

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

# THE PIONEER BAPTIST

INDEPENDENT • MISSIONARY • ESTABLISHED 1786

*"Preaching the same truth since before Kentucky was a state"*

VOLUME 35, NO. 2

NOVEMBER, 2003

## STING OF DEATH

By: C. D. COLE

**I Corinthians 15:55-57, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."**

Babson: "Ministers must realize they have only one real task and that is to help people spiritually." We agree with this if we, as ministers, do not help men in their relation to God, we are cumberers of the ground and cannot justify our calling. But how are we to help people? By lovingly, faithfully and fearlessly preaching the word of God. Officially, we are not priest with wine and wafers officiating at an altar.

The Bible is a solemn book. It deals with serious matters. It deals in cold, hard facts of sin, death and judgment. It emphasizes eternal safety rather than temporal ease. It tells truth about God and man. It describes God as Creator, Ruler, Judge and Savior. It sets Him forth as sovereign over this vast creation, the one with whom we have to do. It describes man as a sinner before God. "...There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God...For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Romans 3:10, 23.

The Bible is a happy book. It tells of glorious things. Contains the greatest news ever to reach human ears: "More-

over, brethren, I declare unto you 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 15:1, 3, 4. The news of salvation provided by grace: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God," Ephesians 2:8. Paid for by the blood of God's own Son. We were redeemed by "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," I Peter 1:19. The Bible presents a Savior mighty to save.

The chapter from which our text is taken is about the resurrection of our dead bodies. It is a paean of victory. It is a shout of triumph as Paul, by faith, sees the redeemed raising from their graves: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," I Corinthians 15:51-57.

Everything has to be taken on faith. How are we saved? By faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ. How do we know we are saved? By faith in what the Bible says. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts 13:38, 39. How do we know our dead bodies will live again? Only by faith in what God's word says. Science throws no light on the question. If a man die shall he live again? What is reason's answer. Reason says it is impossible for a dead body to come out of the grave. What does human history say? It says there is no example of a dead body coming to life again. History points to countless graves that dot the land and says, find an empty one if you can. What does the law of nature have to say? Can it furnish an example of a resurrection? No. Nature gives illustrations of the resurrection but no example. Plant a grain of corn and there is a resurrection when it pushes its green stocks up from the ground, but that is not an example of a resurrection of the body. There was life in that grain of corn, but there is no life in a dead body. Parch that grain of corn so as to kill the germination of life, then plant that grain and there will be no resurrection. The corn is dead. Now plant a marble and we will look in vain for its resurrection. We are shut up to the Bible as to what will become of our bodies. The Bible assures us of victory over death and the grave.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

# WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

By: C. D. COLE

**Matthew 20:20, "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him." Mark 10:35, "And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire."**

Introduction: It is common for us to express a man's ignorance of a thing or duty by saying that he does not know what its all about. Brother Sebastian once summed up his judgment of a certain preacher with this remark: "He doesn't know what its all about." I am wondering if, in the matter of Christian profession and conduct, it cannot be truly said of many of us preachers, deacons, and men and women, that we do not know what its all about."

We have an example of the thing I am talking about in the case of the sons of Zebedee and their mother. Our Lord had been speaking to His disciples about his coming betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection. He took them apart to talk with them about future shame and suffering that would be his lot. And then following that talk the mother of James and John came and asked that her two sons might have places of prominence and ease with Him in the kingdom. The boys made the same request for themselves. Mark 10:36-40, "And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." In other words, "You do not know what its all about." They did not understand the present and earthly position of the followers of Christ. They expected Christ to set up an earthly kingdom of splendor and glory, and they wanted places of

prominence in it. They did not know that the kingdom has to be entered through much tribulation. They expected a crown without a cross. They were ambitious for worldly honour. They did not know that high places must be preceded by high service. They did not know that it was scars made in suffering for the truth that would entitle them to high seats in the coming kingdom. **They were interested but ignorant.** Their hearts were right, but their minds held a false theory about how to be great. It is the same today!

## FEW KNOW WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

Various motives and ambitions in church membership. Preachers are ambitious to rise in the ministry. They want to make their mark in the world just as those of law and medicine and politics do. A ministry that is ambitious for worldly honours and emoluments is one of the most shameful things about Christianity today. In theory Baptists do not have a graded ministry; they do not have pastors aspiring to be presiding elders or bishops or a pope; but they do have pastors who aspire to big churches with fat salaries.

And there is ambition among the men and women of our churches. I believe our denominational set-up feeds this ambition; the various departments and auxiliaries call for positions of honour and leadership and our men and women are ambitious for these positions. We have too many presidents in our organizations; Brotherhood; B.T.U.; W.M.U., etc. I believe we have the right principle in our church. We regard the church as the working body of Christ, and so we distribute the work among committees. These committees carry no position of honour, they are working groups. I want it to always be true of this church that we have no big I's and little U's. When considered as an army we are all buck privates with Christ as the Captain of our salvation.

Some use the church as a sort of fire escape. They believe in a day of judgment and they want to settle the matter of where they will spend eternity, so they profess religion, get in the church, then comfort themselves that they are all fixed up for heaven. And that is the sum and

substance of their interest. They have no love for the word of God and make no effort to grow in grace and knowledge of the truth. They will go to church occasionally if there is not some other place they had rather go, and there usually is. They steal the Lord's day and use it for business or pleasure. It's the only day they have, they say, to sleep, and rest, and visit. It's their day and they will use it as they please. But the Bible calls it the Lord's day. John tells us in Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day..."

Some use the church as a cloak for their wickedness. They can do things too shameful to name and then express surprise that anybody would be suspicious of them. They hide their sins from themselves by a sort of persuasion that the thing is not wrong or that the circumstances justify it, and then think it is hid from God and men. Like the ostrich that hides his head in the sand.

Some use the church for a life of ease and prosperity. They think Christians ought to be more prosperous than other people; the Christian's crop or business ought to be better just because he is a Christian. They think the health of a Christian should be better than others. But they do not know the principle of divine dealings with Christians. God tests his people to see if they really love him. Many a man had better business and better health before he became a Christian. God does not hire people to become Christians with the promise of prosperity in temporal things. The reward for godliness is a future reward. Matthew 6:19-21, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Some think Christians should have the easiest time in the world. What kind of people do have the easiest time as a general rule? What kind of people will receive the best treatment from this world? Not the **best Christians**, II Timothy 3:12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecu-

tion." The best Christians live a cross purpose with this world; his speech and life are a rebuke to the world.

Not the **sorriest Christians**, for they will be inwardly unhappy, and looked upon as hypocrites.

Which category do you fall in? Do you hear and follow? John 10:27-29, "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*"

Not the **immoral and grossly wicked** people, for the way of the transgressor is hard. II Timothy 3:2-4, "*For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*" The drunkard, murderer and gambler will have a hard time. Be sure your sins will find you out; chickens come home to roost. Who has the easiest time? who gets the best treatment from this world? Here is the answer: The moral man; the honest man; the benevolent man; the man who believes and practices honesty as the best policy; but who is not a Christian. The world will honour a man for paying his debts, but it will not honour him for being a Christian, a believer in Christ. The work of unbelievers will not honour a man for being a believer in Christ. The world will reward a man for being a progressive and benevolent citizen but it will not reward a man for being a lover of the word of God and a contender for the once delivered faith.

The world will honour a man for feeding and clothing and educating his family well; but it will not honour the man who puts God before his family. Matthew 10:37-39, "*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*"

Many sensitive souls are hurt by a message like this, mourning over sin and dissatisfied with themselves and this adds to their grief. Others are full of sorrow for the preacher for taking it so seriously.

Does this apply to you? Isaiah 56:10-12, "*His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.*" God forbid.

## STING OF DEATH

(Continued from page 1)

### What Is The Sting Of Death?

What is the sting of death? Why is death such a dreadful thing for some people? What gives to death its terrible sting?

The sting of death is not physical pain. There is not much physical pain in actual death. Many who are still alive have endured more physical pain than some who are dead. Doctors can make death to a lost man appear easy from this side, but he cannot make it easy for the lost soul to go into the presence of God. Beasts die physically, but there is no sting in death to them, because they have no moral responsibility before God.

The sting of death is sin, unforgiven sin that has to be accounted for after death. Hebrews 9:27, "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*" The lost man is not through with sin when he dies. His sins go with him into eternity. Death does not make atonement for sin. Death fixes destiny, but does not destroy sin. In the National Art Gallery of Engineers there is a picture of Perseus handing up, he was head of Medusa. That head turned all persons into stone that looked upon it. There is a warrior with a dart in his hand; he stands steadfast like stone, as he gazes upon the head. There is another man with a sword beneath his robe, about to stab; he becomes a motionless statute by looking at the head. There is another man creeping and crouching as if to catch someone unawares; he is frozen into stone at the sight of that head. This is what death does. In whatever state a man is in at death, that will be his state forever.

In this life there is hope from some-

thing greater. In the darkest hour of sorrow and adversity, aspirations may be crushed and hopes entertained for a brighter and better tomorrow. But to enter eternity without hope is to be forever without hope. The hand of death closes the door of hope, it flings the lost man into danger of despair; it ushers into a place of torment. O, my friends, Christ did not die to save us from some minor inconveniences for a few days or decades; He died to deliver us from wrath to come; he died to save us from eternal punishment. Corruptible things like silver and gold can redeem us from many troubles, but nothing but the blood of Christ can redeem us from the curse of God's law.

### What Is The Strength Of Sin?

What is the strength of sin? From whence does sin get its destructive and damning power? How is it that sin has power to inflict eternal misery? Our test marks the reply. The strength of sin is the law, the moral law of God. The only source of eternal danger is violated law. Romans 6:23, "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Adam was in no danger of being driven out of the garden until he sinned. Angels who have not sinned are in no danger of punishment. Sin brings eternal ruin because it is violation of God's holy law.

The only person whom we should fear is God. Proverbs 1:7, "*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...*" Proverbs 29:25, "*The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*"

The only person who can punish eternally is God. James 4:12, "*There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?*" Matthew 10:28, "*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*" Romans 8:31, "*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*"

The Bible has much to say about the wrath of God. John 3:36, "*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.*" Job 36:18, "*Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.*"

The sinner is in the toils of Divine law and cannot eradicate himself. He can no more save himself from the curse of the law that he can extract sunbeams from cu-

cumbers.

### **Spirituality Of The Law**

The spirituality of the law gives strength to sin. The law not only prohibits overt acts; it prohibits inward desires. It not only prohibits actual taking of life; it also prohibits unrighteous anger. It not only prohibits its adultery; it also prohibits a lustful look. It deals with motives as well as with deeds. To be saved by keeping the law, the sinner would have to keep it from the cradle to the grave as spirituality interpreted by Christ.

### **Inflexibility Of The Law**

The inflexibility of the law gives strength to sin. The law cannot be bent to meet the imperfections of the sinner. It is not a sliding scale to be moved up and down according to each man's ability to keep it. The law will not abate one tittle of its demands. The law will not forgive; it knows nothing about mercy. Galatians 3:10-13, *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us..."* The law of God says to the sinner, *"Thou shalt not pass until thou payest me what thou owest."*

The biggest problem ever to confront man is the problem of salvation. *"How then can man be justified with God?"* is the biggest question ever asked. How can man be restored to God's favor? How can he be justified before God? How is the sentence of condemnation to be removed? How can the sinner have everlasting life? How can man get victory over sin? These are momentous questions. And God be praised there is an infallible answer. Our text says, *"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

### **How Does Christ Give Us Victory?**

It is not by setting the law aside. Nor by lowering the law's standard. Nor by pleading for the law to have mercy. Not by asking the law to show pity. Nor by disarming the law of its weapons.

The Lord Jesus Christ gives victory by satisfying the law; by meeting all the law demands; by making full payment of all its claims.

He satisfied the law for himself. He did all the holy law of God required any man to do. He lived a sinless life, so that the law could find no fault with him. By a

sinless life he had the law on his side. He lived by the law of God. He was obedient unto death. He delighted in the law of God. No sin ever entered his heart. No man could find any fault in him: Judas; Pilate's wife; Pilate; the Centurion; the dying thief. We have a sinless Savior. Why put trust in a sinful man when we have a sinless Christ? Why look to a human priest when we have a high priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners?

He satisfied the law for sinners. The only source of salvation is satisfied law. Men will not go to heaven with any claims of law against them. The law cursed us; He bare the curse. II Corinthians 5:21, *"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."*

I Corinthians 1:30, *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."* He is the answer to the sin question because he answered to all the demands of the law against those who had violated it. He took our place on the cross that we might have a place with him in glory. He was forsaken of the Father that we might be received by the Father.

A missionary was trying to make the way of salvation plain to the heathen. Wondering if he was getting the truth over to them, he asked them to tell him in their own words just what it meant to them. One of them replied; "It means He swapped places with me." Good answer. The only true explanation of the death of Christ on the cross is that *"...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed,"* Isaiah 53:5.