

Don't worry. Be strong and courageous. In 1949 when the People's Republic of China was established there were 1 million believers. Now, 72 years later, under intense persecution, there are well over 100 million. The political or cultural situation never puts the Kingdom of God at risk. The gospel is not chained. It can and does thrive under any circumstances. –Monergism

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813 *(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

27. Q. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of prophet in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation (John 1:18; 1 Pet.1:10,11, 12; John 15:15; and 20:31).

28. Q. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of priest in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice (Heb. 9:14, 28) and reconcile us to God (Heb. 2:17), and in making continual intercession for us (Heb.7:24, 25).

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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THE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE FOR ALL

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:45-48)

Trying times often give rise to a variety of religious reactions. I am often reminded of the saying that became popular in World War II, “there are no atheists in foxholes.” I have listened with interest to the expressions of many since the outbreak of the pandemic and the rise of violence in the streets of our land. I have heard expressions of piety by many, followed by spewing venomous anger and accusation at some fellow citizen. I have heard others relegate it to the will of God but in the absence of any evidence of the true worship of God. Among the many religious overtures, missing is any reference to the Word of God and the fact that repentance toward God is a universal commandment.

Many have in the name of the Lord continued to produce works explaining methodologies and approaches to dealing with distress. Many of these are simply self-help books with a religious tone to them. Most simply point to something that we must do and fall short of advocating that we fall on the mercy of God as it is shown in the work of Christ our Lord. The Lord rather pointed His disciples to the scriptures and opened their understanding. It was here that they would see that the pressing message of their day was of repentance and remission of sins. That has not changed. That is the same message that is so desperately needed in our day. Men spend their days

pointing to the faults of others while failing to see the awful hatefulness of their own sin.

There are many who adhere to a superficial belief that they can attribute to their own will and wisdom. Their “easy believe-ism” brings a false sense of hope and allows them to accommodate all manner of human behaviors and to indulge their pride in several ways. Where there is no deep sense of sin there will be no depth of faith, and worship will be redefined in human terms.

This passage of scripture seems to be an expansion of what we normally think of as the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). In pressing this upon the Apostles He brought the whole of revelation upon them. In referring to that which was written He was looking to the Old Testament and He was asserting that they were about Him. The necessity of His death and resurrection was a matter of necessity to Him and the preaching of the same is to be a necessity to us.

Matthew Henry addressed the matter under the heading of “What they must preach.” His simple outline was that the gospel truth of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord must be published to all. He pressed even further that we should tell what He suffered and why He suffered so. Tell them such was the weight of sin that only He could take it away by suffering under the wrath of God. We are to tell

them of the resurrection whereby we are justified, and all the offence of the cross was rolled away. Secondly, that the duty of repentance must be pressed upon all. The necessity is that they turn from serving the things of the world and rather turn to the service of God in Christ. They are to die to this world and thus hate their sin and their self as they behold the holiness of God. Thirdly, they are to be shown the great Gospel privilege of the remission of sins with the assurance that all who truly repent and believe the Gospel are so blessed. He added, "Go tell a guilty world, that stands convicted and condemned at God's bar, that an act of indemnity has passed the royal assent, which all that repent and believe shall have the benefit of, and not only to be pardoned, but be preferred by. Tell them that there is hope concerning them."

It is certain here that this is the message to be preached to all nations. And in that we know that ours is an unchanging God and Savior, we would add that it is for all times. What is to be preached and taught and believed is the sum of the Gospel ministry. This was Paul's message to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:21). It was the testimony of Paul to Agrippa of the commission of Christ to him: *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. (Acts 26:18)*. John the Baptist came preaching the message of repentance for the remission of sins in anticipation of the imminent appearing of Christ. Jesus began His earthly preaching with the simple message "Repent ye and believe the

Gospel." The Kingdom was at hand.

It is important to note here that, as John Gill ably points out, repentance is a gift of God's grace. He further notes that repentance makes no satisfaction for sin, or atonement for it, nor does the law have any regard for it; tears of repentance will not wash away sin. The only meritorious cause for remission is the blood of Christ. Gill further added that "to whomsoever the grace of repentance is given, to them the forgiveness of sins is applied." In true repentance one sees himself as without remedy, and such a one does not approach God with anything other than the hope of mercy.

Not only does He declare this message as the essence of all that was to be preached, but it was also to be preached in His name. To invoke the Name that is above all names is to identify Him as God manifest in the flesh and to acknowledge all that He has done. In declaring them to be "witnesses of these things," He reminded them of what they had seen and knew of Him. They had seen Him in transfigured glory and had witnessed the utter humility of the cross. Now they would victoriously declare His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to His rightful throne.

Through the revelations of the Word of God under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, we have likewise been made witnesses of these things and are thus commissioned, as were they, to press the necessity of repentance and remission in His name. If we have experienced repentance and have by faith apprehended the gift of forgiveness, we will bear witness to the wonderful grace of Jesus. *bhs*

"My brethren, when God first began to love you, He gave you all that He ever meant to give you in the lump--and eternity is the time in which He is doling it out." --Thomas Goodwin

"The person who loves Christ best, is the person who will pray best." --Thomas Goodwin

Though you are a worm

"Do not be afraid, worm Jacob; I will help you! says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 41:14

"Worm Jacob!" What weakness, insignificance, unworthiness! Yet it is this helpless, groveling "worm," which occupies the thoughts of God--receives His sympathy, and has the assurance of His almighty aid!

Believer, beaten down it may be, with a great fight of affliction, or trembling under a sense of your unworthiness and guilt--mourning . . .

the coldness of your faith, the lukewarmness of your love, the frequency of your backslidings, the fitfulness of your best purposes, the feebleness of your best services--your God draws near to you--He remembers that though you are a worm--still you are "worm Jacob"--His own beloved, covenant one; and He tells you that the thoughts which He thinks towards you, are "thoughts of peace, and not of evil."

Mark His message of comfort, "Do not be afraid!"

Mark His promise, "I will help you!" The guarantee which He gives for the fulfillment of that promise, is His own great name; "says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."

"I Myself will help you!" Yes, poor, weak, trembling one, "Jehovah", "your Redeemer", "the Holy One of Israel"--in other words, Omnipotence, Love, and Righteousness, are all embarked on your side, and pledged for your salvation!

He loves to draw near to His people in the extremity of their weakness. "He will not break the bruised reed; He will not quench the smoking flax." Man would do so. Man would often crush the writhing worm under his feet--bid the trembling penitent away; but He whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, says, "Neither do I condemn you!"

Be it mine to go in the strength of the Lord God. "I will help you!" is enough for all the emergencies of the present; and all the contingencies of an untried, and, it may be, a dark future. "But happy are those who have the God of Israel as their helper, whose hope is in the Lord their God." --John MacDuff

Has God saved you? Has he given you faith in the Lord Jesus? If he has, I ask you, as Ananias asked Saul, "Why tarriest thou?" Do not delay obedience to the Lord's command. Do not delay confessing Christ and his Gospel. "Arise, and be baptized," be immersed, buried in the watery grave. "And wash away thy sins." That is to say, by your immersion, show symbolically how your sins were washed away by the death of the God-man, your Substitute. This is an ordinance for believers only. Baptism is meaningless without faith. But if you are a believer, the ordinance is for you. Tarry no more. "Arise, and be baptized, calling on," worshipping, trusting in, "the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). --Don Fortner