

Voice of Baptists

"The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." *Isaiah 40:3*

VOL. 9

HUNTINGDON, TN

AUGUST, 1987

NO. 5



HOW TWO MEN HAVE AFFECTED THE HUMAN RACE

By James H. Smith
Nashville, TN

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."
Romans 5:19

The two men in the text have left marks on the whole world, but the affect of the two are diverse one from the other, one for bad, and the other for good. The reference is to Adam and Jesus Christ. Study the context and you can see that; in fact, the book of Romans reveals so much about these two men and the way they have affected us.

First, Adam's disobedience, and how that has affected the race; When Adam sinned that started the ball to rolling; he sinned, and from that he possessed a sinful nature; his children were born sinners; in fact, one of them was a murderer. So sin spread, and kept spreading with its deadly affect. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Romans 5:12. Sin entered, and by it came death, death is the penalty, or its wages, as the Bible says: "for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord." Romans 6:23. Adam died in a sense the very day that he disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit, he died a spiritual death, in that he was separated from God, the very source of life; and after about nine-hundred and thirty years Adam died a physical death. Both were the result of his transgression of God's holy command.

Sin didn't remain just a sin, but it has been on the increase since Adam's disobedience in the garden of Eden. Sin is effective like leaven, it spreads and contaminates the per-

son's whole being; or it can spread through a church body, as it did in the church at Corinth, I Cor. 5:6. Sin is like leprosy, or a cancer, it eats away until it destroys, if let go and no remedy is applied; and there is a remedy, the blood of Jesus Christ. Man is so affected by sin that he in his natural state is totally depraved, there is no soundness in him. God gives a good description of this in Isaiah, thus: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and purifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Isaiah 1:5-6.

Sin reigns like a monarch, it has power, it dominates, brings the victim into bondage, and will finally bring death. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5:21. Sin destroys, it is the way of destruction; it destroys the souls of men, it destroys lives, it destroys homes, it destroys churches, it destroys nations and empires, and will finally, because of sin, bring destruction on the whole

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BRO. CARTER DIES

Billy Dan Carter, pastor of Victory Baptist Church, Hendersonville, TN, passed away Tuesday, June 30, 1987. Funeral services were conducted on Thursday by Elders W. R. Overton, Dwayne Greer and Johnny Carver. We send our sympathy to his family and church.

HOW BIG IS GOD? By Larry T. Taylor Washington, IL.

The ancients used a symbol to represent God, the Infinite Creator. The symbol is simply a circle with a single point for it's center which is called a Monad.

The circle, obviously, cannot represent the boundary line of God for He has no bounds. The circle, therefore, represents eternity. If you place all created things inside the circle, including the vast universe, it teaches us that although His divine presence is everywhere among His creation, His creation cannot contain Him. The Monad then, when attributed to God, symbolizes the boundlessness or infinity of His sacred realm.

The point, a figure without dimension, has in all ages represented the Great Creator. It was assigned by philosophers of old to mythical gods such as Jupiter and Vesta. One of the earliest of the heathen philosophers describes the maker of the universe as an intelligible sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference cannot be defined, because the universe is boundless and He existed from all eternity. The Monad is the symbol of unity or the number one.

According to Euclid, unity is indivisible, has no comparison, nor is it a number, but the fountain and mother of all numbers. Being the cause of all numbers, they are formed by a plurality of units, thus 2 is twice one and 3 is three units, etc.: so that all numbers require the Monad, while it exists by itself without requiring any other. All of which is to be considered the First Cause, for as one is no number but the cause and beginning of numbers, so the First Cause, or the Great Creator, has no affinity to His creatures. They all stand in need of Him and He requires assistance from none. Hence the First Cause can be said to be Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent.

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VOICE OF BAPTISTS

(USPS 423-350)

P.O. Box 572

Huntingdon, Tenn. 38344

Kenneth W. Massey, Editor

STAFF WRITERS

James H. Smith, Nashville, TN
 W.T. Russell, Nashville, TN
 F.W. Lambert, Westmoreland, TN
 Harold D. Carver, Buena Vista, TN
 Jerry A. Reynolds, Bowling Green, KY
 Stephen M. Skinner, Springfield, MO
 Keith D. Frieze, Springfield, MO

CIRCULATION STAFF

Glynn and Linda Williams, Huntingdon, TN

POSTMASTER: Return all mail to Voice of Baptists, P.O. Box 572, Huntingdon, TN 38344.

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 Hollis Spurlock—Lafayette, TN
 Billy Ray Gregory—Indpls., IN
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REVIVALS

August 9

Pleasant Valley Baptist Church—Washington, IL

Pastor Larry T. Taylor will be assisted by Elder Billy Moran. Our church will have a special all-day singing August 15th with the Wilburn Family as guest singers. We invite everyone to the revival and the singing.

August 16

Concord Baptist Church—White House, TN
 Pastor Gillespie Smith will be assisted by Elder Kenneth Massey. EVERYONE IS INVITED!

August 31

Summer Shade Baptist Church—Summer Shade, TN

Pastor Dexter Bacon will be assisted by Elder Doug Curtis. Services each evening at 7:30 p.m. YOU are invited.

THE BODY OF CHRIST,
AND MEMBERS IN
PARTICULAR

By Calvin Perrigo
 Lexington, TN

Let us look at the church as the body of Christ and the importance that individual members of that body have toward the visibility and work of the Lord's church. It appears that a lack of understanding exists among our people as to the significance of the individual Baptist church member. The true members of the body of Christ are tempered into that body by the Lord, (see Acts 2:47 and I Corinthians 12:18 and 24). It is obvious that such an attachment would be recognized by the member that was tempered into an existing body. The church, being present when the addition took place, would surely be aware of this Holy Spirit led saved person and will receive such a one into their fellowship. A feeling of belonging must follow any act of uniting, from both the individual member and the receiving church. We hope this writing may bring a fuller, more complete understanding of how a church member and the church should feel after one has become a member in particular.

DECLARATION OF FAITH #13: 'OF A GOSPEL CHURCH'

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his word; that its only scriptural officers are bishops or pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

RECOMMENDED READINGS: Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:1-12 and I Corinthians 12:12-31.

THE BODY OF CHRIST: The Word that was in the beginning, being with God and even was God, was made flesh, and dwelt among mankind. Some people were blessed to behold His glory, being permitted to handle him as the Son of Man (see John 1:1-3 and 14; I John 1:1) and to observe him after his resurrection from the dead (see Acts 1:3). This body of Christ, the one he received from Mary, ascended into the heavens and is now at the right hand of the Father (see Acts 7:56 and Hebrews 4:14).

There is a body of Christ present today in the world and it too is visible to the qualified viewer. The fleshly body of Jesus Christ was recognized by his disciples to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Likewise, the church is recognized by his disciples today to be the body of Christ.

Let us now reason together from the scriptures concerning the body of Christ, both his flesh and his church.

I. JESUS CHRIST IN A BODY OF FLESH: Galatians 4:4 Made of a woman.

A. At his Birth: Luke 2:6,7,11,12 and 16. He was a babe in the flesh.

B. At his circumcision in the temple: Luke 2:21 thru 32, and 36 thru 38. This was a fleshly act: he was recognized to be God's salvation and Israel's consolation and redemption.

C. At his baptism: Matthew 3:13 thru 17; John 1:29 thru 34 and 36. God and man both identified him.

D. During his personal ministry.

1. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother realized he was the Messiah (John 1:41).

2. Peter and the other disciples knew him as the Christ (Matthew 16:13-19).

a. Upon this rock I will build (add to).

b. What is the Rock? JESUS CHRIST. In what sense is the church built recognized Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God through the revealing power of the Spirit of God (verse 17): Jesus recognized man (Peter), see II Timothy 2:19. This shared knowledge is the basis of a visible body of the Lord. See Acts 9:5; "Who art thou, Lord?" Introduction was made; see verse 20 and compare it with I Corinthians 12:3. We cannot truthfully say it without the Holy Spirit. We cannot see the kingdom without being born again (John 3:3). Yes, God (in the person of Jesus) was manifest in the flesh. See I Timothy 3:16.

3. On the mountain of transfiguration: "My beloved Son" (Matthew 17:5).

E. At his death: "Truly this was the Son of God." (Matthew 27:54)

F. After his resurrection: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39) (John 20:27-29 and I Corinthians 15:5-8)

G. At his ascension: "This same Jesus. . ." (Acts 1:11) The scriptures have allowed us to see Jesus the Christ in a body of flesh from birth, through life, in death, after his resurrection, and into heaven, (see Acts 7:56).

II. THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST: Ephesians 1:22-23

A. Paul's letters to the people at Corinth were addressed to: "the church of God which is at Corinth." In the letter to Corinth, Paul wrote: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (I Corinthians 12:27)

B. Paul wrote to the saints at Ephesus and stated that God had given Jesus, "to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body," (see Ephesians 1:22-23). God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. The church is still manifest in the world, preaching peace by Jesus Christ and will continue to do so until she is received up into glory for the marriage of the Lamb.

Seeing now the visible church as the body of Christ we will now proceed and see what makes the church by Christ Jesus a local visible body. Realizing that God is a Spirit and also that the fleshly body of Jesus is no longer upon this earth, we must look for something that will give distinctness or substance to his church. To further introduce this portion of this study we will look at an abridged definition of a church as found in the "Church Manual" by J. M. Pendleton, page 7.

"A CHURCH IS A CONGREGATION OF CHRIST'S BAPTIZED DISCIPLES, UNITED IN THE BELIEF OF WHAT HE HAS SAID, AND COVENANTING TO DO WHAT HE HAS COMMANDED."

The entire membership at Corinth was referred to as the body of Christ by Paul and then he began to point out the importance of the individual member of the church. The various gifts that the Lord had placed in the body of Christ were mentioned to show this individualism. Paul made reference to the different gifts that were set in the body and then ask if every member had the same ability or calling. The answer was NO! The answer is still NO! This fact illuminates the importance of the individual member within the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. MEMBERS ADDED UNTO THEM:

"...and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41) Jesus made a personal choice of the members that went into the original body of his church (see Matthew 4:18 thru 22; Luke 6:12 thru 17; John 15:16). They were hand picked by the Lord himself. How does a saved soul become a member of the Lord's church today? The Lord still adds members to his church today (see Acts 2:47) but he uses the agent of the Holy Spirit instead of the person of Jesus Christ to extend the invitation to the saved soul. The church is also notified by the same Spirit of the Lord's desire and will give opportunity for members.

A. EXPERIENCE AND BAPTISM: The church is gathered together and they extend an invitation to the saved to unite with them in the body of Christ. This invitation is always extended from the existing body to the individual. This practice is important; the church should never be put on the defensive in receiving members. The Spirit of the Lord prompts or moves upon the saved soul to take advantage of the invitation from the church. When evidence of true repentance has been given and unanimously accepted by the church, baptism is administered and all rights and privileges are granted.

B. LETTER: The moving of membership from one church to another can be done decently and orderly by the process of correspondence. The church can supply information to and recommend one of her members to a sister church by correspondence

upon receipt of a request from the sister church. The transfer of membership for any other reason is wrong and harmful to both the churches and the member. A church may be depleted of a functional member and there could be rejection on the part of the new body.

II. RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF A MEMBER: "And they continued steadfastly..." (Acts 2:42) When a person becomes a member of the church they are granted all rights and privileges according to their individual status. This is in agreement with the laws of Christ and we should conform to his laws. Members do not hold the same office or have the same gifts within the church body, therefore their rights and privileges will vary according to their position in the body.

A. DOCTRINE: Membership in the Lord's church gives the new convert access to the teachings of God the Father, (John 7:16-17; Matthew 28:20 and Acts 2:42).

B. FELLOWSHIP: Church membership provides fellowship with other members of the local body, God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. (see I John 1:3 thru 7)

C. THE TABLE OF THE LORD: To eat at the table of the Lord (the Lord's Supper) is a right that is reserved for church members only. This membership is the most exclusive upon the earth. **SHOW HIS DEATH! HE WILL RETURN!**

D. ASSEMBLY: The member of the Lord's church has the right to assemble with the body at the designated place and time. (see Hebrews 10:24-25) **DON'T FORGET!**

1. FOR PRAYER: The opportunity to pray together with your brothers and sisters of the church is a blessed privilege. (see Colossians 4:2)

2. FOR WORSHIP: Sweet indeed is the time of worship at the Lord's house. No doubt, the psalmist, being a prophet, knew of the blessedness that church members enjoy when assembled together for worship. (see Psalm 122:1) We can worship God in spirit and in truth together.

3. FOR SONG: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:19)

4. FOR EXHORTATION: It is a time of strengthening when a church member receives exhortation from a brother in the public assembly. To testify and to hear testimonies in an assembly of the church is a God given privilege. (see I Thessalonians 2:10-12). Don't fail to go, Jesus may be there!

E. LABOR: God receives deserved glory when a church member puts his God given talent to proper use. Gifts were given to perfect saints, for the work of the ministry and to edify the body of Christ. (see Ephesians 4:12). After Isaiah had seen the glory of the Lord and heard his request for help, he came forward and said, "here am I; send

me." (see Isaiah 6:1-8). The apostles forsook all and followed the Lord, (see Matthew 19:27). Paul asked the Lord: "What wilt thou have me to do?" (see Acts 9:6) **Work while it is day!**

II. MEMBERS RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH: This writing has pointed to one important truth. **"THERE IS A LIVING PRESENT ATTACHMENT TO THE BODY OF CHRIST BY EVERY MEMBER OF THAT BODY."** We first see the attachment to God in the salvation of the soul, then we see the connection to the body of Christ by the leadership of the Holy Spirit when joining ourselves to that body. The church is alive and the members are alive and active. Review the contents of this work and see if there be any proxy work performed. Sinners hear the gospel for themselves; sinners seek God for themselves after they are personally effected by the convicting Spirit of God; sinners are personally saved by God for Jesus sake. Saved sinners are personally baptized by the authority of the church. Every aspect of the Lord's work toward us is personal. **WHY THEN DO PEOPLE TAKE AN IMPERSONAL VIEW OF THEIR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP? Are not all members of the body necessary? Can the body glorify the Father without all the members in place and functioning as a unit? IS THE BODY OF CHRIST UPON THIS EARTH VISIBLE WITHOUT ITS MEMBERS?**

Is it any wonder that many Baptists consider the church to be invisible and universal? Many bodies are invisible because they never assemble together as members in one body. Members in particular do the will of God within the framework of the church and those that fail to assemble and labor with the church are deceiving themselves about being a member of the Lord's body. How did the Lord Jesus convince his disciples that he was not a ghost after his resurrection? (Study Luke 24:36-43). The disciples were exposed to and invited to feel the particular members of his fleshly body to be convinced of his resurrection. **COULD THE WORLD SEE YOUR CHURCH BY THE PARTICULAR MEMBERS OF THAT BODY????**

**ATTEND
SUNDAY SCHOOL
AND
WORSHIP SERVICES**

The Human Race Continued from Page 1

world. The wrath of God is kindled against sin, his wrath is upon the believer, the sinner, and one day it will fall upon him with destructive force, if he continues this course. Jesus said this: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

Yes, we think of Adam's disobedience, his sin and by his sin bringing death into the world, but we cannot offer as an excuse Adam's sin, for every rational person is responsible for his or her own sins. We can't blame Adam for all of our ills. Nobody can escape eternal hell by pointing to Adam; Every sinner has to face up to his own sins and repent personally to God.

Secondly, The obedience of One, Jesus Christ, many may be made righteous. William's translation of this Romans 5:19 is very clear and good. It reads: "For just as that man's disobedience the whole race of men were constituted sinners, so by this One's obedience the whole race of men may be brought into right standing with God." We notice in this version that the whole race of men were made sinners, there is no exception. The King James says, "Many were made sinners. A thousand, a million, or ten million would be many, but it doesn't necessarily mean all that there is. Now, it says of the One's obedience: "So by this One's obedience the whole race of men may be brought into right standing with God." We can see that this is conditional. They may be brought into right standing with God, this depends on the terms being met.

Who is a righteous person? One who is morally clean in his every day living would be considered a good man, a righteous man, but what does God think about the man who just cleans up the outside? He said this "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." I Samuel 16:7. Jesus said of the Pharisees, "Ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy." Matthew 23:28.

The one righteousness that every person must have to be acceptable to God is the imputed righteousness of God's Son, Jesus Christ, none other will do. Through the obedience of this One the righteousness of God is available to all who will come to him by faith. Most people who profess Christianity today, judging from what we hear and read, are depending on their own righteousness, their own works. They say we must believe in Christ, but at the same time they will say we must add our works, that we must hold out faithful to the end in order to get to heaven. But the Bible says this: "But to him that worketh not but believeth on him

that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:5. God expects his children to live a godly life, but it is not his way for us to get to heaven. Salvation is of grace, and not of works. Ephesians 2:8.

Jesus was obedient to the Father in all that he sent him to do; He lived in a human form, the likeness of sinful flesh, "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:7-8. Jesus bowed to do the will of the Father and prayed that His will be done. In the Garden He prayed: "Not as I will but as thou wilt." Matthew 26:39. He was facing the cross with all that pain and agony, but like a lamb being led to the slaughter, He opened not His mouth, He offered no resistance. Our sins were upon Him, and on the cross He paid the supreme price in order that we might have his righteousness. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." II Corinthians 5:21.

All those who have Christ have spotless righteousness, quite different from what the Bible says about our own righteousness; and here is what the Bible says about that, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 54:6. What kind of robe are you wearing, one of the filthy rags, or the white robe of righteousness of Jesus Christ? It doesn't matter how white you may try to make your outside it doesn't clean up the inside. If you are just trying to reform and make the outside look good it will be like the Bible says about this kind, the kind that makes clean the outward appearance. You will go back to the old habits, like the dog and old sow, "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." II Peter 2:22. The washing must take place on the inside, and that requires an application of the Blood of Jesus Christ. How is your standing with God? Having the righteousness of Jesus Christ means we have good standing with God. Otherwise it is not good.

Jesus Christ Saves Sinners!

How Big Is God? Continued from Page 1

He is Omnipotent, or all powerful. Then can He be concerned with mere man? While He was creating the great Milky Way He was designing the tiniest of atoms which cannot be seen even under the most powerful microscope. While He was laying out the entire, infinite, universe He was concerning Himself with the tiniest grain of sand on the seaside. When we consider that all His vast and incomprehensible creation was for the man, whom He molded from the dust of the earth, we must conclude that He has a great concern for the lowest of peasants as well as for the most exalted king.

He is Omniscient or all knowing. How vast is the knowledge of God? It is without limit, the past is now, the future is at hand, and the present is both. If all the knowledge accumulated in all the books of all the libraries of the world, together with all knowledge to be gained in a million millenniums to come were all stored in one brilliant mind, it would compare to the knowledge of God as one tiny grain of salt would compare to all the vast oceans of the earth and the grain of salt would still be millions of times too large.

He is omnipresent or at all places at all times. The circle that circumscribes the Monad and thus represents the boundlessness of the Supreme Architect of the universe, illustrates this characteristic of God. If it is untrue that He is Omnipresent, then a limit has been ascribed to His existence and He ceases to be God. The emperor Trajan in a conversation with the rabbi Joshua, hearing the latter say that 'God is everywhere present,' observed, 'I should like to see Him.' 'God's presence is indeed everywhere' replied Joshua, 'but He cannot be seen: no mortal eye can behold His glory.' The emperor insisted, 'Well,' said Joshua, 'suppose we first try to look at one of His ambassadors.' The emperor conceded. The Rabbi took him into the open at noonday and bid him look at the sun in its meridian splendor. 'I cannot - the light dazzles me,' cried Trajan. 'Thou art unable,' said Joshua, 'to endure the light of His creatures and canst thou expect to behold the resplendent glory of the Creator? Would not such a light annihilate you?'

The Bible tells us that God is Love. To describe God's love would be to describe God Himself. Both are totally indescribable as one talented songwriter illustrates in one verse of his beautiful song:

If we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the Love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.