

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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SEVEN WONDERS

By: C. D. Cole

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus 2:11-14.

Novelty hunters are very numerous, people who are always looking for something new, like the Athenians. But human and earthly wonders soon became old and cease to attract and become commonplace. The seven wonders of the world in nature are seldom spoken of today because other wonders have surpassed them. But the Bible is an abiding wonder. Its origin, teaching, and power are all superhuman. It was a wonder when Lindberg flew the Atlantic alone; it was a wonder when Corrigan flew the wrong way to Ireland. But people soon cease to talk about these things because of other happenings.

Our text speaks of seven wonders that will never be surpassed and that will never cease to interest some people.

I. A WONDERFUL EXHIBITION

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." The exhibition of grace is a wonderful exhibition.

How slow we are to appreciate the grace of God; the display of God's goodness to sinners. And some never learn the meaning of grace. Grace was displayed at: (a) Calvary--the meaning of the cross is that God was displaying grace to sinners; (b) In our conversion-- that work that was done in us making us appreciate the cross work of Christ and appropriating it to ourselves was grace displaying itself. We did not convert ourselves, we did not make ourselves to differ from the lost about us; it was grace that made the difference. By the grace of

God I am what I am.

II. A WONDERFUL CHARACTER

Jesus is here called *"the great God and Saviour."* Jesus Christ was the most wonderful man that ever walked the earth. He was the most wonderful because He was more than man; He was the Great God and Saviour. What a wonder was the divine incarnation. The ancient of days became an infant; the One who made the worlds became a child; the Great and Mighty God drew nourishment from a woman's breast.

He who never tires rested in a woman's lap; He who owned the universe had not where to lay His head; He who triumphed over the grave had to be lain in a borrowed grace. He is Emmanuel, God with us. He was God manifest in the flesh. He was as truly God while on earth as He was before He came to earth and as He is now. He has always been God and always will be God. He changes in His appearance but not in character and personality.

III. A WONDERFUL GIFT

"He gave Himself for us." For a man to lay down his life for a friend is man at his best. But while we were yet enemies Christ died for us. This is the only example the history of the world has ever given of one willingly dying for His own murderers. He gave Himself for us. What have we given for Him?

IV. A WONDERFUL WORK

The work of redemption. This is why he became incarnate. He was born to die; He came into this world to perform the work of redemption; He was the only one fitted for such a task: redemption and cleansing. When a woman buys a set of china she never thinks of using them until they are washed. Christ redeems, buys, and then washes. He loved the church and gave himself for that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

V. A WONDERFUL PEOPLE

A peculiar people; a people that are different. Sometimes business firms advertise the quality of an article by saying, "Its different." Now if God's people are anything, they are different from the lost world about them. All the metaphors used to describe them emphasize their difference: salt, light, sheep, elect, saints, etc. They have a peculiar citizenship; their citizenship is in heaven. They have a peculiar language; the ungodly don't like to hear them talk about God and eternal things. They have a peculiar task; they are to evangelize the world; that is, tell the story of Christ and his redeeming grace to all men.

VI. A WONDERFUL LIFE

The life of the redeemed man is to be a resisting life; a denying of ungodliness; he is to struggle against his old nature; against the devil. *"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,"* James 4:7 and against the world.

It is to be a sober life. Sober in eating, clothing, speech. The Christian should be the most punctual business man. It is to be an active life. *"Zealous of good works,"* Titus 2:14.

VII. A WONDERFUL PROSPECT

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing," Titus 2:13. That the sun will rise tomorrow is not more certain than that Christ will return to this earth.

THE CHARACTER OF THE TRUE MINISTRY

By: C. D. Cole

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," II Corinthians 4:5.

Introduction: In this section of his epistle Paul is discussing the gospel and its ministry. There are various kinds of ministry spoken of in the Bible. That great collection taken on the mission field by Paul for the poor saints in Jerusalem is called "the ministering to the saints." The word for deacon is the same as the word for minister. The word minister is derived from the Latin, while the word deacon is from the Greek, but they mean the same. So the ministry is a service and the minister is a servant. The ministry Paul is discussing is the ministry of the word. The deacons were chosen to minister the business or carnal things in the church while the apostles gave themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.

Paul says that he received this ministry, that is, he was called by God to minister the word. *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,"* I Timothy 1:12.

In pursuing this ministry Paul did not follow the ways of the flesh and the world. He was open and above-board he renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. Craftiness and deceitfulness were avoided in handling the word of God. If Paul were here today he would look with horror upon the methods of many professional evangelists to gain notoriety, secure large crowds and get big collections.

He next tells us that the way men regard the gospel gives evidence of their spiritual condition. If the gospel he preached was not understood and appreciated and appropriated it proved the person to be lost and blinded by the god of this age.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," II Corinthians 4:6. He speaks of the power that causes man to understand and believe the gospel.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us," II Corinthians 4:7. He says that the preacher is an earthen vessel so that the success of the gospel will be due to the power of God and not the power of the preacher.

In the remainder of the chapter he speaks of the experiences of the preacher which illustrate the earthen vessels in their weak and helpless condition, and the exceeding greatness of God's power. The earthen vessels may be troubled and afflicted on every side, but the power of God keeps them from being straitened or distressed.

We come back now to the text: *"We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."* A very simple analysis gives us: 1. The pastor and his mission; 2. The pastor and his members; 3. The pastor and his motive.

THE PASTOR AND HIS MISSION

"We preach," says the apostle. The pastor's mission is a preaching mission. The New Testament pastor is not a priest with wafers and wine on his way to the sick room; he is a preacher with a life-giving word. The New Testament pastor is not an actor performing for the fleshly entertainment of his audience; he is a man sent of God to cry aloud and spare not. The New Testament pastor is not a salesman employing the tricks of the trade and handling the word of God deceitfully; he is a herald proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. The New Testament pastor is not a politician, fawning and flattering with hidden motives of dishonesty; he is a prophet of God sent to declare all the counsel of God, pressing every truth upon men's consciences in the fear of God. He is not an efficiency expert, applying worldly methods to a heavenly program; he is God's man saving lost men by the foolishness of preaching. We need to get back to the primacy of preaching.

The preacher's theme is stated both negatively and positively:

Negatively:

"We preach not ourselves." The

most disgusting topic a preacher can find is to preach himself. There are but two topics and when a man is not preaching Christ Jesus the Lord he is preaching himself. When is a man preaching himself? He is preaching himself when he uses the ministry for his own advantage rather than for the glory of Christ. He is preaching himself when he builds himself up in the esteem of the people rather than to build the people up in the most holy faith. He is preaching himself when he preaches his own experiences rather than the gospel of Christ.

Positively:

"Christ Jesus the Lord." The preacher is to preach a person not an abstract doctrine. This person is Christ Jesus the Lord. Every word here is pregnant. The word Christ is a New Testament word, and is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew Messiah or anointed one. All through the Old Testament the coming of a person, a unique person, is predicted. He is to be God's anointed Saviour of sinners. Andrew, *"findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiahs, which is, being interpreted, the Christ,"* John 1:41. *"The woman [at the well] saith unto him, I know that Messiahs cometh, which is called Christ,"* John 4:25. Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be and was the personal fulfillment of these Old Testament predictions.

The word Jesus is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Joshua which means Jehovah saves, or Jehovah is salvation. There have been many men by the name Jesus, but only one was and is the Christ. This was Jesus of Nazareth, born of a virgin in Bethlehem, in the days of Caesar Augustus, condemned by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate and crucified on a Roman cross.

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THE LORD'S SUPPER

By: C. D. Cole

Introduction: By disposition and training Baptists are not ceremonialists; that is, we do not put emphasis on outward rites and ceremonies. In our public worship we put emphasis on preaching. We believe in the primacy of preaching and the pulpit is the central thing in our worship. We have no altars at which an official performs; we have pulpits from which the preacher proclaims the truth of God's word.

This marks Christianity as different from Old Testament ritualism. Under the Old Testament economy there were many sacrifices and ceremonies, and there was an official class of people called priests who officiated at altars. These priests were not preachers, but officials who performed at altars. The book they had to know word perfect was the book of Leviticus, the book of Old Testament worship. They had to know when and what animal to offer. They had five distinct offerings to make in the interest of the people: the burnt offering, the meat, the peace, the sin, the trespass offering. The priests had no sermons to prepare and deliver, but they had all these offerings to make.

Christianity has two simple but beautiful and meaningful ceremonies, which we call ordinances: baptism and Lord's Supper. They are not sacraments but symbols. A symbol is that which stands for or represents something else. Baptism and the Supper are symbols of the Gospel; that is, they represent the Gospel; they point to what saves; they do not save, but point us to what does save. We have a definition of the gospel, "*How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and*

that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures," I Corinthians 15:3-4.

What are we doing in observing the Supper?

1. We are commemorating the death of Christ. This is a memorial service in honor and memory of Him, "*This do in remembrance of me,*" I Corinthians 11:24. We are thinking of his body while we eat this bread and drink the fruit of the vine. These things are not his actual body and blood, but they represent his body and blood. When we look at a picture of a loved one, we think of the person; the picture is not the person in reality, but represents the person. As the passover commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and as the 4th of July commemorates our birth as a nation; so the Lord's Supper commemorates our salvation through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.

As a mother might tell her children to meet over her grave and commemorate her sacrificial toil for them, so Christ bids his people meet and remember Him.

This celebration is to be done in church capacity. It is not a solitary observance on the part of the individual. No showing forth is possible except in company. In New Testament history no single individual ever celebrated the Supper by himself. Nor is the celebration of the Supper in each family by itself ever mentioned in New Testament.

2. We are expressing our faith publicly in the blood of Christ for salvation. Nobody but a believer should come to the table. The unbeliever would be telling a lie; he would be professing something he would not have. Where there is no faith in Christ it would be mockery

to partake of the Supper. This supper tells us that Christ's death was a sacrifice which we trust to put away sin. The Lord's Supper is the standing witness that Jesus regarded his death as the very center of his work, and that he regarded his death not merely as a martyrdom, but as a sacrifice by which he put away sins forever. Those who reject the sacrificial view of the atonement are puzzled what to make of the Lord's Supper.

3. "*Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come,*" I Corinthians 11:26. This proves that it is not individual and private observance, for there would be nobody to show or proclaim it to. The word here for "shew" is translated "preach" ten times, declare two times, shew three times and teach one time.

4. We are communing with our Lord. "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*" I Corinthians 10:16. It is a symbolical participation of Him. There is not a single cup, but many. "*And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves,*" Luke 22: 17. Here is warrant for individual cups.

The Lord Supper marks, not a real presence, but a real absence of his body. Till he come implies he is away while we observe the supper. The Romanist insists that the real body and blood of Christ are in the elements. But the New Testament makes it clear that when he instituted it he anticipated his absence, therefore, he said, "*This do in remembrance of me.*" Paul said, "*Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come,*" I Corinthians 11:24, 26.

The Character of the True Ministry
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THE PASTOR AND HIS MEMBERS

His relation to them. "Ourselves your servants." The word servant is used in a variety of senses. It means one thing when it expresses our relation to Christ and quite another thing when it expresses our relation to the people.

As the servants of Christ we are bondslaves. A bondslave had no rights before his master. He was owned and treated as a piece of property. Paul says of all Christians that they are not their own, but have been bought with a price. Denotes inferiority.

As servants of the people the preacher is one who renders service, he ministers to their spiritual needs, he ministers to them the word of God. The ministry is a work for the benefit of others. Here it denotes greatness. "If any man would be great among you, let him be your servant."

THE PASTOR AND HIS MOTIVE

The pastor is to serve his people for Jesus' sake. Here is the motive that makes service acceptable to Christ. John speaks of some missionaries who for his name's sake went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles.

Here is a motive that makes service easy. If the preacher keeps his eye on the people he serves he will often become faint and the going will be hard. There will be lack of appreciation of his ministry on the part of many. There will be those who will not agree with him when he preaches the truth. Others will not love him for the truth's sake. Some will not cooperate with him in a scriptural and spiritual program. The care of a church of Christ is the greatest care that can fall upon the shoulders of any man. It is too much for human wisdom and human strength. As Paul thought of the heavy work of the ministry he cried out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" He could not find the spirit to go on until he could say, "Our sufficiency is of God."

One day a pastor talked to one of his men who was manifestly disloyal and unfaithful. The man was quite frank and told his pastor that he did not like him. He voiced this objection and that objection. When he had finished the pastor

replied. I do not like you either. I do not like your ugly disposition. I do not like the way you treat the church. You scarcely ever come to the services. You are a sorry giver to the work of the church. You pout and criticize if you cannot have your way about everything. I do not like you but I can cooperate with you and love you and serve you for Jesus' sake.