

# THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

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

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## THE GRACE THAT BRINGS SALVATION

by M. A. Brawner

When a study of the Bible is conducted, it is apparent that the world is in its last days, 1 Jn 2:18. The last days are described as times when sin would abound and love would wax cold, Mat 24:12. People would love pleasures more than they love God, 2 Tim 2:4. Men would hold to a form of godliness while denying the power thereof, 2 Tim 2:5. Let's allow this last situation to draw our attention. The Bible states that men would enter times when they lay claim to godliness but deny the power needed for true godliness to be present. This has to be a man-made godliness where God is left out. God may be spoken of and referenced, yet He has no active part in it. Truly, this situation is worthy of consideration seeing we live in such a day.

Man-made religion is nothing new. Ever since Eve was willing to listen to the devil's lies, he has had a lie to offer man. The devil obviously has no real interest in the form of false religion men are willing to adopt. He just wants to make sure it is something besides the true religion where mankind escapes hell and becomes faithful servants of Jesus Christ. As long as man ends up going to hell, the devil is happy. Then, for those who escape hell through genuine soul salvation, the devil wants to offer practices which lead born again people to serve anything just as long as it isn't in the Church the Lord Jesus Christ established. When children of God unite to serve Jesus Christ in His one Church, glory is rendered to God and the world of lost humanity has the greatest opportunity to escape the power of darkness. So then, man-made religion is of high interest to the devil. He promotes it. The more variety the better. In these last times in which we live, it is apparent that the devil is hard at work to distract mankind from the truth. The answer to overcome his distractions has been the same from the beginning. The answer is found in "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." Tit 2:11.

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## A CHRISTIAN NATION

by H. B. Little

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD...Psa 33:12. The fleshly author of this passage is unknown. Being inspired scripture, we know its author spake as moved by the Holy Ghost. And it contains eternal truth. It is as true today as it was when written. It states that a nation which has the LORD (Jehovah) as its God (King, Judge, Lord, and Savior), that nation will be blessed. With the exception of Israel and Judah, no nation has been more blessed by keeping this precept than ours.

The providential blessings upon our nation are evident from its founding. This is no doubt the result of our founders being guided by Christian principles. Much of history—as it is taught today—focuses on the deism of a few of them and neglects the Christianity of the majority. However, our founders were greatly influenced by their Christian faith and the Bible.

Patrick Henry was a general during the Revolutionary War. He served in the Continental Congress and was present when our Constitution was ratified in Virginia. He is well-known for his oratory ability and credited the quote "give me liberty or give me death!" He was lesser known for his Christian faith. This fact he documents in a letter to his daughter in 1796—a letter which had no political ambitions. He wrote:

*I hear it is said by the deists that I am one of their number; and indeed, that some good people think I am no christian. This thought gives me much more pain, than the appellation of tory; because I think religion of infinitely higher importance than politics; and I find much cause to reproach myself, that I have lived so long, and have given no decided and public proofs of my being a christian. But, indeed, my dear child, this is a character which I prize far above all this world has or can boast.*

Samuel Adams is considered the Father of the American Revolution. He signed

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## BOGARD ON SAVING FAITH

by H. B. Little

Ben M. Bogard (1868-1951) was a Baptist preacher, author, and educator whose work was largely done in Little Rock, Arkansas. He wrote the popular book *Pillars of Orthodoxy, or Defenders of the Faith*. He was a champion debater, engaging in over 200 public discussions.

In 1938, at 70 years of age, Bro. Bogard debated *Church of Christ* minister, N. B. Hardeman, in Nashville, Tennessee. In this debate, Bro. Bogard contended for salvation by faith only, while his opponent argued for salvation by baptism—and like duties.

In the following passage, Bro. Bogard assails baptismal salvation and sets forth the nature of saving faith:

*Nothing we can do can save the soul, no work at all that we can perform can save the soul; because, if so, then we could boast of having performed it...*

*Then my friend [Hardeman] quotes from 2 Cor. 5:17: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away." Very well. Eph 2:10: "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works." The good works we get there come from the new creation. I want to know if you worked yourself into creation, or were you created into good works? Well, did you work your way into creation or were you created into the good works like the Bible says? You got the creation first, and it didn't take baptism to get it...*

*Then my friend comes to the plan of salvation, and says the plan of salvation has been the same in all ages, but the act that must be performed to obtain salvation may not be the same in all ages. I am going to maintain that there is no act at all that any man in the Old Testament time or the New ever had to perform in order to be saved. Salvation is received by faith, and faith is the only thing you can do without doing anything. Faith submits to the Lord and doesn't pretend to do; as long as you attempt to do, you are working it yourself and*

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## A CHRISTIAN NATION

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the Declaration of Independence and was present when the Constitution was ratified in Massachusetts. He too is lesser known for his Christian faith. After his political ambitions had ceased, his last will and testament shared his hope in Christ. He wrote:

*Principally and first of all, I recommend my soul to that Almighty Being who gave it, and my body I commit to the dust, relying on the merits of Jesus Christ for a pardon of all my sins.*

John Jay was an author of The Federalist Papers and the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He was also a member of the American Bible Society. He said these things concerning the Christian religion:

*The Bible is the best book of all books, for it is the word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in the next.*

*The evidence of the truth of Christianity requires only to be carefully examined to produce conviction in candid minds...they who undertake that task will derive advantages.*

While other examples could be given, these show that our nation and its institutions were greatly influenced by the Christian religion. Even the less religious among the founders acknowledged that the moral principles found in the Bible are the bedrock upon which any civilized nation should be built.

John Adams was a signer of the Declaration, a signer of the Bill of Rights, and the second president of our nation. He had this to say about the principles upon which our nation was founded—general Christian principles. He wrote:

*The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence, were the only principles in which that beautiful assembly of young men could unite, and these principles only could be intended by them in their address, or by me in my answer. And what were these general principles? I answer, the general principles of Christianity, in which all those sects were united, and the general principles of English and American liberty, in which all those young men united, and which had united all parties in America, in majorities sufficient to assert and maintain her*

*independence. Now I will avow, that I then believed and now believe that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.*

The United States was founded as a Christian nation, upon general Christian principles. The founders established no religion or Christian denomination, understanding the words of the Savior, “my kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36. Thomas Jefferson well stated this principle when writing to the Danbury Baptist Association after being elected the third president of the United States. He wrote:

*Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between Church & State.*

Our great nation was founded on Christian principles—one of those being freedom of conscience. In other words, we have freedom of religion. We have lived under this principle for many years, tolerating belief systems which we do not accept as our own. As such, the Lord’s churches have thrived. Lately, however, some have decided that freedom of religion should mean freedom from religion. They make a concerted effort to remove Christian morality from our government and society. No doubt the scripture is fulfilled by them. For Psa 2:1-5 says:

*Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*

Their campaign for “freedom from religion” has little concern for individual liberty and freedom of conscience.

Rather, they are attempting to create a lawless society where their depraved lives are not condemned by God’s law. And they promise a better nation by their labors. However, the Lord has promised only evil awaits such a nation. God shall “speak unto them in his wrath.” God has promised “the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” Psa 9:17.

The Lord told His disciples that we “are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?” Mat 5:13. Our Baptist churches had a significant influence during our nation’s founding. While the salt was salty, the land was savory. Let us continue to do the Lord’s work and use God’s word to influence our nation’s course. The Lord has promised “ye that forget God...I [will] tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.” Psa 50:22. If we abandon God as a nation, there is no plan, program, or defense to prevent our sure destruction. But the Lord has also said, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.” Psa 50:23. If we are a Christian nation, guided by godly principles, there is no problem so great that our Lord cannot help us overcome.

We live in the most prosperous nation in the history of the world. This is because Jehovah has been our God. If we desire to secure these blessings to ourselves and our posterity, He must continue to be our God, for “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.”

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## PRAYER FOR SCOTUS

Let us pray as the Supreme Court deliberates *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*. May God hear our prayers and our laws again protect the most vulnerable and innocent among us—the unborn. For the Lord hates the shedding of their innocent blood.

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## THE GRACE THAT BRINGS SALVATION

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Man-made religion is based on what man is able to do for himself. Remember the lie the devil told in the garden? He suggested to Eve that God had withheld from man all of the truth. The devil told Eve that she would not surely die if she disobeyed God, Gen 3:4. Rather, if she would exercise her right to act according to her freewill, she would be like God. The devil led Eve to see that on the one hand she had the way of God but on the other hand she had her own way. So Eve was tempted to follow her own way then presented that to Adam. Adam extended his own hand, took hold of the fruit, and willingly ate, see Gen 3:6. Here we have the historical account of the first time mankind rejected what God set before him to adopt what the devil set before him. There is a dark history in the world of the same taking place down through time. The Bible reveals that these last days will be some of the darkest of all. Men will adopt “forms of godliness” in place of true worship of God.

Man-made forms of godliness are those that involve the works of man. Take the baptism of infants as an example. Those who practice infant baptism believe this is essential for salvation. When the Bible is studied from cover to cover there is no example of even one infant being baptized. Yet the Bible contains many instances of those who come to baptism and give their testimony of being born again before being baptized. They were asked to “bring forth fruits meet for repentance,” Mat 3:8. They had to believe with all their hearts before being baptized, Acts 8:37. Obviously, infants are unable to do any of these. Yet this practice is common around the world among those who bear the name “Christian”. In the year 2000, there was an estimated 968,000,000 members of the Roman Catholic church. There were 218,000,000 members of the Orthodox Catholic church. All of these practice infant baptism. Additionally, there were 396,000,000 Protestants reported the same year. In this group the vast majority are Presbyterians, Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, and Episcopalians. All of these likewise practice infant baptism. Problem is, there has never been an individual who received infant baptism without another person being directly

involved. It is as if all of those involved in the practice fail to realize that they are depending on works for salvation. One person performs work on another person and calls it essential to salvation. Do they feel God needs the help of a man in order to save a soul? Is God unable to save a soul without their help? Did God have a lie written down when He said that there is only One mediator between Him and mankind? All of this reminds us of the kind of ideas presented to Eve in the garden recorded in the third chapter of Genesis.

Likewise, baptism for the salvation of an adult falls into this category. When anyone concludes that baptism is needed in any way before a person can receive the forgiveness of sins, they are depending on work. This work may be called “holy” work, “righteous” work, or “sanctified” work. A person can put Sunday dress clothes on this work if they want but it still ends up being work. Just like infant baptism, this practice requires another person in order for it to be performed. What must go through a person’s mind who leads another person out into the waters of baptism then buries them with the intent of saving their soul? Do they realize that they are stepping into the position of mediator between that lost soul and God? Even though God is so high and so holy, must God patiently wait for the administrator of baptism to bury the candidate in the watery grave to be able to deliver the soul? Where do such workers believe eternal life rests? Is eternal life in their hands or in the hands of God?

Then there are those who ask the seeker of salvation to read a prayer in order to be forgiven. It is true that they keep their hands to themselves but they still stand between the lost soul and the great God of us all. In the Bible we read that “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” Rom 10:13. But these tell men to just repeat after them. Some of these will even go so far as to suggest that “calling on the name of the Lord” in prayer is just unnecessary. These are men of works if there ever has been men of works. They are working on the lost soul to engage their minds in a system of mental belief. Mental godliness is a sham form of godliness which flat out denies the power thereof. If ever a person stood in the way of a lost soul seeking the Savior, these surely do.

Then, surely we all can see that the idea of learning to “live godly so that God will save us” is fully work based. The poor lost soul may have been convicted that their lives were full of sin. Perhaps they heard of a better way to live. A way that is more wholesome and acceptable to the public eye. They feared that continuing to live wickedly would surely end with them in hell so they started down the path of leaving off the bad and choosing the good. They look at their lives as set in a balance. The wicked works of life they put on one side of the balance but the wholesome they put on the other side. Their thoughts are that at the end of the life, the good must outweigh the bad. Then and only then, do they believe they will be saved. When we step back and take in this whole idea, it is apparent that this is man-made. It is all based on works. The one side is evil work of man and the other side is supposed to be the good work of man. God is left out all the way around. Man is doing it all by himself.

The verse referenced in the title of this article speaks of “...the grace of God that bringeth salvation...” Let us all rest assured in the fact stated in this scripture. The fact is that salvation is by the grace of God and by that grace alone. Knowing that salvation is by grace, we should quickly realize that there can be no work of any sort involved in salvation. One of the plainest statements found in the Bible is that, “And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace,” Rom 11:6. This verse means that as soon as a man doing work gets involved in it, the thing is no more of grace. Even if that work is all dressed up in their best Sunday clothes, it is no more of grace. Grace excludes men and all of their best planned practices. Man must step aside, get out of the way, and let the lost soul seek their Savior. God stands ready to save in an instance and has no need to wait for some man to come on the scene and help Him. God has saved multitudes of souls when no one else even knew He was doing so. God placed only One mediator between Himself and the world of lost humanity. Let’s continue to direct the lost to Him so they can find the grace of God that will bring them salvation. Otherwise, we are those who adopt forms of godliness while denying the power thereof.

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**BOGARD ON SAVING FAITH**

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*not depending upon the Lord...*

*So, go to the sixteenth chapter of Acts and read where the jailer cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" A fair and square question to ask a preacher who ought to know. For he asked an inspired man. And the apostle answered back, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." If after he believes and complies with the condition laid down by the apostles, then if the conditions are raised, God certainly becomes a dishonorable God. You can't make anything else out of it. When you have a promise of God, he is going to stick to that promise.*

This passage contains one of my favorite explanations about the nature of saving faith. He says of saving faith:

*Faith is the only thing you can do without doing anything. Faith submits to the Lord and doesn't pretend to do; as long as you attempt to do you are working it yourself and not depending upon the Lord.*

Bro. Bogard has born the scorn of a few generations of *Church of Christ* preachers because of this quote. Paul said of such unbelieving scoffers of a simple gospel, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." 1 Co 1:18.

In my opinion, saving faith has scarcely been better described. Every child of God should be able to understand it. The faith that saves is one coming from the heart. It is a faith which cannot be taught by man. It cannot be recited. It trusts not in the merits of self. It trusts not in the works of oneself or another. It looks not to ordinance, church, priest, or preacher. A faith that saves relies on the Savior. It looks to Him and Him alone.

How many Christian testimonies have culminated with *I didn't know what else to do—when I had tried everything else—then I tried the Savior, Lord help me, or Lord save me?* How many sinners have found relief from the depths of condemnation and hopelessness when *turning it all over to the Lord?* When we quit trying "to do"—take care of it ourselves or depend on anyone or anything else—and looked to the Lord, He saved us. Saving faith is the only thing you can do, without doing anything. This our ransomed souls understand very well.

**A 'CHRISTMAS' SERMON**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men" Luke 2:14.

The only begotten Son of God being anointed to be a prophet, priest and king, had a very important work to accomplish, as the Mediator between God and man. It was necessary that He should humble Himself and assume our degraded nature. Had He appeared in our world in all the majesty and glory of the Deity, it would have been impossible for the children of men to listen to His doctrine, and it would have been impossible for Him to offer Himself a sacrifice for sin; but being God manifested in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, God in our nature; very justly then, and with the greatest propriety the angels sang with rapture and surprise, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will to men.

I would call your attention to the incarnation of Christ, and to the glorious anthem sung on the solemn occasion...

Though it is impossible for the unchangeable God to be made a creature; yet the human nature was so closely and mysteriously united to the divine nature, that the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the prince of peace, is the Son given and the child born in Bethlehem Ephratah. Though the incarnation of Emmanuel did not take away nor tarnish in the least degree the essential glory of the Deity; yet it was a very great condescension in Him, Who is above all, God blessed forevermore, to be united to the nature of man. With the greatest astonishment Solomon asked the important question—will God in very deed dwell with man on earth? The question is now answered in the affirmative by men and angels. The Word that was in the beginning with the Father in the fullness of time tabernacled in the flesh; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Though we cannot form any idea of the infinite distance between God and man, yet that vacuum is filled up in the incarnation of the Messiah, so that He is called the true God, and the man Christ Jesus.

Though angels are more excellent creatures than men yet He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Though He did not take upon Him the human nature in its original glory; yet He was perfectly free from all the contamination of sin; He was

holy, harmless, and separate from sinners; He knew no sin, there was no iniquity found in Him, nor any guile in His mouth.

Though it was impossible for the divine nature to become human, or the human nature to become divine; yet the two natures mysteriously united in Christ, make but one glorious person. Notwithstanding that our blessed Redeemer thought it not robbery to be equal with God 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 painful and ignominious death of the cross; yet there was something so wonderful and glorious in His nativity that the angels came down from Heaven to publish the glad tidings. It is true, there were no Ambassadors sent to the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, and the court of Rome, to proclaim His birth; but the Ambassadors sent to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem in the land of Judea, were far more noble than any that ever announced the birth of an eldest son, of the greatest monarch in the world. No sooner Jesus made His appearance on earth than the command was given, that all the angels of Heaven should worship Him; whose example was followed by all the wise men of the east, who came and worshipped Him. The prophet Isaiah said, that His name should be called wonderful! And the angel Gabriel said to Mary that He should be great, and should be called the son of the Highest; and that the Lord God should give unto Him the throne of His father David; that He should reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there should be no end. He became poor, that through His poverty, we should be made rich. He humbled Himself that we might be exalted, He was wounded, that we might be healed; yet He died of the most shameful death, that we might be saved in the most glorious manner that infinite wisdom might have contrived.

The glorious anthem sung on the solemn occasion, glory, peace, and good will...by the angel's anthem, it appears that the miserable objects of mercy may rejoice. Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy; which shall be to all the righteous? No...but shall be to all people. A Saviour, and a Redeemer is born, for a lost and perishing world...

*This is a portion of a sermon by Welsh Baptist preacher Christmas Evans (1766-1838).*