

The deepest spiritual lessons are not learned by His letting us have our way in the end, but by His making us wait, bearing with us in love and patience until we are able to honestly pray what He taught His disciples to pray: Thy will be done. —Elisabeth Elliot

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. 108. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily (that is, suitably) partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves, of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body; of their faith to feed upon Him; of their repentance, love, and new obedience: lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

(1 Cor. 11:27-31; 1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 13:5)

Q. 109. What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.

(1 John 5:14; 1 John 1:9; Phil. 4:6; Ps. 10:17; 145:19; John 14:13-14)

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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 CHURCH

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

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AN UNBREAKABLE COVENANT

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (Hebrews 8:10)

David, in a description of the priesthood of Christ declared, *The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. (Psalms 110:4)*. In comparing the old priesthood with that of Christ, the writer of Hebrews quotes the same passage and actually elaborates on the origin of the thought from Genesis. Of course, the text is a quote from Jeremiah, but is cited following the declarations concerning the eternal priesthood of Christ our Lord. The Covenant here quoted had a reference to the priesthood of Christ even from the days of Jeremiah. That which was old was decaying away and was ready to vanish away (See v. 13). In this New Covenant God has laid down the terms and has assured that both parties to it will be completely happy with it.

We are reminded of the broken promises of old: *And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. (Exodus 24:7)*. We know of the long history of disobedience in the nation of Israel. Their propensity toward idolatry began very quickly thereafter and continued through the cyclical history of the Judges and continued on until the captivity. But we are participants in an everlasting covenant: *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. (Jeremiah 32:40)*.

We focus first on one phrase in our text that

appears elsewhere as well – “I will put...” Our Lord invokes an infallible methodology. In the verse just quoted it is “I will put my fear in their hearts...” In our text, it is that I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts...” From another Old Testament prophet we read the following: *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)*. Not only do we see the purpose of God declared in these thoughts, but we also see the power of God invoked in bringing these things to pass. This matter of purpose and power is likewise stated by James as he writes, *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. (James 1:18)*.

There are those who would restrict the application of these things to national Israel. Paul very effectually brings it home to bear on Jew and Gentile alike in writing to the Corinthians: *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. (2 Corinthians 3:3)*. Peter would attribute the expressions of divine love in those to whom he wrote as being for this very reason: *Being born again, not of corruptible*

seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter 1:23).

We delight to lay hold on another aspect of this Unbreakable Covenant. "I will..." and "they shall..." I am often reminded of the thought of mutual possession from the Song of Solomon: "My beloved is mine, and I am His..." Not only do we see mutual possession; we see mutual desire toward each other. This has always been a matter of expectation among the faithful. See, *And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. (Zechariah 8:8).* Again, Paul in writing to a Gentile people invokes the same thought and application: *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).*

The very nature of the relationship is defined for us by Christ Himself. His message to His disciples was "...I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." The Lord had said to the Israelites of old that on the condition of their obedience, "then shall ye be a

peculiar treasure unto me above all people." But then we see that the ultimate relationship is seen in precious perspectives: *As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. (Romans 9:25-26).* We are then reminded of the purpose of God in redemption declaring of Him that it was He "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

David prayed, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions..." His prayer is answered through the prophet Isaiah: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." An extension of this covenant is seen a few verses later as we read: *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. (Hebrews 8:12).*

As I am constrained to see myself as weak and completely incapable of satisfying the just demands of a Holy God, I am increasingly grateful that my salvation is dependent on the fact that it is declared that He will put that which is essential in my heart and that by virtue of a new creature I shall be what He has determined. *bhs*

• John Owen. "We cannot enjoy peace in this world unless we are ready to yield to the will of God in respect of death. Our times are in His hand, at His sovereign disposal. We must accept that as best." (Note: peace is related to accepting God's sovereignty.)

• J.I. Packer. "To know that nothing happens in God's world apart from God's will may frighten the godless, but it stabilizes the saints." (Note: God's sovereignty over all things, including sorrow, suffering, and death is meant to give us confidence and stability.)

And so, as far as I am concerned, the truth is as clear as clear can be.

NO LONE-RANGER CHRISTIANITY

The New Testament knows nothing of lone-ranger Christianity or do-it-yourself spirituality. The New Testament everywhere expects and assumes that every Christian will be in a church, be committed to that church, and be participating in all the means of grace the church is entrusted with. It is as individual believers are involved in the life of the church that the church collectively and churches individually will be able to overcome the onslaught of Satan and his people. Christ's work is always done through local churches. Revelation makes this clear. Local churches are the focus of His concern and the object of His care, because Christ is in the midst of His church. In Revelation 1:12–13 John says, “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the [chest] with a golden girdle.” What are these seven candlesticks? Revelation 1:20 says, “...and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

The local church is God's institution for getting His work done on earth in this age. It is through the local church that He builds His kingdom, proclaims His glory, and preaches His gospel. Therefore, we see that Christ's great concern in the book of Revelation is for the purity of His church, the doctrine of His church, the suffering of His church, the protection of His church, and the victory of His church. Christ is a church-centered Savior, and therefore we need to be church-centered Christians. To be church-centered is to be Christ-centered, because Christ dwells in the midst of His church. –Max Doner, *Revelation, A Manual of Spiritual Warfare*

We are not naturally inclined to do the will of God. To the contrary, until God intervenes, we take joy in contradicting and disobeying him. But once God saves us we come to understand the pleasure of carrying out his commands and submitting ourselves to his will. And that's what F.B. Meyer reflects on in this sweet passage.

God is love; to do his will is to scatter love in handfuls of blessing on a weary world.

God is light; to do his will is to tread a path that shines more and more unto the perfect day.

God is life; to do his will is to eat of the Tree of Life, and live forever, and to drink deep draughts of the more abundant life which Jesus gives.

God is the God of hope; to do his will is to be full of all joy and peace, and to abound in hope.

God is the God of all comfort; to do his will is to be comforted in all our tribulation by the tender love of a mother.

God is the God of peace; to do his will is to learn the secret inner calm, which no storm can reach, no tempest ruffle.

God is the God of truth; to do his will is to be on the winning side, and to be assured of the time when he will bring out our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noonday. –Tim Challies