

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

Published weekly by the Forest Hill church of Christ

Visit our Website at www.foresthillchurch.org

Forest Hill Church of Christ

3950 Forest Hill-Irene Rd.
Memphis, TN 38125

Office: (901) 751-2444
Fax: (901) 751-9711
Info Line: (901) 392-2449

Elders:

Anthony D. Callahan
Floyd M. Hayes
Harold D. Mangrum
Leonard Watson

Minister:

Barry M. Grider

VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

**HOME OF
MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF
PREACHING**
www.msop.org

Missions Supported:

Iglesia de Cristo (Getwell)
Kakinada, India
Manila, Philippines
Murmansk, Russia
Far East/World Evangelism
In Search of the Lord's Way
Truth for the World

Volume 33

May 3, 2005

Number 18

WHAT IS MAN-AS SHOWN BY THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

(Part Three)

Barry M. Grider

The Christian must believe that his prayers affect the will of God. Peter wrote, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1Pet. 5:8). Why be anxious when you can turn your trials over to Him? The Psalmist said, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psm. 46:1). Do you believe Him? If a Christian could not affect the will of God, why pray? Peter continues, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12). Notice, the attitude God has toward the righteous as compared to His attitude toward the wicked. Do we have Biblical precedent that a child of God affected the will of God? Recall Elijah and his prayer for rain. James writes,

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit (Jam. 5:17,18).

Now how did this happen?

And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel" (1Kings 18:41-45).

Notice, Elijah prayed for rain. God provided rain, but not miraculously. Rain is not an uncommon or unnatural phenomenon. Rain comes from the clouds and so it happened when Elijah prayed that God provided through His natural laws. This is the providence of God at work. This proves that God does not have to work directly or miraculously in order to work on behalf of man. Winkler writes,

Furthermore, we do not have to have the miraculous to have the providential. They are not one and the same thing. When the angel stood by the apostle Paul, on the occasion of his ship being wrecked, and said, "God hath give thee all them that sail with thee," such was a miracle. But, the passengers safely getting to shore by swimming and floating on broken pieces of ship was not miraculous. Peter's

THE REST OF THE STORY

(Part One)

Matthew Martin

I have many fond memories of my childhood. One memory in particular is the first time my father and I went together to get our hair cut. Being a young “whippersnapper” of about 12, I had no say as to what my father and I listened to on the radio. While I would have preferred a little rock-and-roll, my father had other tastes. He was a Paul Harvey man. And in time so too would I be. In fact I grew to look forward to our drives to the barber shop so he and I could enjoy together listening to Paul Harvey.

Harvey, as you may know, has one bit on his program where he recounts an individual’s unusual and sometimes amazing life-story, but with a slight twist to it. He never tells you up front who the individual is. After he has told an interesting story about the individual and what that person has meant to society, Paul will reveal the name, followed by his now classic line: “...and now you know...the rest of the story.”

While Paul Harvey was never trying to be deceitful with his stories, there are those in the religious world who make their living only telling you part of the story. There are some that, while they appear to be preaching Bible-based sermons, in reality they are only giving you *part* of the story. Let’s consider the *rest* of the story as it pertains to the various conversions of the book of Acts, beginning with the first conversion on the day of Pentecost.

THE REST OF THE STORY CONCERNING THE CONVERSIONS AT PENTACOST (ACTS 2)

After the Lord was resurrected, and before ascending to the throne prepared for Him, Jesus met with His Apostles and gave them what we call the Great Commission. In it He commanded them to go and teach and preach to all nations. Then, just before ascending, He promised His Apostles would be endued with power from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) and told them to wait in Jerusalem for that power to come. That power fell upon them as recorded in Acts 2:1-4. While this was happening there were “dwelling at Jerusalem, devout men, out of every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). Some of those Jews there at that time were the exact ones that some nights earlier had cried out concerning

Jesus: “crucify Him, crucify Him” (John 19:6).

After Peter received the Holy Spirit’s power, he stood up among the eleven and began to preach the first Gospel sermon (Acts 2:14). Peter told the crowd that what was happening was not the effects of alcohol, as some believed (Acts 2:13), but that it was the fulfillment of the prophesy of Joel (Acts 2:16-21). Peter preached his sermon to the crowd, telling them that the man they had crucified was killed by the foreknowledge and plan of God (Acts 2:23). Then Peter quotes David, and tells them that the one they killed was raised, and ascended into the heavens to sit on the right hand of God (Acts 2:25-34). He brings his sermon to a close by telling them, that the man, Jesus, whom they crucified, is both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:26). “

“Now when they heard this they were **pricked in their heart...**” (Acts 2:37). Does the verse stop there? Is this the end? Is there no more? Yes there is more. It is not the end. But so many would have you believe that you should stop reading right there. Don’t read any more. False teachers will say “See here, the Bible says when they heard the Gospel they were pricked in their heart. That means they were saved. God touched them and they opened their hearts to Jesus and they were saved.” Well, does the Bible say anything like that? No! Not at all. Those false teachers are not giving the rest of the story.

The rest of the story is found in verse 37 through the rest of the chapter. In verse 37, the crowd, **after** being pricked in their heart, **asked** “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” This is not the joyous shout of the Christian. This is the mournful plea of the alien sinner. This crowd realized what they had done and that ripped their hearts to pieces. And that motivated them to make their lives right. The problem was they didn’t know how to do that. So they asked.

If the false teachers are right, then the Apostles would have said “You don’t need to do anything, you are already saved.” But they did not say that. When asked, the Apostles said “**Repent and be baptized**, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, **for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

False teachers would have you believe that the story of Pentecost ends with the pricking of the hearers hearts. But keep reading and it is plainly seen, that crowd needed something else. They needed to be baptized... And now you know the rest of the story...

(continued next week)

deliverance from prison in Acts 12:5ff was miraculous, whereas there is no suggestion of the miraculous in Paul being delivered from so great a death (2 Cor. 1:9-11). Much of what occurred on Mount Carmel in Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal was miraculous (1 Kings 18:31-39). But, his prayer for rain was answered providentially and not miraculously (1 Kings 18:41-46; James 5:18). Yes, there were clouds and they came from the right direction. This is providence. Had they been in a desert without a single cloud in the sky, and rain would have come, such would have been a miracle.⁵

Nichols writes,

The Holy Spirit does not have to operate **directly** upon a heart to move it. There are many things God providentially does—not miraculously—in answering our prayers. There is a difference between providence and miracles. Providence is the word “provide” plus “ence” (with a slight change in pronunciation). God provides without miracles (necessarily) in many cases, and always has done so.⁶

Some ask, “if the Holy Spirit only works through the word, how then do you explain providence?” There is a difference between what the Holy Spirit does on behalf of a child of God and His directly impacting the saint's heart. For example, Paul wrote,

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26).

Here the Holy Spirit is going before the throne of grace on behalf of the child of God, not doing something directly to the Christian. While many events and circumstances occur that God uses providentially to benefit man, and particularly the Christian, conversion and sanctification are always dependent upon one's hearing and obeying the word of God. One could say he providentially came into contact with a gospel preacher, but such a one must still listen to the preacher and heed his message to be saved.

(To be continued.)

Non-Profit
US POSTAGE
PAID
GERMANTOWN, TN
PERMIT #94

The Forest Hill News
Forest Hill Church of Christ
3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Germantown, TN 38125
Address Service Requested