

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

“REMOVE NOT THE ANCIENT LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET.” PROVERBS 22:28

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IF THE FOUNDATIONS BE DESTROYED

by M. A. Brawner

A question is raised in the book of Psalms regarding the foundations. The verse under consideration is given here: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” Psalms 11:3. As will be presented in the following references, the Lord described the foundation as that on which a person lives their life. The overwhelming majority of so called Christianity today has been assimilated into Protestant teachings and practices. These views suggest that a person, independent from the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, can establish their own lives on a solid foundation and live securely. Yet God has laid out in His Word that the life of a born again person needs to be established and maintained under the headship of His Son. This can only be accomplished in the Church He organized during His personal ministry and He has maintained unto this very day. This is an important question and one well worth our time to consider.

We find the Lord to address this important teaching in such places as Luke 6:47-49. Students of the Bible will recognize this as part of what is known as the Sermon on the Mount. Having just established His Church, the Lord delivered this message. Some have described this as the Lord’s Church Dedication Sermon. In it, He explains the importance of a solid foundation. Let’s think about some important points the Lord makes in this explanation.

Here are some points to consider from Luke 6:47-49. Whether or not a house is built on the foundation, the “flood arose and the stream beat vehemently” on the house. The house built on the foundation withstood the flood and the stream. The house built on the earth fell and was greatly ruined. What made the difference between being on the foundation or on the earth was not in the “hearing” the Lord’s sayings but in “doing” them.

The four points identified here are part of God’s Word. This being the case, we

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THE KJV UPDATED?

by H. B. Little

The Baptist Landmark is an advocate for the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. We believe it is the best English translation of the Holy Scriptures. As such, we promote it as the sacred English text.

Proponents of newer English versions contend that the KJV is too difficult to read. They say the KJV, which was completed in 1611, is written in an outdated dialect. They say the vocabulary of the KJV is no longer common English. As such, they assert that newer translations are needed to make Scripture easier to read and understand.

Here is the question to consider: are newer versions of the English Bible merely the KJV with updated dialect? Are the New Living Translation (NLT), English Standard Version (ESV), New Life Version (NLV), and others just like our older version without the thee’s, thou’s, ye’s, etc? A simple comparison of these versions with the KJV reveals the answer is no. Let’s look at a few examples.

One example is found in Acts 8:36-38. The KJV says:

(36) And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? (37) And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (38) And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

The same passage in the NLT says:

(36) As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” (37) He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

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WEIGHTIER MATTERS OF THE LAW

by Greg Dunham

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Matthew 23:23.

In the times of this writing the Jewish leaders had all but forsaken the spiritual meanings of the law. They were quick to follow the traditions that they had learned, as well as the ceremonial portions of the law of Moses, yet the true meaning of these things was all but lost. In this same 23rd chapter, Jesus takes them to task for their abandoning the real principles of the Scriptures. He pointedly calls them out for their desire to be seen of men, while disregarding the principles that were taught in the very law that they were binding themselves to. In point of fact, they were no more following God than the heathen were. Even under the Old Covenant, God was more concerned with the spiritual observance than the carnal observance, as is seen in 1 Samuel 15:22. “And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” This was in response to Saul’s failure to obey the Lord by not utterly destroying the Amalekites.

The fact is that God has always desired obedience above sacrifices or works. This has not changed in the present. Under the Old Covenant, the people were instructed to offer sacrifices, and go through rituals that were meant to sanctify them as a nation. Hebrews 9:13-14 states, “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Notice that the sanctification here spoken of was

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not a question, but a statement of fact. They were, as a nation, sanctified by this. However, in the next verse Paul calls these things dead works and encourages the Hebrews to serve God with a clear conscience. The conscience is an inward commodity, not an outward act. The actions of obedience that God desires are not mere formalities but must originate from the heart. We must serve God from a pure heart, or our works are not acceptable.

The true problem, looking back at the Pharisees was not that they were paying their tithes, but they were omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith. These were primarily of a spiritual nature. Judgment, while holding a negative connotation in today's society, can not be disregarded, if we are to serve a living God. The real nature of judgment is to engage in self examination. Paul so advises the Church at Corinth when correcting them concerning the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:28. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup." Likewise, mercy has to do with the heart. James 2:13 states, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." Mercy is that attribute in humanity that allows us to forgive when we have been wronged and should be inculcated in our lives as a very high priority. Forgiveness is actually of a divine nature, and we are to be as Christ was. Faith is that attribute in humanity that causes us to take God at His word. Hebrew 11:6 states, "But without faith *it* is impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." *Coming to God* here means more than seeking salvation. The context of the chapter is about those saints of God who received a good report or walked with God. They were those that leaned on the Lord for help in a time of need, trusting that God would see them through the trials.

So, are there no sacrifices for us today? Romans 12:1-2 states, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which* is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye

transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." We are called on to make a sacrifice of ourselves: mind, body and soul. The expectation is not just bringing our bodies into subjection, but our thinking should also be changed. This will lead to the changing of our actions. We are to be transformed, by the renewing of our minds, thereby bringing our actions into line with the dictates of God. This is more than simply performing tasks that are written down. This is a changing of the way we think about things. It is a changing of the way we walk in our day to day interactions with others. There is in truth, a change in our nature. This change then drives our actions.

We cannot serve God acceptably by going through the motions. No matter how accurately we recreate the motions that are required, there must be a transformation. This is begun in salvation but should be continued in our lives on a daily basis. 1 Corinthians 15:31-33 states, "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." Paul was a man subject to like passions as we are, yet he considered himself to die daily. This is another way of saying that on a daily basis he crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof. Paul's manner of service to God was not a formality but a living faith that caused a change day by day in his actions.

We are not to serve God by simply following the do's and do not's. If this is all we have, then we are no better off than the Pharisees that simply performed the outward rituals of service, while leaving off the spiritual things of the law. We then also are become like the whited sepulchers, that appear beautiful to the eye but inwardly are full of dead men's bones. Perhaps, this is in truth the state of our people today. If so, would not the pronouncement of Christ to the Pharisees ring true to us today?

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her

wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Matthew 23:37-39.

FORMER YEARS

by H. B. Little

In the spring of this year, I sat down with Sister Frances Williams and her family to discuss some of her recollections as a member of Union Missionary Baptist Church in Lafayette, Tennessee. In my three years as pastor of Union Church, Sister Williams has made several good talks about her time as a member of the church. I have always enjoyed these talks and have been especially fascinated by her recollections from former days.

Sister Williams has been a member of Union Church for 75 years and has many experiences to share. The most important experience that she shared with me that day was how she came to trust the Savior. Though many years had passed, she described with keenest thought the days leading up to that revival in 1944. She recalled:

I had known ever since I was a little girl that someday I would need to be saved. But until that year, it had never really bothered me. But the day that the revival was to start that night, we were out under an oak tree playing something. It was a beautiful sunny day, but it didn't look right to me. I had the revival on my mind.

She went on to describe the setting of the revival. Brother F. L. Ray was the pastor at Union, and the church had called Brother Gladys Gregory to assist in the meeting. At that time, Union held day and night services. According to Sister Frances, the preachers did not usually invite sinners to the altar the first night or two of the meeting. And in 1944, it was Tuesday night before an invitation was given. It was this night that she believed. She described it this way:

I was very bashful, and I didn't want to get up out of my seat and go to the altar. I planned to go though...I sat down on the front seat of the middle row...The whole seat was filled with children about my age. And the front seat in the women's corner, the front seat of the amen's corner, and the seat under the pulpit were all filled with teenage children: which is an unusual site to see these days. I began to

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should remember that they are to be considered as part of the WHOLE Bible rather than in isolation. This is said because we all have the tendency to see the word "house" used in these verses and make a hasty conclusion as to what is being referenced. The teachings of Protestantism tells us that a born again person becomes a part of the New Testament Church at the point they are born again. They mix this idea with a truth from the Bible which explains that "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," 1 Timothy 3:15. Bringing these two together, Protestantism says a person enters the Lord's house at the moment they are born again. The serpent mixed truth with error in order to lead mankind into the great fall. Genesis 3. This Protestant teaching is having the same effect.

God has explained in the Bible that He had His house built under the direction of His own Son. Matthew 16:18. John the Baptist came as a forerunner to prepare the material the Lord would use in this construction process. Luke 1:17. Having received the baptism ordained of God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ laid the foundation of His house in the Apostles and started to build thereon. 1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 2:20, and John 4:2. The Lord established the ordinances which would ensure the Church's perpetuity and continuity. Then He gave the great commission promising to never forsake the Church right up to the day He returns for it. Matthew 28:18-10 and John 14:2-3. The Churches who have directly descended from this Church, who both "hear and do" what the Lord has said, maintain the foundation the Lord explained in Luke 6:47-49. Their perpetuity and continuity are ensured by doing so. However, history has demonstrated Churches cannot last long when they come to the point that they only "hear" but fail to "do" as the Lord instructed. We might read Luke 6:46, which the Lord stated before He described this foundation, to further grasp the importance of being "doers" of the word.

The book of James teaches us that "doing" must accompany "hearing" or hearing is of no value. Consider, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers

only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed," James 1:22-25.

Those who are blessed are different than a forgetful hearer. They remember what they hear and do it. These are blessed in their deeds. True Churches, in order to maintain this sure foundation for children of God, need to labor on. As the world goes more and more crazy, the Church needs to hold the course. Though the government takes off after the policies of the devil, the Church is instructed to continue to lean on the Lord. When asked "will you also go away?", the Church should still respond, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," John 6:67-68.

Let's all be honest and upfront with each other. The life described in the Bible is one we are unable to do on our own. The words of Paul, no doubt divinely inspired, tell the story best. In Romans 7:14-25, we are informed that the human race has been "sold under sin". Even when we are born again, "sin dwells" with us. We can live a life full of wanting to do the will of the Lord but unable to actually do it if we try to do so on our own. Just as a branch needs the vine to be fruitful, so the children of God need the daily mercy and grace of God. This mercy and grace is not needed to keep a child of God saved, but it is needed to overcome the infirmities of the flesh and temptations in the world. Protestantism says we can do this separate from the foundation God has established. They offer a house which is built upon the earth. God says a life conformed to a house separate from the headship of His Son will fall and come to great ruin. So God sent His Son to lay a sure foundation and build His own house upon it. He extends grace to this house daily to help us in our time of need.

One last thought: the worldly Pseudo-Christianity of this day would rob young, unexpected Church members from the assurance of a life carried out on the foundation God has established. The house of God, the Church of the living God, is as important to God's people as it

has ever been. It is where the joy found in soul salvation can become "full", 1 John 1:3-4. Protestants, even those with the word Baptist in their title, own the vast majority of Bible publishing companies. I know of no popular Study Bible they print that teaches the truth about the New Testament Church. They all contain the Protestant Universal Invisible Church heresy. The best of intentions are expressed when we buy a nice Study Bible as a gift for one of our new Church members or teens who have an interest in studying. Yet, we place in their hands a book full of study notes which teach great and dangerous errors. Those notes can persuade its readers to conform to the world and forsake the foundation established of God. Let us guard against such misplaced good intentions and uphold the sure foundation.

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try to pray. I didn't know how to pray. People would come around and talk to me. They would tell me to trust the Lord. And I would watch for different people. And I knew every time Momma came around. But somewhere down in that line, I forgot all about who was coming around to talk to me. And I really got down to business. There is a space of time that I cannot account for. When I came to myself, I saw two people that I thought I never had been especially thoughtful of how pretty they were. One was a man and one was a woman. And I thought they looked so happy. Before I knew it then, I was on my feet and I told people that I got saved. Brother Gladys Gregory was standing in the stand. And I passed around by there, and he said, "How do you feel?" And I said, "I feel alright!" That was on a Tuesday night, the 18th of July.

Sister Williams shared that several were saved during that revival and that the meeting continued day and night until the day service of the third Wednesday of the meeting. It was on that day, the 2nd of August in 1944, that Sister Frances was baptized into the membership of Union Church along with 25 others. In those days, Union baptized at the creek by the church house at the close of the revival.

When I asked her how the church conducted the altar service those days, she described the church as more eager to work with sinners. She answered:

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THE KJV UPDATED?

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In the NLT and most other new versions, verse 37 is completely omitted. The eunuch asks a very important question: what is the prerequisite for baptism? The answer given by Philip is this: if you believe with all your heart, you may be baptized. Outside of the KJV, the answer is predominantly removed from the text. The verse containing this vital doctrine is reduced to a footnote.

Another example is found in 1 John 5:7-8. The KJV includes the Johannine Comma which is underlined:

(7) For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (8) And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

The same passage in the ESV omits it completely. It says:

(7) For there are three that testify: (8) the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

When the Comma is not omitted, this passage clearly teaches that God exists in three divine Persons: the Father, the Word (the Son), and the Holy Ghost. This doctrine, called the doctrine of the Trinity, is among the founding tenets of Christianity. Yet the ESV and others omit this important phrase from the passage.

A final example is found in Revelation 11:7-9. The KJV says:

(7) And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. (8) And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. (9) And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

The same passage in the NLT provides a subtle change that affects the interpretation of the prophetic scripture. It says:

(7) When they have finished speaking for God, the wild animal will make war with them. It will come up out of the hole without a bottom. This wild animal will have power over them and kill them. (8) Their dead bodies will lie in the street

of Jerusalem. It is where their Lord was nailed to a cross. The city is sometimes called Sodom and Egypt. (9) For three-and-one-half days those from every people and from every family and from every language and from every nation will look at their dead bodies. People will not allow the dead bodies of these two men to be put in a grave.

Several years ago, I had a discussion with a friend regarding this very passage of scripture. We discussed it using these two versions of the Bible. As we discussed its meaning, I explained that I understood the two witnesses are not men. Rather, the two represent the New Testament Church. I proceeded to explain the passage in the light of Zechariah 4 and Revelation 1. My friend disagreed with my interpretation, asking why the Bible specifically says they are "men". He read Revelation 11:9 of his NLT, "For three-and-one-half days those from every people and from every family and from every language and from every nation will look at their dead bodies. People will not allow the dead bodies of these two men to be put in a grave." I then read to him the same passage from my KJV, "And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."

My friend and I never saw eye to eye on the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11. But the next time I saw him with a Bible, he had a KJV. We both learned something from our discussion. Even subtle differences between Bible versions can make a big difference in the interpretation.

Newer versions of the Bible are not the King James Version with updated English. These versions remove more than the thee's, thou's and ye's. In fact, more than a dozen verses have been removed from their pages. In addition to these deletions, there are hundreds of passages that have been altered. These deletions and alterations are not harmless. They can affect how we interpret the Bible. Our interpretation of the Bible affects our doctrine. Our doctrine affects our practice. As such, we ought to think twice before using a modern version of the Bible.

Please address correspondence to:
The Baptist Landmark
P. O. Box 392
Westmoreland, TN 37186
-OR-
hblittle@thebaptistlandmark.com

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One of the differences in the altar services, everybody nearly that was a member of the church would come to the altar and stand during the altar services. It was not uncommon to hear women praying aloud in the altar services...It seems that not as many church members come around and instruct the lost on the altar as we used to.

Sister Williams and her siblings were raised in the Union Camp community, just walking distance from the church house. She described her Christian upbringing as a simpler, church-centric one.

All social life was involved with the church. We didn't have TV. A lot of people didn't have radio. Just about any kind of activity was something concerning the church. Of course, we went to church everywhere. At that time [Union Church] only had preaching on the Saturday conference and the third Sunday...That's just what you did. We went to church. I can remember when my oldest brother and sisters were still at home, and I was very small. When we got in the car to go to church my dad, brother and sisters were singing. We had an old '31 model Ford car. And everywhere that we went, we always sang on the way. It was a heritage that is priceless to me. We had family prayer, especially every Sunday night. Either my dad or my mother would lead in prayer. We grew up with that. My mother, she prayed beautiful prayers. We didn't have any money hardly at all. But we were rich. We were rich.

Sister Williams shared other fond memories of Union Church and the 60 or so Baptist churches she has visited in her lifetime. She fondly described, in days gone by, a greater zeal among God's people, a greater sense of cooperation among the churches, a greater amount of missionary effort, and the spiritual services of old associational meetings.

As I ponder our discussion from that afternoon, I wonder if the future holds any revivals like Union's in 1944. If it does, it will be because the churches take a greater interest in our mourners. It will be because we become a more church-centric people. It will be because our duties as church members are taken as seriously in the home as they are the church house. Let us strive for such, for "then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years." Malachi 3:4.