

To every believer, the debt–book is crossed; the black lines of sin are crossed out in the red lines of Christ’s blood. —Thomas Watson

The Baptist Catechism (Keach’s Catechism)

1677

*(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

Q. 8. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

(John 4:24; Ps. 147:5; Ps. 90:2; James 1:17; Rev. 4:8; Ps. 89:14; Exod. 34:6-7; 1 Tim. 1:17)

Q. 9. Are there more gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

(Deut. 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10)

Q. 10. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory.

(1 Cor. 8:6; John 10:30; John 14:9; Acts 5:3-4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM– In Richwood

Services:

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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### UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE READ

*Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. (Acts 8:29-31)*

The account of Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) is worthy of much study. We are taught of the role of the Spirit in directing us to the tasks appointed. We marvel at the precision with which the Lord’s sheep are sought and rescued. We rejoice at reading how the Gospel was spread in the early days. And we find much with which our own experience in Christ our Lord finds validation. Thus, we are encouraged to walk in the Spirit and to be attuned to His leadings as He directs us in the things of Christ our Lord and to the work of Christ in the spread of the Gospel.

It is likely that Philip had not thought of preaching as he was directed to join himself to the chariot. But as he approached, he heard his text being read aloud by the man in the chariot. It seems that this man was a high placed official and was being driven back to Ethiopia. He did not hesitate at the questioning of Philip. Rather it was that he was welcoming any help that might be given. He may have sensed that Philip could answer his questions.

It is here that we would endeavor to learn from this man’s experience. It is always to be commended that one is reading the Scriptures. It may not always be assumed that they understand what they are reading. How often do we simply read the Bible in a cursory manner, or simply “drive by” with a brief

thought as to what we are reading? (Some of my thoughts here were inspired by reading an article by Scott Hubbard). In this work Hubbard emphasized the need to work at reading and understanding the Word of God. One picture may be worth a thousand words, but an appreciation for what comprised the picture may be clearly lost – the picture is viewed without effort. As we read this account we might easily, being familiar with both the beginning and the ending, pass quickly by much that is profitable. I have often been guilty of this.

We would note that the man was quite sincere in his quest to know what the scripture was saying. Understanding was the lack and so Philip was directed to ask him. He was not hurrying through the passage. Rather, his thoughts were arrested at this point. The man here is an example to us. We tend to dismiss that which we do not understand. However, we are well advised to prayerfully persist at such a time. The matter of understanding is often addressed in the Word and we do well to give attention to those things.

Hubbard wrote: “To be sure, a Christian is nothing without sincere spiritual affections. But God has carved only one path to the human heart, and it runs through the mind.

Passage after passage in the Bible shows this relationship between thought and affections. In fact, the Bible's very existence suggests it, because here we have a book that unashamedly addresses the brain in route to the heart." It was here that Hubbard directed attention to our Lord's encounter with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. There we read that Jesus opened and explained the Scripture showing them of all that pertained to Him. The response was, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?" We would note that further on in that same chapter in Luke our Lord addressed the minds of the disciples. We read, *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: (Luke 24:45-46)*. We are aware that the things that appeared in this man of Ethiopia are completely lacking in those that are without: *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (Romans 3:11)*. So, we read of Ezra of old that he read the word and gave the sense of it.

That the man was searching is revealed by his answer to Philip's question. He knew he needed help and did not hesitate to ask. That he had proceeded to a point is revealed as he asked specifically whether Isaiah was speaking of himself or of another. We take note of the fact that the question is not a matter of what; it is rather who? The man, probably a Jewish proselyte, seemed to have some knowledge of the scriptures, but clearly lacked the necessary understanding. He is to be credited with being honest. It is here that we read that Philip began at that very scripture and preached unto Him

Jesus. Spurgeon directed his students to take every scripture and proceed directly to Christ. He explained the passage to him, and the Lord opened his heart as He did with Lydia.

While we are not told the content of all that Philip preached to him, we can surmise from the response that Philip would have been very thorough in showing the man how that all that was here written had been fulfilled in the finished work of Christ. He surely must have explained to him the significance of baptism. Thus, the man requests to be baptized. We marvel at such a beautiful picture of the operations of grace. The work of the Spirit in both, the providential placement of all the pieces, the witnessed effect of the understanding opening the way to the heart. The man went on his way rejoicing.

We do well to seek understanding of the Word of God that we might the more experience that burning in our hearts that would provoke us to more and greater degrees of worship. We consider the word of Paul to the Ephesians: *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (Ephesians 5:17-18)*. John Owen wrote of those who entered into books only to be seen coming out again. He implied that many give only shallow attention to what they read. May it never be said of us that we ever treat the Word of God so casually. Paul made it a matter of prayer for the Colossians: *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (Colossians 1:9)*. bhs

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All heaven is interested in the Cross of Christ, all hell terribly afraid of it, while men are the only beings who more or less ignore its meaning. —Oswald Chambers

## Surprised by Joy – Marshall Segal

Some of the most life-changing verses in the Bible are those that come alive years after we first read them. We read them and pass over them, read them and pass over them, read them again, and then suddenly reality breaks through, and their meaning explodes in our imagination. I wonder if any verses like that come to mind for you.

Years ago, a line in Psalm 4 leapt out of the fog of familiarity and arrested my attention. At first, it exhilarated me, awakening me to spiritual wells I had walked by (and looked past) again and again. Then it humbled me, confronting me with how weak and fickle my heart can be. And then, finally, it has strengthened me, stirring my desire and ambition for Christ and building my courage in him. King David writes,

You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. (Psalm 4:7)

The verse slid under my radar for years, I think, because it rang like a cliché to my immature and naive ears — like a sentence beautiful enough for Pinterest, but just out of touch with the heavier realities of real life. I would read verses like this, feel vaguely inspired for a moment, and then move on and forget them minutes later. The vagueness evaporated, however, when I slowed down enough to finally see through the window this verse opens for us.

David does not say, “You have given me great joy,” or even, “You have given me as much joy as those in the world have in their finest meals and fullest pleasures.” No, he says, “You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.” If it was a word that seized me, it was the word more. As David weighs his joy in God against the greatest pleasures on earth — the most expensive experiences, in the most exotic places, with the most famous people — he finds the world’s offer wanting. He prefers what he has tasted through faith over anything else he might see or do or buy.

Do you think about your faith in God that way? When you think about Jesus, do you ever think in terms of joy, delight, fulfillment, pleasure? Have you actually been taught, subtly or explicitly, to pit him against your happiness? The discovery for me, at that time, was that I did not have to walk away from joy to follow Jesus. In fact, I could only find the richest, most intense happiness in him.

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Never be afraid to make a small beginning for the Lord. He is willing to meet with just two or three people (Matt. 18:20). Jesus began His earthly ministry as a baby in a manger. Many a great ministry has started with a small prayer meeting or a small offering. J. Hudson Taylor opened the China Inland Mission bank account with ten British pounds. The young lad gave his small lunch to Jesus, and He fed thousands. I used to remind my pastoral students, and I still remind myself, that there are no small churches and there are no big preachers, but we do serve a great and glorious God. – Warren Wiersbe, *He Walks With Me*