well-to-do maiden of the refined strata of society. It is not a necessary conclusion that she was a low character because Christ cast seven devils out of her.

It took a legion of devils, from two to six thousand, to make a man an outcast. There is no reflection on Mary, certainly not after she became a follower of Jesus Christ. She testifies that she saw Jesus, she saw the empty tomb, talked to Jesus, He spoke to her, she recognized His voice, He dried her tears, and she went and told the disciples. John, Matthew, Luke and Mark confirmed the testimony of this good woman.

Then the other women-Mary Magdalene was with them, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and some other women. Luke, Matthew and Mark confirmed the testimony of these women. They saw the empty tomb, heard what the angels said about His being risen, and recognized Him after He had come out of the tomb.

Put Peter on the stand. Luke and the Apostle Paul testified that Simon Peter saw the Saviour after His resurrection. Nothing is said as to what conversation passed between them nor where the meeting occurred, nor anything about the meeting. Peter certainly would know the Saviour and could not have been mistaken.

The next witnesses are the two disciples on the Emmaus road. Luke and Mark confirm the record of this interview. One of the men was Cleopas. We do not know who the other was. Emmaus was a village six or eight miles from Jerusalem. These disciples walked with Him and ate with Him and did not recognize Him at first. This is one of the longest visits the Saviour made in His after-resurrection appearances. It has all the marks of genuineness and naturalness. It is one of the most beautiful and revealing of all the appearances. He talked, He walked, He ate, He interpreted the Scriptures, and gave these disciples a burning heart.

Put a large group on the witness stand-ten apostles without Thomas, and maybe other of the disciples, in a room, secluded room, with closed doors. Mark and Luke and John make the record and confirm this appearance. At this meeting one of the strangest of miracles occurred. He entered the room with closed doors. Material things offered no resistance to His resurrection body. He spoke to them. He delivered a remarkable message: "Peace" and "I send you." He gave them an inside victory and challenged them with a world program, wide missionary efforts. This group recognized Him and believed Him.

Another group of eleven or more disciples, with doubting Thomas present. John tells us of this story. There is no evidence that Thomas had been in any of the other groups before this to whom Christ appeared. Where he was or what he was doing we do not know, except his refusal to believe that Christ had risen except he put his hands in the crucifixion wounds. His skepticism of the resurrection was evident.

All we are told of this appearance is of the convincing proof to Thomas that Christ was alive. Christ readily submitted to the pragmatic test demanded by the doubting Thomas. He must have been of a doubting, analytical mind. Christ had not gotten over to him even the expectancy of the resurrection. When his fingers entered the nail holes and spear holes in the wounded body of our Saviour, Thomas was overcome and said, "My Lord and my God!" Thomas was the slowest in expectancy and trust, but was as thoroughly convinced as any. Crucifixion's scars convinced him. Doubt added its testimony to the reality of the resurrection triumph.

Christ's withering, rebuking words should fall heavily and sadly on all "doubting Thomases" from that time until now: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Skeptics inside and outside of Christianity are not even willing to believe that Thomas believed. These unconvinced skeptics will someday see Him whom they have pierced. John tells us of the first meeting of this group, Thomas being absent. Mark and Luke join John in that record, but only John tells us of Thomas' confession of Christ's resurrection.

The other recorders must have been ashamed of Thomas. Judas the betrayer and Peter the denier and Thomas the doubter are sad representatives of these early disciples. They could have done better. What would be your and my classification if an inspired record were made of us in our day?

I have more sense of commiseration for Thomas than I have for the modernistic skeptics in this day of nineteen hundred years of infallible proofs of Christ's resurrection. I fear that many of them, with the full light of sacred history and gospel triumphs falling on their trained heads, should be put in the Judas classification of betrayers instead of Peter's and Thomas' classifications of deniers and doubters.

We now change the scene from Jerusalem and Judea to Galilee, many, many miles away. John tells of this story.

Peter led six others of the disciples on a fishing trip. They were discouraged and backslidden. Peter led them in a backtrack movement. He quit fishing for men and tried out his old job of fishing for fish. Peter's behavior in the last few days or more had been bad. He cried; he lied; he denied. He not only lost his sword, but lost his courage.

A little Jewish lass made him lie, and a rooster crowing at the time of his denial established a memorial to his cowardice. So he told the others, "I go a fishing," and they said, "We go with you."

They immediately caught nothing. People who run from God and the spiritual never catch anything worthwhile. This group appearance of Christ is the longest and most interesting in some respects of all the appearances. It is a wonderfully revealing appearance. The great truths and lessons of this visit are discussed at length in another chapter.

Here another miracle (if not two) was performed.

Here the most puncturing question Christ ever put to the consciences of the disciples and to ours is given: "Lovest thou me more than these?" Love's debtorship to service has here left us in a pointed interrogation. These disciples were wide awake. They saw the Saviour.

At first they did not recognize Him. Later then they did recognize Him. They ate the fish and bread and warmed by the fire He had provided. They talked with Him close up. You must make them out bold, bald liars or else believe their story.

The witness of a multitude on a Galilean mountain far distant from Jerusalem is brought thundering down to the consciences of a doubting world. Mark, Matthew and Paul guarantee the genuineness of this story. Three unimpeachable records bear witness to its genuineness. Matthew says the eleven disciples were there. Mark does not tell the number unless Mark 16:14 refers to it and it probably does not.

Paul tells us there were over five hundred present, many of whom were then living.

Christ first appeared to one, and next to the last time He appeared to five hundred. They were all His disciples, because no unsaved eyes ever saw Him after His resurrection, unless it be the eye of the unsaved Paul of Tarsus, and He opened that eye. This was before the Pentecost. Here He delivered His great commission, found in Matthew 28:18-20, not to one hundred twenty only but to all the disciples who followed Him there, whether members of His first church or not.

His commission is a church obligation, but it is also a personal, individual obligation, and is also a kingdom matter, a world-wide debtorship. This appearance was a multi-magna meeting-five hundred people looking on Him, hearing His eternally meaningful words in which he was enfolding

all His towering authority, all His people, all the world, all His commandments, for all eyes and all climes.

It also commandeered all His presence and power for all ages to come. This meeting is discussed in another chapter. Here is a climax of testimony to the reality of Christ's resurrection. One little, frightened woman might be mistaken; one impetuous disciple like Peter, who had denied Him, might be overawed by a mystic vision; two people with blinded eyes might walk six miles with a spirit and be mistaken, but when you add to these other witnesses five hundred people in the daylight, on top of a mountain, you cannot easily imagine all of them to be liars or deceived visionaries.

Not to believe this accumulated testimony is to reveal in one's self a dangerous incredulity in historical testimony. Paul says, "I saw him" and I tell the world five hundred other people saw Him. To make Paul a deceiver is to reveal yourself blind and destroy all historical values.

James comes on the witness stand (1 Corinthians 15:7). Paul says Christ appeared to James. When and where and to what effect nobody knows. Paul is a true historian. James must have told Paul about this visit, but no further record appears. But James pastored a church whose foundation was built on Christ's resurrection.

The final pre-ascension appearance occurred as far away as Bethany.

In his Gospel (Luke 24:50) Luke says He led them out as far as Bethany, and in Acts 1:12 he says the disciples returned from the Mount of Olives, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey.

Mark says: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

Here in this last appearance before His ascension He gave the last commission, reinforcing all others, and promised the Holy Spirit's power for witnessing. The two men in white told them: "This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Luke tells us that Christ told them to tarry in Jerusalem until enduement came. He then led them out as far as Bethany and lifted up His hands and blessed them, and He was carried up into heaven. They watched Him, worshiped Him, and returned to an upper room in Jerusalem with great joy, and continued in the temple praising God.

This completes the testimony of this company of pre-ascension eyewitnesses to the fact that "Christ has risen indeed." Who can be fair and unbiased or unprejudiced and gainsay or deny this accumulation of eye-witness evidence? These are not all the infallible proofs. There follows in the next chapter a further accumulation of convincing, direct and circumstantial testimony.

~ end of chapter 3 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

04-CHAPTER FOUR: THE EMPTY TOMB AND CHRIST'S REAPPEARANCES

CHAPTER FOUR: THE EMPTY TOMB AND CHRIST'S REAPPEARANCES INFALLIBLE PROOFS

PAUL says: "He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:8).

In the former discussion we have marshaled before the world court a long list of eyewitnesses, with unimpeachable records and testimony to the fact of Christ's resurrection. These were pre-ascension witnesses. We now call in other eyewitnesses as post- ascension, infallible proofs.

Then we will assemble some convincing by-products of the resurrection which are based on or demand Christ's resurrection as essential to their existence. The last of the unimpeachable, infallible proofs is the empty tomb. It ought to silence infidelity's brag and boast forever.

CHRIST'S REAPPEARANCES

We must not overlook nor undervalue heaven's testifying witnesses who appeared to add the weight of their heavenly testimony to the other witnesses. Christ was an angel-accompanied messenger to earth. They announced His coming to the shepherds-heaven's good will tour of "peace among men."

Angels fed Him in the wilderness of temptation, comforted Him in the garden of suffering. Legions were at His command in His betrayal. They were with Him all through His ministry. Why should we not value their testimony to His resurrection?

Two men stood by them in shining garments. Luke says: "They said unto them . . . He is not here, but is risen" (John 24: 5-6). Mary saw two angels in white, John tells us. This was on resurrection morning.

Two men in white appeared forty days later, Luke tells us in Acts 1:10-11. Here are heavenly witnesses. If we believe the angels announced His birth, why not believe angels announced His resurrection and ascension and promised His return?

A dying deacon, Stephen, saw the same Saviour, who had risen and ascended and was at the right hand of the Majesty on High (Acts 7:55-56). Here is a Holy Ghost witness years after the resurrection.

He appeared to Saul of Tarsus twice. While on the Damascus road, enraged and armed with destruction, Christ appeared to Saul and he recognized Him-"Who art thou, Lord?" (1 Corinthians 15:8; 1 Corinthians 9:1; Acts 9:5). There is also in connection with this appearance to Saul the testimony of Ananias and Judas, as recorded in Acts 9:11-20. The second appearance He made to Paul was when he was praying in the temple, as recorded in Acts 22:17-21. Does it look reasonable to believe that Paul could have been made out of Saul on a vision of lies? Lies do not

turn roaring lions into mighty evangels of power.

Christ appeared to aged John, as told us in Revelation 1:10-20; Revelation 22:6-21. John had a good record with Christ. He was one of the first two to follow Christ from the leadership of John the Baptist, and he went clear on through with Christ. He knew his life.

- He saw His miracles.
- He journeyed with Him.
- He heard His sermons, witnessed His trials, went the farthest with Him into the Garden, and stayed closest to the cross.
- He was there in the early morning of the resurrection.
- He was among the up lookers at Christ's ascension.
- He was at the Pentecostal prayer meeting and baptism.
- He knew Paul and knew of his missionary triumphs.
- He doubtless read from the original manuscripts of the New Testament.
- He was acquainted with all the New Testament churches.
- He knew of the death of all of the apostles; he outlived them all.
- He was familiar with Christ's commands, His promises, His great doctrines.
- He wrote the chief love letter of all time, and when he was very old he saw the Saviour.
- He was alone, in exile. He was not frightened. He was not dreaming.

Look at what he says:

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; . . . And I turned to see the voice that spake with me . . . And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:10-18).

What can be more convincing? Sixty or more years after John's long, experimental tests with the Saviour He appears to him again. He saw Him, he fell at His feet, and heard the Saviour say, "I am alive for evermore." Surely this is believable testimony. **THE TESTIMONY OF RESURRECTION'S BY-PRODUCTS**

Pentecost. Pentecost was just fifty days away from the resurrection. It was brought on by the same people that said Jesus was alive. How could they falsify and get by with it?

Christ's churches and their missionary, evangelizing and educationalizing triumphs of nineteen hundred years. Can such a superstructure be built on a league of lies?

The apostolic leadership. Peter, John, Paul, their comrades and successors, Luther, Spurgeon, Moody, Broadus, Mullins, Carroll, Speer, Mott, Gambrell and Truett, all are products of the resurrection of Christ.

The Bible is a by-product or a direct product of the resurrection. Every line of the New Testament was written after resurrection and in view of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Can such a mountain of dynamic truth be built on a mistaken apparition? No. Supernatural incarnation, holy life, atoning death and bodily resurrection are the girders of God's Book. Falsifiers do not write records like these.

The preachers of the post-resurrection period. Look at Acts 5:15; Acts 4:2-10; Acts 5:30-31; Acts 10:40-41; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 Peter 1:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Acts 21:22; Acts 4:33; 1 Corinthians 15:1-58; Galatians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14; Galatians 1:1; Romans 1:4; Romans 4:24-25; Romans 8:11-34; Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14; Ephesians 1:18-21; Colossians 2:12; Php 3:10, and on and on. If all these preachers of the cross and the resurrection are based on a deranged story of insane deceivers, where can there be any truth or any hope for a lost world?

Look at the inner testimonies of millions of saved souls. A group of us visited the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. Dr. G. W. Truett of Dallas read a Scripture as fifty of us stood around the empty tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The great preacher led a prayer and in the midst of an inexpressible exaltation of soul he said, "Thank God, Joseph's tomb is empty!" We not only saw the empty tomb with our eyes, but we felt the risen Lord in our hearts, and this is a sample of ten million souls and more during these nineteen hundred years of resurrection's triumphs.

The empty tomb. Witness the emptiness of Joseph's tomb.

- The angels said so (Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:2-7). The faithful women said it was empty (Matthew 28:6-10; John 20:11-18).
- Peter and John testified that He was not there (John 20:1-8).
- The frightened soldiers testify that "they have taken him away" (Matthew 28:11-15).

A tragic dilemma-either Christ arose from the dead or the soldiers or His disciples removed His body. The soldiers were not accused of it. The soldiers accused the disciples and carried this deception to the elders, who paid for the lie and protected the soldiers from the government.

Nobody believed the soldiers or the bribing elders. The disciples did not do it. Christ arose! All testimony from any angle, direct or circumstantial, exonerates the disciples from taking the body of the Saviour away.

They are the consummate liars of history if they stole His body. Nobody believes they did and hid His body to cover up a lie. The empty tomb stares the world in the face and for nineteen hundred years has built a monument to Christ's resurrection. It challenges the world to find Christ's body, then or now. Infidelity, atheism or godless communism, we challenge you to find Christ's body! The futile efforts of these past centuries mock infidelity to shame and should silence you forever. What say you of Christ's empty tomb?

The final witness-Christ Himself, Prophecy said that He would rise (Psalms 16:8-11; Acts 2:25; Acts 13:35-37).

- Christ promised to rise. He promised it in Matthew 26:60-68; Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:22; Matthew 17:22-23; Matthew 27:63; and Luke 24:7.

- Christ's two ordinances are the established monuments to His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:29; Romans 6:4-13; Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-28; Mark 14:22-25).

And on top of this accumulating testimony is Christ's own personal word that He is alive, adding the final, climactic proof that He is alive (John 20:14-17; Luke 24:25-26; Matthew 28:10; Revelation 2:5).

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18); and in Revelation 21:20 He says, "Surely I come quickly."

~ end of chapter 4 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

05-CHAPTER FIVE: THE BODY OF HIS GLORY

CHAPTER FIVE: THE BODY OF HIS GLORY

Php 3:10; Php 3:21 says: "Our citizenship is in heaven whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." In 1 John 3:1-2 the disciple "whom Jesus loved" says: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

These are very heartening words from two of God's noblest, inspired sons. When we come to talk about the body of our Saviour, either while He was in the flesh or in His resurrection garments, we must tread softly and reverently, because we are on holy ground and in the presence of mystery. How could there be a human body without a human father, and how could divine fatherhood give to the human body a body without sin? And yet all this happened in Christ.

Even when death performed its major operation on His precious body, what was left, if anything, of His other body, and what is the form and substance of the new body with which He came triumphantly out of the tomb? We cannot describe the substance of His body. We do not know its form and quality. We can only talk about what the Scripture says about it. So, softly, tenderly and reverently we write about the body of His glory. THE BIBLE ACCOUNT

Let us enumerate some of the things said about Him and His body in these immortal forty days between resurrection and ascension.

- Human eyes saw Him, human ears heard His voice, human hands touched Him, even touched crucifixion's wounds.
- He walked and talked and ate with His disciples in enjoyable comradeship and fellowship.
- He passed through closed doors, as is indicated when He met the disciples in a Jerusalem conference. How could the substance of His body find no resistance in the shutters of doors?
- He ate with His disciples and they recognized Him and loved Him and worshiped Him.
- His hands, His feet, His side bore the marks of cruel crucifixion.
- The nail holes were in His hands and in His feet and the spear point marked His blessed side.

Will we see in heaven the nail-riven hands? Will we be constantly in sight of the wounds that our sins perpetrated in His blessed earthly body? It is said at least that at the Judgment probably some will see Him whom they pierced, and I judge they will recognize Him by the afflictions that their sins put on Him.

- He suddenly appeared and disappeared in “another form.”

The Emmaus travelers did not recognize Him part of the way and yet a little later they did recognize Him. The sleepy, misty eyes of the seven fishermen on the Lake Tiberias in the early morn of the morning did not recognize Him, and yet a little later they did recognize Him. Was the fault in their eyes or did He appear in another form?

- He breathed on His disciples. There was evidence of lungs and breath.

He said to them with the power of His redeeming breath, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Are the lungs of our risen Saviour filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, and can He not still breathe on us and endue us with power?

Unsaved eyes will never behold Him. Did He evade the sight of the lost or did He blind their eyes not to behold Him? He says in Luke 24:16, “But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.” This applied to His disciples, but what does He do to evade the sight of the unsaved?

- He disappeared into heaven without human or seemingly divine conveyance.

The law of gravitation seems not to have had any basis of hold upon His body, and yet they saw Him as He ascended.

- Their eyes could behold Him but the ordinary laws of life could not withhold him.

Saul and John years after His ascension saw Him, talked with Him, recognized Him, and worshiped Him. There was something in the human eyes that was appealed to in visual construction in His glorified body.

- There is no evidence that He was an hungered or tired or ever slept or ever drank. It does say that He and the disciples ate together.

- He left nothing in the tomb but the grave clothes. What change death made in His body is yet unanswered. That is left for the illuminating explanation of heaven’s light.

- His body did not suffer corruption (Psalms 16:10).

It is probable that the same thing which happened to Christ’s body in death will happen to our bodies, or the bodies of those who are living at the time of His return. They will be changed by some heavenly alchemy to conform to the image and body of our Saviour.

- He had a real, spiritual body that could be seen and felt and yet was not subject to the natural laws.

It seems that death caused no change in His appearance except when he purposed to change it, nor to His voice. Mary recognized His voice when He said lovingly, “Mary.” It made no change in His plans (He went right on with His missionary conquest), nor His love (He loved as deeply as ever) nor His power (He was in His resurrection body when He said; “All power in heaven and earth is given unto me”).

Was He like Enoch or Elijah, who were translated? Was there any relationship between Christ’s body and that of Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead, or that of the widow’s son. There is no

way to tell.

Science in none of its branches seems to have been able to help us. No one but Christ has returned from that land of the spirit with a body like His, and therefore no bodies of the dead and raised have been subject to laboratory tests.

The tubes of science cannot measure eternal life nor weigh its substances in any of the balances of scientific investigation. There is no room for dark speculation here, only complacent, patient waiting. Pious imagination and expert speculation are left to run riot if they desire, but we will wait with confident certainty that some day we shall be like Him.

COMFORTING FACTS

There are certain comforting facts left us as we complacently wait for further light upon the body of His glory. Some of these comforts are as follows:

- We shall know Him and He shall know us.
- We shall be like Him. Just in what respects we will have to wait to see.
- We shall be raised from the dead and our spirits and incorruptible bodies shall be reunited when - He comes with His angels, filling the heavens with their triumphant hallelujahs.
- We shall be with Him forever and forever where He is in the mansions which He has gone to prepare for us.
- We shall live forever in heavenly mansions prepared by Him.
- We shall be sinless, sorrowless, deathless.
- We shall be forever under His Lordship and possess His eternal life.

Our occupation will be eternal, joyous service in His love, doing His bidding, following the lines of His holy will.

So I judge that is enough to know. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we shall see him and be like him."

~ end of chapter 5 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

06-CHAPTER SIX: OUR ETERNAL BODIES

CHAPTER SIX: OUR ETERNAL BODIES

PAUL tells us in that famous chapter of 1 Corinthians 15:1-58, in the thirty-fifth verse, "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" and he answers in verse thirty-eight, "But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." In the fortieth and forty-second verses he says: "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." Then he goes on with a further description of our bodies, which will be discussed later.

The beloved John in his First Epistle tells us, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). No light from two translations-that of Enoch and Elijah, no help from the transfiguration visit of Moses and Elias, no light from other resurrections, such as the widow's son, the Shunammite boy, Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, nor from the man Paul healed, nor from the description of Dives or Lazarus in the other world in Luke 16:1-31, nor from the dead who were raised about the time of Christ's resurrection, has been thrown upon this vital question concerning our eternal bodies.

None of the surveys of history, philosophy, psychology, medicine, or from any of the sciences, have cast any illuminating gleam on the subject we now face: "With what body do they come?"

Paul is one of our best accredited witnesses and writers. He had some spiritual credentials. He saw the risen Saviour. His whole nature, purpose, plan and destiny were changed by what he saw. He was closest to the risen Christ and is Christ's best interpreter. His knowledge, as shown in 1 Corinthians 15:1-58, makes him God's greatest human authority on resurrection bodies. We shall see what he says there. A STUDY IN RESURRECTION BODIES

1 Corinthians 15:1-58 is the basis of the study. There is the threefold heart of the gospel concerning Christ.

Paul says, "Christ died for our sins," "And that he was buried," and "he rose again the third day."

Look at Paul's comparison of the two bodies, the body of the flesh and the eternal body. He said:

- One is terrestrial, one is celestial;
- One is corruptible and the other incorruptible;
- One is sown in dishonor and the other is raised in glory;
- The one is a body of weakness, the other a body of power;
- The one is a natural, the other a spiritual body;
- The one is earthy and the other heavenly; the one mortal and the other immortal.

HINGES ON CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

What are the things of value that hinge on the resurrection of Christ's body? This is an important assessment. It is an eternal invoice of vital values.

- The resurrection of our bodies. If Christ did not rise, we will not rise.
- The value of our preaching. If Christ did not rise we are false witnesses.
- The assurance of the forgiveness of our sins: If Christ is still in Joseph's tomb, we are still in the pit of corruption, unforgiven and unpardoned.
- The very existence and destiny of all who are dead. If Christ arose not, all the dead are perished forever.
- The very joy of Christian living. If He did not rise, we are of all men most miserable, utterly lost.
- The final triumph of Christ's kingdom. If Christ arose from the dead, He must reign and conquer. If He did not arise from the dead, then Satan will reign and conquer. The resurrection of Christ's body from the grave is God's perpetual rainbow. And, if Joseph's tomb is not empty there are no rainbows in the heavenly horizons of night and darkness and death.

TWOFOLD COMFORTS The facts about Christ's resurrection comfort us in two particulars. One is a steady, immovable, optimistic labor in Christ's service. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." And the other comfort is final triumph for all who trust the Saviour "if they faint not." Then we can confidently trust Him, enthusiastically work for Him, labor in hard places and under difficult horizons, watching, waiting, and loving His appearing, knowing that He is at the right hand of God and that surely He is coming back to take us home.

~ end of chapter 6 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

07-CHAPTER SEVEN: WHAT CHRIST SAID AND DID DURING THE FORTY DAYS

CHAPTER SEVEN: WHAT CHRIST SAID AND DID DURING THE FORTY DAYS

IT IS an interesting study to find what our Saviour did in His resurrection body and what He said to the various groups who were witnesses to His forty days appearances. We must remember what John said in two places in his Gospel. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (20:30, 31). And then in 21:25 he says: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

I would judge that these statements would cover the deeds and words of His flesh-life as well as the deeds and words of the forty day period after His resurrection. Studying the record, you will find that He appeared to the disciples, as far as the records go, only about six of the forty days, and only small portions of those days. Now, whether He met the disciples at other places and times during the forty days we do not know, because our information is limited entirely to the record in the New Testament. It is supposed that He had other things to say, other demonstrations of His resurrection power and other revelations of His resurrection presence, but we could only conjecture about that. We are interested in and will limit ourselves to the records.

SOME OF HIS DEEDS

- He emptied death's tomb, arose from the dead.
- He contacted, talked to, comforted, encouraged His discouraged disciples.
- He opened the Scriptures to them and warmed their hearts.
- He performed some miracles.
- He filled their fishermen's nets after a night of fruitless labors with a whole school of fishes, one hundred and fifty-three.

This evidently was on the order of His power having control of the seas and the fishes thereof.

- He prepared a refreshing meal of bread and fish and built a warm fire for His shivering disciples, after facing the wind and waves through a long night of disappointment and failure.
- He entered a room where the disciples were without opening a door or doing violence to the property. How marvelous must be His body now if it is not subject to the ordinary laws of nature!
- He changed His form from the unrecognizable to the recognizable, and vice versa.

- He opened their blinded eyes.
- His resurrection is probably the greatest of all miracles.

His ascension without the means of earthly transport into the heavens above is no mean miracle.

- He breathed on them the breath of His holy power.

And many other signs of personality and power did He show among His disciples in these tragic immortal days.

WHAT HE SAID

We have only a few of the things recorded that He spoke to His disciples during these days. One would desire to know the other things of which John spoke in his closing chapter. Would it not be glorious to have the other tender, comforting revelations He made to His disciples? This is not a complaint but a soul-longing hunger. Let us itemize some of the things He said to His disciples.

He gave them several commandments on His missionary world-will, which will be discussed in other chapters.

Most of His commissions and missionary orders were given during the last period of His public ministry among men.

He packed into these significant, far-reaching and eternity-meaning messages that which has influenced the world in the centuries since and will until He comes again. I think His orders, even though given to individuals or small or larger groups are to be binding on the conscience of each individual or groups of individuals or of His churches every-where.

He invited Mary not to touch Him and the other Mary's to touch Him. He invited doubting Thomas to put his hands in His wounded hands and side. This was the pragmatic, practical touch of faith, convincing the doubter that his doubts were wrong. Christ is always willing to make a test of His genuineness and of our acceptance of Him.

He taught them what the Old Testament Scriptures said about Him, opening their hearts and minds to look back on the wonderful revelations of the Old Testament. I am wondering if this is not a prophecy and promise of His revelatory visit to us in our days of ignorance and darkness.

He said, "Peace be unto you," "Be not afraid." The hearts of the disciples were distressed and full of all sorts of complexities and confusion. They were afraid of the overpowering ecclesiastical, political and military organizations of that day, which were unanimously against Him.

He came into their midst and told them that they need not be afraid and that their best usefulness could be when they were fully filled with peace, the peace that His power would give to them as they faced their difficult tasks.

He told them to cast their empty nets on the right side of the ship. They evidently were disobeying Him in their going back to their old jobs, away from His spiritual kingdom, but He desired to encourage them, even in their disobedience, and told them to fish on Christ's side of the ship. Disobedience always causes failure. If we are unwilling to do God's will, He will not let us have our way. Many Christians today are fishing on the wrong side of the ship. When they cast their nets

according to Christ's commands and follow Him implicitly and obediently, then the schools of fishes will find their nets.

He chided them for their lack of understanding of the Scriptures and their lagging faith in Him as the risen Lord. The most consummate wastes of all this world are the wastes of misunderstanding and lagging faith. Our losses count into the billions because we do not trust Him and do not follow Him.

He probed their souls and pressed their consciences on the great doctrine of love's debtorship. He craves the best of our love. We must love Him, if we satisfy Him, "more than these," whether it be our business, our pleasure, our comradeships, or our dearest ties; and He says if we love Him we will show it in feeding His lambs, His little sheep, and His sheep.

He rebuked them twice for trying to settle dates and seasons about His return and His disposition of the destinies of His people. These rebukes are found in John 21:21-24 and Acts 1:6-7. It is not our business to settle times and seasons which are in the Father's hands and will.

The doctrine of the Lord's second coming should not anywhere be used as a divisive matter, nor should it be used to delay us nor hinder us nor stop us in the building of the lines of His far-flung missionary program. He not only told us to wait and watch and pray about His return, but He told us also to work.

He said in that immortal fourteenth chapter of John, in the twelfth verse (John 14:12), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." And in the twenty-first verse, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." And in the twenty-third verse (John 14:23), "If a man love me, he will keep my words."

So work is a part of His program for us, touching His return, and there is a lot of work to do. Souls all around us are lost; sick everywhere need comfort and strength; the ignorant in every place need the light of God's truth. The missionary, educational and benevolent organizations and institutions should be reinforced and we should give ourselves in a wholehearted cooperation to bringing in His kingdom and to the accomplishment of His world-will.

We cannot be faithful to His last orders and be idle and non-cooperative.

Waiting and watching and praying for His return are not substitutes nor alibis nor good excuses for a failure to do His will and to work out His program.

He gave them His wonderful promise of witnessing power, especially recorded in Acts 1:8. He says: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come unto you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem (City Missions), and in all Judea (District Missions), and in Samaria (State and Home Missions), and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Foreign Missions)."

And immediately after giving this order He left them and the men in white promised that He would come back.

These are some of the things He did and said. We wish we had a record of the other things He said and did in these wonderful forty days, but this is enough for us to be glad over and to find full occupation until He comes again.

~ end of chapter 7 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

08-CHAPTER EIGHT: CHRIST'S MAJOR MESSAGES DURING THE FORTY DAYS

CHAPTER EIGHT: CHRIST'S MAJOR MESSAGES DURING THE FORTY DAYS OF COURSE the first outstanding message the Saviour gave after His resurrection was to prove to His disciples that He was risen from the dead. So His first convincing purpose was to prove the tomb empty and His resurrection real. This was the greatest barrier and difficulty that the disciples faced. He had told them about His resurrection and the prophets of old had foretold His resurrection, but the disciples were slow to believe. He had to open their eyes. He had to make visible and impressive demonstrations of the reality of His survival of the grave. They had expected another kind of kingdom, a temporal, earthly kingdom, not a spiritual, eternal kingdom. In many ways He proved His existence and the reality of His resurrection body.

There was another important message which it seems to have been His principal purpose to impress upon their hearts, and that was His victorious, all-pervasive power. He bore down on their consciences this revelation also.

- In Matthew 28:19-20 He told them that all power in heaven and earth was in His hands,
- In Acts 1:8 that He would give them the power of the Holy Spirit, which was all-conquering power,
- He promised them in Matthew 28:20 that this triumphant power lodged in Him would be a perpetual presence with them.

He did not say "I will or shall be with you," but He put it in the eternal present tense—"I am with you."

These two important messages were preliminary and preparatory to the other messages which He gave them. HIS MISSIONARY WORLD-WILL In various expressions and on a number of occasions and in different places He set out His missionary program to His disciples. Let us review this expression of His permanent and primary program.

He said to Mary and to the other women, "Go tell my disciples." That is the message of the resurrection and is the primary message in His missionary program.

To the ten He said, "As my Father hath sent me, so also send I you" (John 20:21). Here He set Himself up as under the orders of God, as the Father's missionary Messiah, and He sets out that we are to take Him as a model missionary, with the same love, as far as possible, and the same power, the same territory, with the same message and the same methods. In the same interview He gave them peace and took the fear of men out of their hearts and breathed on them the one successful power of missionary enterprise, the Holy Spirit.

To the seven disciples on the Sea of Tiberias He told to cast the net on the right side of the ship. He told them in the early part of their ordination and call, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." So, in this commission on this occasion He told them to cast the net, and that is His command to all His disciples through the widening centuries.

In this interview He put on them the question of super-devotion to Him, as a preliminary condition to the right sort of spiritual feeding, the right kind of spiritual fertilization of souls, and He outlined the feeding process that covers all ages-His lambs, His little sheep, and the adults of His kingdom.

To the five hundred on a mountain in Galilee, as recorded in Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:15 and as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:6, He set out His world-orders. In this group Matthew says the eleven apostles were there and Paul says there were five hundred. He puts His divine authority and power back of this great commission, and it was thus divinely authorized and ordered.

In this commission He tells us to go teach all nations.

Mark says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Therefore it is a universal order as well as an individualistic order. It is a duty binding on us to go, and that is spiritual activity; to preach and to teach, and that is a heavenly message delivered in the twofold form of public address and in the private form of personal teaching; and it says to baptize, and there is the ordinance of baptism; and hence it is organized because the church only has the authority to administer baptism.

And then after baptism and church membership His command is to teach all the commandments and doctrines and teachings of His Book. And then He gives a great, perpetual promise of His presence, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

To the eleven apostles, and probably others, He delivered on the occasion of His final appearance His commission, as recorded in Mark 16:19-20, probably, and Luke 24:44-53, and Acts 1:1-14. It tells us here in Mark's record that after He spoke His commission He was taken up into heaven and the disciples departed and preached everywhere. Luke tells us in his record that Christ thus tied His missionary commission on to the prophecies and laws of Moses and the Psalms of David.

He opened their understanding that they might understand all these things, and He said that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.

He tells of His Father's promise of enduring power and His orders for them to tarry in Jerusalem, and then it says that the Saviour led them out as far as Bethany and lifted up His hands and blessed them, and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. The commission, as delivered in Acts 1:1-14, tells us, first, to wait for power, and, second, not to worry about the times and seasons which the Father holds within His own hands, but to receive this power and go forth witnessing into all parts of the world.

And then it tells us that two men in white told them they would see the same Jesus coming from heaven. They saw Him ascend; we will see Him return.

So, in these many places on different occasions and to different groups, He delivered His major missionary message. **AN ANALYSIS OF THESE OBLIGATIONS**

What He meant could be summed up, describing these obligations, as follows: Loyalty to His authority and obedience to His power.

At any cost we are to go into all the world and to all individuals of every nation, to every creature, and give this gospel.

We are to go, either personally or by representatives, to teach the gospel and to teach the commandments of His truth. He has laid these commandments on us and they are a binding obligation. We are to baptize the believers and to teach the saved in His name.

He furnishes the Father's promised power in the personality of the Holy Spirit, and He Himself will give His divine presence every step of the way to the uttermost ends of the earth.

Here is an authorized world task, with sufficient guaranteed power, a simple message, binding upon the saved consciences of His people, an inescapable obligation, and it involves evangelism, education, enlistment and cooperation.

CHRIST'S SILENCES

What Jesus did not say in these forty days is interesting.

He seems to have made no reference to His mother. He had already committed her to John, the beloved disciple, and put on him the obligation to see after her. He made no reference, so far as the record goes, to John, the beloved disciple, no reference to baptism except to command that it be practiced. He was silent on the financial problem except as it is involved in carrying out the commission. He made no reference to His churches, and on many other important matters He seems to have been silent.

He evidently had finished His message on these vital matters before His resurrection, or sufficient had been said to satisfy the divinely inspiring mind and the will of God in this matter.

His silence on any of these great questions does not at all mean His neglect of them, nor does it mean to take any of the emphasis off them that He had put on them during the days of His flesh! But He did major on His loving orders to His churches and people to carry His gospel around the world.

LOVE'S BINDING DEBTORSHIP

I would say that the Master put major emphasis on another matter, as recorded in the twenty-first chapter of John.

After the night of fruitless angling the disciples, with their empty nets, saw the Saviour coming to them in the mists of the early morning. They at first did not recognize Him, but He made Himself known. He filled their nets. He called them to shore and fed them with a morning meal, and warmed them by a fire which He had made; and then He asked a question. He propounded it three times.

He shot it straight at the heart of Simon, but I think He meant it to bear upon the consciences of the other six disciples, and upon yours and mine as well. He said, "Lovest thou me more than these?"

What was included in the bounds of this question of contrast and comparison?

There were the nets, the fishes, representing Simon's business and his pleasure; and there were the disciples, who represented his comrades and his fellowships. Just what the Saviour meant I do not know, but am inclined to believe that He meant all that tugs at the human heart, whether business, pleasure, friends, family, ambition, money, or whatever knocks at the door of the soul for affection.

The Saviour was about to leave the earth. He had a big task. He left it to His disciples and to those who would believe on His name through their preaching. He had a right to ask these disciples how much they loved Him.

The basis of all human achievement in many of its deeper meanings is love. And Christ based the prosperity of the future on the devotion that men had to Him.

When He got Simon's answer He assigned the task, "Feed my lambs, my little sheep, my sheep."

This is an important question. "If you love me, serve me." And He magnified here our responsibilities. God's people must pass God's spiritual food on to all classes and ages of men.

There is much that rests on our hearts which is described by the debtorship of love.

God's other name is Love, and He desires of us love's service. We cannot pay any debt we owe to Christ, and one of the largest of all debts is love's debtorship. When we look at Christ's emphasis on the mission obligations in the light of love's debtorship it becomes a mammoth affair and ought not to be shirked nor dodged nor disregarded. God allows no shifts in love's obligation.

Looking back over the grave and cross and Garden and the price He paid, love's redemption price, He certainly had a right to ask you and me and all of His disciples this question, "Lovest thou me more than these?" "If so, feed, feed my lambs, my sheep." And one of His ascension expectations of all of us is that we seek to pay love's eternal debtorship.

~ end of chapter 8 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

09-CHAPTER NINE: THE HERITAGE HE LEFT US

CHAPTER NINE: THE HERITAGE HE LEFT US HIS PRESCRIPTION FOR TROUBLED HEARTS (John 14:1-31) THIS CHAPTER has to do with a heritage Christ left His disciples as expressed in the fourteenth chapter of John, before His death and resurrection.

It was just before He had instituted the Lord's Supper in the Upper Room. Judas had gone out to betray Him, and in the shadows of the cross, somewhere between the Upper Room and the gate of the Garden of Gethsemane, with the weight of a lost world on Him, He delivered the matchless message recorded in John 13:1-38; John 14:1-31; John 15:1-27; John 16:1-33, and concluded the sermon with His intercessory prayer in John 17:1-26.

His message known as the Sermon on the Mount was delivered in the early part of His rising ministry, when His praise was on every lip, when the multitudes were applauding Him. He delivered that world-influencing sermon on a mountain in northern Galilee. It is doubted whether there is any other sermon that has influenced the world quite so much. But this message in John 13:1-38; John 14:1-31; John 15:1-27; John 16:1-33 was to eleven men, defeated, discouraged, was delivered in the night, delivered at the gate of Gethsemane.

The shadow of the cross fell across His path; the dampness of the tomb must have chilled the blood in His veins. He was soon to be crucified as a culprit. He was soon to drink the awful, bitter hemlock of the world's distilled sorrow, and drink it to its bitter dregs. And yet, just before He entered the Garden on His way to Calvary and to Joseph's tomb He said: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have trouble: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Now, with this tragic background and dark setting He spoke the vital, never-dying truth set out in John 14:1-31. I wish that we would study this heritage left us just outside the Garden. Certain great, outstanding truths are set out here and left to us, marked by His own blood. This was not part of the messages of the forty days, but was a fitting setting for these and other days. THE HERITAGE OF LOVE An analysis of this chapter shows us the following things the Saviour left us just before He entered the Garden and climbed Golgotha and plunged into the tomb.

God. "If ye believe in God, believe also in me."

The Bible begins with "In the beginning God." John gave at the masthead of His great love letter, his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Now, if we have God, our troubles are minimized, our difficulties are made soluble. Life is a guaranteed success, sorrows will end in joy, life will cross all the Jordan's of death and have a resurrection, night is explained, hope is realized, and heaven shows its coming gleams of light when we hypothecate God.

Home, an eternal home. "In my Father's house are many mansions."

He said, "I go to prepare a place for you . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Home is one of the earth's biggest words, and the nearer it approaches the heavenly home the more glorious it is. The homes here dissolve and break up. The house itself decays. The loved ones of the home scatter. But not so with the home that Jesus leaves us and is preparing for us; no decay, no destruction, no rust, no thief, no tooth of time can ever take away from us the home that He is preparing for us. He says it is a mansion, and He says He will come back and take us to that home. He will be with us and we will be with Him forever. In the light of this heritage of our Saviour there ought to be joy in all Christian hearts, because of the certainty of the eternal home.

He left us the glorious heritage of His identity with the Father. "I am in the Father and the Father in me." This guarantees all the great truths He promised us, and holds with an eternal grip all the relationships that are guaranteed in His revealed will. If Christ the Son and God the Father are one, and they are interrelated and interwoven into each other, this satisfies hope and guarantees expectancy.

He left us a task, work, a world-wide work. He defines it when He says, "I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

What did Jesus do? What were the works that characterized His marvelous ministry?

- Soul winning was one.
- Spiritual education, the training of the saved, was another.
- The healing of the sick was a third.
- The comforting of the distressed was another.

Along all the lines of evangelism, education, benevolence and comfort He charged us to go forward with His work. He says at another place, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." This task puts heavy obligations on us under an ever-enduring trusteeship, stewardship and guardianship to Him.

He left us an open access to Him and to the Father in prayer. What a great heritage is prayer! And this is one of the items of His heritage to us. He said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name I will do it."

Prayer is sometimes regarded as God's best gift after Christ is given to us. He gives spiritual radio and telephone and telegraph connection with the throne of God. We are to wire God over the wireless, signing Christ's name and pleading our case, and He guarantees an answer. His answer might be "no," or half of what we ask, or less, or sometimes more than we ask, but prayer is one of His best gifts to us.

Love's obedience. He says, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments," and "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

The power of love cannot be calculated by any mathematical process, not even the calculus of the angels. Suppose the world had no mother-love, no filial devotion, no love of friends, no love for God, and suppose love had no obligations, no debtorships, what sort of a world would we be in? A loveless world is a godless world. How grateful we ought to be for this item in Christ's last will and testament, this item of love!

He left us "another Comforter." In John 14:15-18 the Saviour says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Can there be a richer heritage left to a family of mourning children than this promise Christ made at the gate of the Garden?

Let us notice the value of this gift. This seems to be the gift based on love, for He says, "If you love me," and "I will pray the Father." It is divine love's gift to human response in love.

Then He says "another" The intimation is that He, Christ, is a comforter, and the Holy Spirit is another comforter, evidently like Himself. Then He says, "He will abide with you forever." It is an enduring comfort. Sorrow is often for a moment but the Comforter is forever. He says also that He is the "Spirit of Truth" whom the world cannot receive- that is, the people of God have a monopoly on this "Spirit of Truth." He is ours.

The eyes of the world are blinded to Him. They cannot see Him and cannot have Him.

And then He says He dwelleth with us-that is, He makes His home with us and will be in us. He takes up His enduring home in our hearts. Then He says, "I will not leave you comfortless," or, "I will not leave you orphans." "I will be parents to you and take the place of all the losses that may come in your family life."

And His closing promise is, "I will come to you." Thus He identifies Himself with the Holy Spirit. Now, what a blessed heritage that is to us! He is ours, ours forever. He gives a holy parentage, father and mother to us. He comforts us. He lives within us and will dwell with us forever, and His presence in us is identical with the Savior's presence. What could be better for us than that?

Security in life and the security of life. He says in the nineteenth verse, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also."

He not only is making a home for us, but He is making a way home. This promise gives the guarantee not only for this item in His will for us, but this item guarantees all the other items. He identifies His life with our life and makes us coexistent with Him. The impartation of Christ's very nature in our regeneration is a guarantee against all the losses of this life and the life to come. He came not only to give life, but to give life more abundantly.

He says, "From within you shall flow rivers of living water." The life He gives us is an endless life. And it is an overflowing life, not only enough for us but for the parched deserts around us. We need not fear anything that is behind us, within us or before us. No grave of the past, no peril of the present, no womb of the future has any dangers for Christ's disciples. Our life is His life and His life is ours.

Love. Love is one of Christ's major gifts. John 14:21-24 are God's classic on love. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him . . . If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Here is the Father's heritage of love. John's main subject in all of his writings is love. He saw the love side of Christ. Christ interpreted the love side of the Father and he interpreted the words and deeds of the Saviour in the light of love's eyes, and added to the list of items of our joy the united, propelling, conquering power of a new affection.

Christ not only left us a Comforter, but He left us a teacher and a guide in the same personality. He says in John 14:26 : "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Here He gives us a guide. He is the true sky pilot. He is familiar with all the stratospheres of the heavens and all the needs of the earth.

- He knows the mind of the Father.
- He knows the needs of men.
- He guides men in the light that the Father gives, in order that men thus enlightened may find the Father and the Father's will.
- He does not limit the Holy Spirit's teaching ability. He says "all things."
- He does not limit His power to quicken memory.

He will bring to our memories the things that Christ has taught us. Thus, with this divine teacher with us, all of life's paths will be clearer and more joyous.

Peace. In the twenty-seventh verse He says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

One of His greatest "leavings" is peace, and the best part of peace is Christ's peace. I wonder what He means by "my peace I give unto you." He evidently means the output of the costs to which He has been put in bringing peace from a peaceful heaven. His peace was not easily given.

It came by a very expensive route-incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection. All these costly items entered into the sum that He had to pay for peace. It means peace with God, peace with our own consciences, peace with a world in war and storm, peace with our fears, peace with our troubles.

The peace of Christ in our hearts makes them hearts that trouble not. Oh, what a longing Christ expresses here that His people should not live with troubled hearts! God's people ought not to worry. There are two things we ought not to worry about, the things we can help and the things we cannot help. We should save the strength wasted in worry for work, and work would be more happily done and with more cheer in the doing of it, and the amount of it would be greater and the efficiency of it more satisfying. A nerve-strung hand cannot do the best work. A worry-wrought soul cannot achieve the best. The Saviour would have us have His peace. If Christianity had back the strength it had lost in worry and would use that strength in work with a peaceful soul, we would be centuries ahead of where we are now in the achievements of the gospel. Worry halts, it distresses, it tires, it pains, it slows down the machinery of life. Worry cannot achieve; it cannot think straight; it does not act bravely. Worry has no crown, but peace has. Peace advances the kingdom of God. It brightens the eyes, pushes back the horizons for hope to act. It achieves.

The heritage the Saviour left us begins with God and ends with peace, and all these items of the heritage coming in between make life one round of joy. The Savior's will is that His people should not only hope but happily work.

~ end of chapter 9 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

10-CHAPTER TEN: HIS TWOFOLD LOVE'S LABORS FOR US NOW

CHAPTER TEN: HIS TWOFOLD LOVE'S LABORS FOR US NOW HEAVEN-MAKER (John 14:3)-INTERCESSOR (Romans 8:34)

Now for more than nineteen hundred years, besides holding the worlds in His hands (and the scientists tell us there are billions of them), Christ has been doing two things for His people: building mansions and interceding-making a home for us and answering our prayers. He seems to tire of neither of these continuous acts of His love, based upon the great, climactic gift of His love, His death on the cross. He keeps on keeping on in the behalf of His disciples in both these vital matters. He is our Saviour, our Lord, our King, our Eternal Redeemer, our Friend, our Elder Brother.

- He can plead with the Father; with the nail-riven hands present to the Father our needs.

- He can say, "Here comes a petition from one of my blood-bought. Here are my hands to prove my love for him."

And surely the Father will not withhold nor deny a petition with such a plea.

Let us look at some of the items in Christ's spiritual architecture and construction of our heavenly home. He says, "I go to prepare a place for you."

PRELIMINARY STEPS The building of the mansions in the heavenly home is but the climax and finishing of an age-old plan for God's people. The preliminary steps were as expensive to God as the erection of the mansions in the heavenly home.

There is creation, our first home, its beauty, its food, its light, its clothing, its manifold comforts and sources of joy, the sun He gave us, the stars by night, the flowers strewn copiously along the way, the songs of birds to gladden us, the love of mother, the joy of children, and all the other manifold provisions He made for us. It cost God to make this old world, which sin has blighted and scarred and tried to ruin.

A preserving providence. He has not only given us a home but He has kept us while at home and kept our homes for us. He, through Christ, has given us all the other blessings of His providence and His love and care. It must be very expensive for God to hold the billions of worlds in sight of science's glasses without conflicts, without wreck and ruin.

His springtime and fruit harvest times come in on regular schedule, and if we cooperate with Him He keeps us and loves us.

His providential evolution of an elect family was a gracious deed. Abraham, and on down the line through David to Jesus-what a wonderful channel of human blessings issuing in such a climax, in which He gave us the Saviour! Israel has cost God in patience, in forbearance, in love unrequited. We have trampled on His love and blood, and yet it did not deter Him from His great ultimate purpose of giving us a Redeemer.

He revealed to us His first will in the Old Testament and developed through the long ages of man's rebellion and sin the history of His will in the first great testament of His love. The Bible is filled with God's providences and mercies and unfolding will for us. Its light is a Shekinah light, an infilling light. How grateful we ought to be to God for the Old Testament and the messengers that have brought us the will of God!

How wonderful the mercy extended to men in Christ's expensive efforts in the inauguration and development of His church and churches! It is said that He bought the church with His blood. So precious is it to Him that He makes it His eternal bride. Without the warming, cheering, enlisting, enlightening power, the gospel-bringing power of Christ's churches, how poor indeed would we be!

These were preliminary steps looking toward a fulfilling of His will in His chief blessings. HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT Our Father packed into the thirty-three years of Christ's earthly career the major, imperial gift of His love. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." Look at the steps in this expensive Christmas gift that He made us.

His supernatural incarnation. God took the best of earth in Mary and the climax of heaven in the Holy Spirit, and gave us one God in one man, one man in one God. How marvelous the miracle, how wonderful the output!

His sinless, triumphant life. What an example of living Jesus is-no sin in soul, none in mind, none in heart, none in head, none in hand, none in feet, sinless, perfect!

His atoning sacrifice. All values climaxed in Calvary. It is utterly unthinkable and unimaginable to estimate the cost of Christ's death. The highest values we can even intimate, with the farthest-reaching imagination, is the value of men's souls.

It is triumphant resurrection. It costs to come out of the grave. It is expensive to conquer death. It is love not only in crucifixion but in triumphant resurrection. The joys of triumph over death are somewhat a compensation for the costs of crucifixion.

His power-endued church. God did not regard economy nor think of losses nor costs when He gave to the world His embryo church and set it to its main task, the winning of a lost world.

His victorious evangelism this side of Pentecost. Steadily through the years Christ's vice-regent, the Holy Spirit has been promoting missions and evangelism. He has put His great power around our hearts and personalities, and pushed us forward and on until His evangelistic causes engirdle the world. Here is an expense account to God and man that is not often considered when we think of the values and the products of Christianity. It is a slow process, but a glorious, missionary conquest. When we value God's unspeakable gift in Jesus, we must think of the costs in the products and remember that this big missionary movement has just begun and its prospect is as radiant as the promises of God.

Now, we must remember that Christ is in this home and will be forever with us when the home is completed and the mansions are furnished and inhabited in that land of eternal life and light. He is the architect, the contractor, and will be the supreme guest and host of these mansions, as we shall live with Him forever and ever. HIS VITAL, CONTINUOUS INTERCESSION

There is great joy in our hearts when we remember that we have a double intercessor in this matter of access to the Father. The Holy Spirit is here at our home end of the big problem of praying. He sifts our prayers. He indicates the direction of them and the purpose of them. He takes the dross from the gold, the chaff from the wheat, and with unutterable intercessions He sees that we are fairly represented to Christ in our prayers.

Then at the other end is Christ, "who liveth to make intercession for us." Christ has throne rights with the Father. He is the Father's Son. He is our substitute. It is in His name that we appeal. He bought these throne rights in His eternal essence, before incarnation, and by His voluntary unselfish sacrifice of Himself for us on the cross, and by the right of His dynamic power in resurrection.

He is our intercessor at the throne and the Holy Spirit is our intercessor at this end of the line, and they know how to follow up our prayers and bring them to a complete answer. Love is at work in our hearts here, and love is completing love's task in the Savior's interceding in heaven. If you count the items of value in His throne rights, you must count love-blood, crucified love, you must count the value of His name and all that it carries with it.

Surely, with this double intercession going on constantly, we have a great hope in prayer, confident assurance in our petitions, assurance that if He denies us it is best for us. If He gives us only part of what we ask, the other part, if granted, would injure us.

- He knows the schedule of answered prayer and the items of our needs. All He gives is in love.
- He knows what perils are along the way.
- He knows our enemies and our chief enemy.
- He knows the pitfalls to our falling feet and the dangers to our blinded eyes;
- He gauges the answer to our prayers in view of our needs and of the environment of our lives.

Someone has said that "God is too good to do wrong and too wise to make a mistake" and that "we are in His hands." Our attitude should be that of complacent confidence, joyous assurance, buoyant hope, optimistic courage.

~ end of chapter 10 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

11-CHAPTER ELEVEN: A STUDY IN INTERCESSION (Joh_17:1-26)

CHAPTER ELEVEN: A STUDY IN INTERCESSION (John 17:1-26)

JOHN in the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel has given us a whole chapter on Christ's prayer. It came after His experience in the Upper Room and the Garden of Gethsemane. He had itemized the will of His inheritance and showed us what He left us, and on the basis of His conquering peace in His heart He went into an intercessory supplication for His disciples.

There are some great prayers recorded in the Bible, but this is the most unique and outstanding prayer of them all.

When you study the background and the foreground there is no other prayer that may be brought into comparison. When you take the One who prayed, and the prayer itself, and the age-long answers to the prayer, it is the only prayer of its kind in all history. It begins; "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee," and the prayer closes with these words: "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Now, within the compass of these twenty-six verses the Saviour packed His Gethsemane petition in behalf of His disciples. A devotional study of this wonderful prayer may be fruitful. **THE TRAGIC BACKGROUND**

Prayers should not be tested without their environment and their setting.

A look at the setting of this prayer helps us to understand the depths of its petitions. The days and nights immediately before the Saviour came to Gethsemane are filled with tragedies. The many side trials just ahead, the ecclesiastical trial and the political trials, the trial He would have with His disciples, the trial with the betraying Judas and the denying Simon, the unspeakable ness of the cross, the darkness of death, the tragedy of the misjudgment of men, the disappointment of His disciples, and all that gave dark color to His intercessory prayer; and yet you cannot judge the prayer without the background to it.

THREEFOLD DIVISION The prayer falls into a trinity of thoughts.

- In John 17:1-8 He prays for Himself.
- In John 17:9-19 He prays for His people.
- In John 17:20-26 He prays for the lost world in all ages.

Look at the content of His prayer about Himself. It is hardly a prayer for Himself. An analysis of this prayer shows the following:

The petition was that the Father would glorify the Son, that the Son might glorify the Father- a twin glorification. Ever before the Saviour was the Father's will and the Father's glory. He did not wish to violate the one nor soil the other.

The statement that the Father had given Him power over all flesh that He might give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. He defines the eternal life-"that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

He tells of the glory He has given the Father on earth and the finishing of the task which He, the Father, had assigned to the Son.

He stated that He had manifested the Father's name to those whom the Father had given Him on earth and they had kept His word. They had received His words and had recognized their divine origin and mission.

What are some of the cherished things in this intercessory prayer about Him?

- The fatherhood of God is revealed, and Christ's relationship to Him and our relationship to Christ.
- Christ's eternal purpose in all of His earthly career was to glorify His Father.
- He reveals Christ's own divine origin and mission. He came out from the Father and was sent by the Father.
- He sets out the matchless achievements that He has accomplished in this incarnation, that is, that He had manifested God's name and given His people His words, and that His disciples were God's own and God had given them to Christ, thus explaining the mystical double divine ownership. He said, "They are thine and mine."
- He pays a great compliment to His disciples when He says, "They have kept thy word." It would be great if God could say that of us today, that we have kept the words that the Saviour gave us.

HIS PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES

Jesus records in John 17:9-19 His petition in behalf of the disciples whom He had already won. He says in verse nine: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." This prayer contains the following great encouragements:

- An acknowledgement on the part of Christ that His disciples are God's gift and His eternal possession, His authority for our divine ownership.
- A recognition of the dual ownership and partnership. God not only owns us, but He is in business with us and we are His partners.

"I am glorified in them." Here is a holy outlook for all of God's people and the assignment of an imperial task, not only that Christ is in us but that, being in us, we are to glorify Him and make His name known in all the places of the habitat of man.

- His prayer was that God would keep them through His name. He says, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." Here is a divine guardianship shown to His people.

- He tells in this sacred supplication the story of the one awful blot and dark place in the discipleship of that day. He says, "I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." The betrayal of Christ by Judas is the number one crime of all ages.

He spoke of His home going. "And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." Christ was a happy Saviour. God is a happy Father, and He means for joy to be in the hearts of His people evermore.

He tells the Father of the unworldliness of His disciples. He says, "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world." He sets up the same standard for us that He Himself had lived up to, separateness from the world and unworldliness in the world.

He asks that the Father should not take them out of the world but that He might keep them from evil. He wanted us to be in the world but not the world in us. I fear that no other prayer of the Saviour is more unanswered than this.

His prayer was for the sanctification of His disciples through the truth, and here He sets out the fact that a study of the Bible, an impartation of its vital truth, is the best means of sanctification in this world. There are many riches hidden away in this prayer for God's people. More and more we ought to help Him answer these prayers. HIS INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST

He says in John 17:20, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

How glorious it is that He did not forget the lost in the unfolding womb of the future! He thought of you and me and our children and theirs on to the last coming generation. What an emphasis this is in divine supplication for the missionary program of Christ's people! Now, what did He ask? That there should be spiritual unity among His disciples and that this spiritual unity is God's missionary polemic-"that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

That they, all His people, may be perfect in one and this perfection in unity may be a great missionary dynamic. "That they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

He had told His disciples before that He was going to prepare a place for them and would come back and get them, and now He puts that great thought in His petition to the Father for the lost world who would believe on Him. He wanted His mansions that He was going to build to be filled. He did not wish to lose one believer, and prayed that we might be with Him and behold His glory and the love which the Father had bestowed upon Him and upon us from the foundation of the world.

He announces His great prayer-purpose, that is, to declare God's name, and His purpose to distribute the Father's love for Him to all God's people everywhere. Thus Christ and love, His richest inner possession, are left us for our heart's possession.

EXALTED TRUTHS In this prayer there stands out for unsaved men some gracious realizations and promises.

Christ's love and prayers are for sinners.

- His concern for a united Christianity as a mighty dynamic for world evangelization.
- His plan to share His glory with His redeemed.
- His proof that His Father's love for us is modeled after His love for Christ.
- His purpose to have us live with Him forever.
- That the center of hope for His people is the indwelling Christ in the secret throne of our souls. The love God has for Christ is also in us.

The Father has not yet answered all this prayer. He is answering it. This intercession of our Saviour reveals the wonderful love and nature of Christ and the Father, and their great, engirdling compassion for us and lost men everywhere, and God's eternal purpose to bring us home and make us everlasting companions of Christ.

John tells us that when Jesus had spoken these words "he went forth to his disciples over the brook Kedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples," and there followed His Gethsemane experiences, where He took the bitter cup, the distilled sorrow of the world, and drank it all, and from there He went to betrayal and crucifixion and resurrection, and on.

How glorious it is in our spiritual history to claim this prayer as ours! God will be answering it in us for the ages yet to come.

~ end of chapter 11 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

12-CHAPTER TWELVE: A STUDY IN HEAVENLY MANSIONS

CHAPTER TWELVE: A STUDY IN HEAVENLY MANSIONS

ONE of the most important and beloved passages in God's Word is what John said in his Gospel in the fourteenth chapter and the second and third verses: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"; and another is what he said in Revelation 21:2 : "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

John is God's writer on love and heaven. No other inspired message has given so much joy concerning the heavenly home. His words have cheered millions of heaven-facing Christians.

Christ is the architect, the builder of our eternal mansions. He announces that one of His main occupations at the Father's right hand is preparing mansions for His people. He says in the above quoted Scripture that there are many mansions, which He is going to finish and furnish. He promises to come back for us and take us with Him to these mansions, where we will dwell together forever.

CHEERING THINGS John tells us many cheering things about our heavenly home. For our comfort let us itemize some of them:

- He says His Father, who is also our Father, has a house, a home of many mansions.
- It seems that He is preparing for a large company and will have plenty of room for all.
- He says these homes are mansions. That would indicate great comfort and beauty as well as plenty of room.
- He indicates that there is no rent to be paid and no taxes to be kept up, no trouble with a landlord.
- He takes precaution not to deceive us about it. He says, "If it were not so, I would have told you."
- He gives the credentials of His divine authority to guarantee the statement that He makes about housing His people.
- He is going to make it into a place or home for His own people. He says it is a city, a new Jerusalem, and that there will be no sin there. The righteous only shall walk its gold-paved streets and highways.
- He says He will come back to us and receive us unto Himself and pilot us home. He guarantees this by the power of His own resurrection life.

He says, "As I live, ye shall live also." There is no question in the minds of God's faithful, expectant people about the Savior's return and His ability to take us home.

He did take Enoch and Elias home, leaping the Jordan of death. Moses reported to Christ and the Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration, and these are three messengers of Christ's ability to make a home and come back to get His people. If the war lords can fill the heavens with fighting and bombing airplanes, and if Christ by one word can call to His right hand legions of defending angels, surely God will have aircraft enough on the morning of the resurrection to take all His people home; and the Saviour will be the pilot and captain of the greatest aircraft cavalcade that ever filled the stratosphere with their shouts of praise.

He is going to let us live with Him throughout the endless, sorrowless eons. He is not only our Saviour here and will be our guide home, but He will be our companion there. We will never attend any funerals in heaven and never hear a sad word of farewell.

Jesus seems to hold out heaven as a remedy for heartbreak here. He wishes His people to be expectant, hopeful, patient and love-longing until He comes. Some day the glorious march will begin, and the stars of glory will join together in the triumphant hallelujahs of the great march.

JOHN'S DESCRIPTION OF HEAVEN

John says: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1-2).

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 22:1-5).

And in chapter Revelation 21:16 ff he says:

"And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

Let us see if we cannot frame this immortal picture of our heavenly home. We have here some bold outlines of this new Jerusalem, and we are entirely dependent upon Scripture. Vivid imagination and fervid speculation are untrustworthy as we review this city which we seek and the

mansions our Saviour is building for us. He is an experienced architect and builder. We can trust Him. He has not revealed much of its beauty and richness, but what He has said charms us and the angels in fondest anticipation.

Look at just what John tells us in these great passages of Scripture.

- It is a city, a new city, a heavenly Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven. Its beauty is compared to an adorned bride just ready for the marriage.

- It is coming, an approaching city. Its arrival will be announced by unnumbered angels and the spirits of the redeemed.

- It is the tabernacle of God, where He and His people will dwell together forever.

- It will be a tearless city, a city without a death, no graves, no tombstones, a sorrowless city, with all former things passed away.

- The Alpha and Omega, the Redeeming Lamb of God, will sit on its throne.

- The sparkling fountains of everlasting life will refresh its beautiful parks and streets.

- It will reflect the glory of God. Its light will be like a stone most precious, like jasper, clear as crystal.

- Angels will guard the gates of its holy walls, which have twelve foundations.

- The city is of jasper, a city of pure gold, like transparent glass.

- The foundations of its walls are burnished with precious stones.

- It has no temple, for the Lord Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it,

- It has no sun, no darkness, for the glory of the Lord lightens it and the Lamb is the light thereof.

- The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.

- The ransomed of the Lord shall be there with everlasting joy upon their heads.

- There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles nor worketh an abomination or maketh a lie, but only they whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

- The pure river of the water of life flows out from the throne of God and the Lord, producing the twelve manner of fruits, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations.

- There shall be no more curse there.

- The throne of God and the Lord will be there.

His servants shall see His face and serve Him. And they shall reign forever and forever.

The Lamb says, "Behold, I come quickly," and John says, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus."

Now, this is a mere glimpse, a mere parting of the curtain that veils the future from us, opened to us by the divine hand, a look into the home that Christ is building for us. How worthily we ought to live here and how faithfully we ought to serve such a Saviour, who is building these mansions for

us and interceding in our behalf, that finally we may reach this home through the power of His blood and love!

~ end of chapter 12 ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

13-CHAPTER THIRTEEN: A THROUGH TICKET HOME

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: A THROUGH TICKET HOME A STUDY IN DIVINE GUARANTEES

SINCE CHRIST had a prenatal, divine record, a supernatural birth, lived a sinless life, died an atoning death, has an assured resurrection, had a visible ascension, has promised to intercede at God's throne of power in behalf of all believers, is building a home for His people and promises to come back for us and take us to that home and give us eternal fellowship with Him, it might be well for us to think of our ticket, whether or not we have a through ticket.

I judge none of us would want a round-trip, but all would like to be assured that he had a guaranteed, through passage to these eternal mansions. The fact is, heaven is just ahead.

- The Father is watching for us.
- The Savior's love-cross is holding out nail-scarred hands, beckoning to us.
- The Holy Spirit will soon be calling for us.
- The ransomed hosts are looking expectantly toward the city of God.

The big question facing us is: Has salvation any eternal values? Does God vouchsafe a through transportation ticket to the eternal home? What says the Bible? It is our only schedule for such a trip.

CERTAIN SCRIPTURAL FACTS

Let us look at some of the outstanding doctrines concerning sinners and their salvation which are clearly taught in the Bible.

All men are sinners, conceived in sin, sinners by nature and sinners by choice.

Their case is pictured very seriously by the Word of God.

- They are condemned, already dead in trespasses and in sins, under God's wrath.
- They have come short of the glory of God.
- They are helplessly and hopelessly imperiled in the entanglements of sin, without God and without hope in the world.

The prophet says, "Thou hast loved my soul out of the pit of corruption." The pit of corruption is the natural state in which lost men are born and live without Christ.

All moral merits, legalism, self-righteousness, ceremonialism, creedal salvation, have utterly failed in the face of the penetration, inoculation, ingrained prevalence of sin. Man cannot merit salvation. They are the heirs of death instead of the heirs of life. They cannot traffic in righteousness. Priesthood's holy orders, churches' ordinances, sacraments, none of these can reach deep

enough to find the core and center of death in the souls of men and eradicate sin's poisoned fluids. Man's destiny-hell-ward-is sure unless some outside, holy power comes down into the seat of life.

All systems of salvation except Christ's plan have failed in the presence of an Adamic sin, fallen human nature, and the power of Satan's hold upon the souls of men. We must turn away from man to God for help to save sin-mastered human nature.

CERTAIN ENCOURAGING PROMISES The Word of God is sown down with great, outstanding promises for sinners.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22).

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

CERTAIN IMPORTANT STEPS TO BE TAKEN An unsaved man is an alien and is a long distance from God. He has to take two steps to find God. These are repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21).

He ought to take many steps with God, not in order to be saved but because he is saved.

- He should publicly profess faith in Christ, as Jesus says, "He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

- He should follow Christ in baptism and into Christ's church, not in order to be saved but because he is saved.

- Then, after that he should follow a life of unselfish, consecrated service, living the exemplary life, giving his talents, his time, his money to Christ's cause.

He lives every day in just one step of heaven, and death is that step.

CERTAIN VITAL TRANSACTIONS In one's conversion there are certain vital transactions resulting from one's repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ described salvation to Nicodemus as a birth from above in which a new nature is imparted.

The old nature is changed (John 3:1-12).

- Paul says after this heavenly alteration of life called regeneration we are new creatures in Christ Jesus.

- Peter says we are partakers of Christ's nature.

- Christ says, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

- Paul says by this new nature we become "children of God by faith."

How can one who is a child of God by spiritual birth, partaking of the nature of Christ, ever become any other than God's child? If this is not true, Christ's illustration of spiritual childhood does not illustrate at all.

- Jesus says when one believes in Christ he receives life everlasting (John 3:16; John 3:36; John 5:24).

- Paul says, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23).

This eternal life is possessed as a gift from God based on one's repentance and faith in Christ. It is a spiritual transfusion of the life of Christ into our psychic veins. How can one become dispossessed of eternal life?

Salvation is described by Christ coming into our heart-life, "Christ formed in us, the hope of glory."

He says,

- "Ye are hid with Christ in God";

- "I will come into you";

- "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

"If ye abide in me and my words abide in you" are Christ's words telling of God's guarantee to keep us and save us on and on. He says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).

What could make a greater guarantee than this?

The Scriptures tell us what God does with our sins:

- Washes them whiter than snow (Isaiah 1:18);

- As a thick cloud He blots out our sins (Isaiah 44:22).

- He pardons, cleanses, justifies, forgives, buries our sins in the bottom of the sea, puts them behind His back, separates us from them as far as the east is from the west.

- He remembers them against us no more forever.

- He loves our souls out of the pit of corruption (Isaiah 38:17).

Do these Scriptures not tell the story of God's heavenly guarantee for a through ticket to Christ's mansions in the sky? Taking all this together, Christ being absolute God and a perfect atonement and having a complete resurrection and being seated at the throne of power in heaven, and the divine, eternal life which He by regeneration transfuses into our eternal soul substance, how can any of us doubt Him?

On these bases every believer may be sure that his faith-ticket is a through passage to heaven. "There is therefore now no condemnation," no judgment, for them "who are in Christ Jesus."

There need be no fear of death or judgment. Paul says, "Neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nothing in the grave of the past, nothing in the peril of the present, nothing in the womb of the future, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus," and, therefore, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

This guarantee is not a license to sin, either to love it in our hearts or practice it in our lives, but it is an inner urge and a heavenly, powerful dynamic to solve and explain life; and we are to wait for Christ's return, or His call before He returns, with a complacent confidence and a holy living, assured of a through transportation ticket to the heavenly mansions. Glory be to His name!

~ end of book ~ <<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>>

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