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The Fivefold Appeal to Be Justified By Faith Alone

Study 8: Galatians 4:12-20

—Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

<p>1. Treat the minister of God as a brother</p> <p>a. Identify with him</p> <p>b. Hold no grievances</p> <p>2. Welcome the true minister of God</p> <p>a. In his witness</p> <p>b. In his illness</p> <p>c. In empathy & deep feelings—seeking to identify with him</p> <p>d. In the truth he proclaims</p>	<p>B. Appeal Two: Restir Affection for the Minister of God, 4:12-20</p> <p>12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.</p> <p>13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.</p> <p>14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.</p> <p>15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, If it had been possible, ye have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them</p>	<p>to me.</p> <p>16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?</p> <p>17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.</p> <p>18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.</p> <p>19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,</p> <p>20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.</p>	<p>3. Guard against & reject all false ministers</p> <p>4. Receive the true minister—always</p> <p>a. He seeks after believers for their good</p> <p>b. He holds to believers as his own dear children</p> <p>c. He agonizes over the believers' growth</p> <p>d. He watches over the believers' spiritual welfare, over potential error</p>
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Section IV

THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE

Galatians 4:8–5:12

Study 2: APPEAL TWO: RESTIR AFFECTION FOR THE MINISTER OF GOD

Text: Galatians 4:12-20

Aim: To strongly support your minister in word and deed.

Memory Verse:

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for

your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (He.13:17).

INTRODUCTION:

Contrary to popular opinion, your minister does not get dressed in a phone booth and come out with a large “S” on his shirt and a flowing cape tied at the base of his neck. Instead of leaping buildings with a single bound, he is usually trying to keep the building which contains the congregation from flying apart.

What is one of the most important missions of the ministers of God? One of the most vital duties is to restore sheep that have strayed away from the Lord.

Backsliding people need appeal after appeal, for they are walking a dangerous course when they turn their backs upon God. Also, a backsliding person is usually alienated from his minister: he wants little to do with the minister when he is turning away from God. The Galatian churches went even further. False teachers and critics of Paul had begun to attack Paul personally, both his person and his ministry. They were tearing down his character every way they could. There was great danger that the churches would reject his ministry; therefore, Paul had to do all he could to stop the mess and save the churches from destruction and apostasy. The present passage is an appeal for the believers to *remember and restir their affection* for the minister of God.

OUTLINE:

1. Treat the minister of God as a brother (v.12).
2. Welcome the true minister of God (vv.13-16).
3. Guard against and reject false ministers (v.17).
4. Receive the true minister—always (vv.18-20).

1. TREAT THE MINISTER OF GOD AS A BROTHER (v.12).

Remember that some in the churches of Galatia were criticizing and attacking Paul. But note several significant facts.

1. Paul called them brothers: he did not treat them as enemies, not even as antagonists. He did not murmur, gripe, complain, or even attack them. The very opposite is true: he sensed and expressed deep brotherly affection for them.

2. Paul *beseeked* them; that is, he was not commanding or instructing, but he was begging and pleading from the heart of a true minister of God.

3. Paul begged them to be as he was, for he had become one of them. He had always loved and cared and shown affection for them, and he wanted them to do the same for him—not to abandon and turn against him and his ministry.

It should be noted that many commentators understand Paul to be saying that he had become as they were, that is, a Gentile; therefore, he wanted them to remain as he was, a Gentile who trusted Christ, and not to turn to Jewish law in seeking God's approval.

4. Paul assured them that what they had done had not injured him: he held no bitterness, anger, or malice against them.

APPLICATION 1:

The heart of a true minister is clearly seen in verse twelve: love, affection, kindness, and care for a people who had become critics of the minister of God.

APPLICATION 2:

Believers must heed the appeal of the minister of God: "Be as I am in affection and love—do not abandon and turn away from me."

ILLUSTRATION:

Several Christian men who had been touched by the Lord decided to do something practical for their pastor: pray for him. What is so unusual about that, you might ask. Well, for one particular pastor, it was a brand new sensation.

These few laymen had just returned from a Bible study that encouraged them to approach their pastor and tell him that they were committing to pray for him on a regular basis. They liked their pastor but had never thought that such a "great man of God" needed their awkward prayers. After all, they were just laymen and *he* was the pastor.

During their appointment with their pastor, they shared with him what God had led them to do. In response to their offer, the pastor took a deep breath and told them a sad truth: "In all of my fifteen years of being in the ministry, no group of men have ever come to me to tell me that they were praying for me." He was truly touched by their Christian love; and make no mistake about it, from that day forward he preached, pastored, and prayed with a greater confidence knowing that he was not in the battle alone.

Does your pastor know that you are praying for him?

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think of your pastor as a brother? Do you treat him as a brother?
2. Do you need to change your attitude toward your pastor? If yes, in what way?
3. What can you do for your pastor to show him your love and appreciation?

2. WELCOME THE TRUE MINISTER OF GOD (vv.13-16).

There are three areas in which true ministers should be welcomed.

1. True ministers should be welcomed in their witness. Note: the Galatians had welcomed Paul when he first preached the gospel to them, and they had readily responded to his message. They did not question his call to preach nor the message he preached. There was no criticism nor censoring of his person or preaching. Their arms were wide open and their hearts were receptive.

Note that Paul was appealing for the same spirit of welcome and receptivity now. No other spirit should ever characterize God's

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people—not toward the minister of God—not toward any child of God.

2. True ministers should be welcomed even in the infirmities and weaknesses of their flesh. Too often, this is not true. Churches and believers sometimes abandon and ignore the minister of God when he is stricken in body or spirit. When Paul first went to the Galatian churches, he was stricken with some infirmity. Just what the infirmity was is not known, although the best guess seems to be some serious eye problem (v.15). The point is that the Galatians . . .

- did not despise him
- did not reject him
- received him as an angel or messenger from God Himself

This last fact stresses just how wide open the welcome was to Paul. There was no lack in receiving and caring for the minister of God. They would have even plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul if they had been able.

3. True ministers should be welcomed in the truth they proclaim. Paul had been proclaiming the truth: a person is justified by faith and not by law nor by works—not by trying to earn God’s acceptance by doing good deeds here and there. Was the church going to treat Paul as an enemy because he had told them the truth?

APPLICATION:

How many churches turn against the minister of God because he preaches and tells the truth? The church must always welcome the minister who speaks and proclaims the truth.

“Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation” (Ph.2:29).

ILLUSTRATION:

If the minister of God tells the truth, will he be exempt from persecution? John wished it were so. Let’s hear his painful story:

John was a man of God who had forsaken all to follow Christ. He was willing to go wherever God wanted. It looked like a golden opportunity for a young minister. This congregation wanted him, and he felt led to the church. Right up front he told the congregation that he would never compromise the truth. And they replied, “Pastor, that’s great! We’re sure glad to have you with us.”

As the years went by, the truth from God’s Word put the congregation in the fork of the road. There is an old saying that the truth hurts. Instead of responding in repentance to the Lord, many in the church began to shift the blame for their guilty hearts to the pastor’s sermons.

The result was tragic. John was spiritually tarred and feathered. The people were looking for something that would tickle their ears. To his credit, John refused to give in to the pressure, counting the truth more important than acceptance by man.

3. GUARD AGAINST AND REJECT ALL FALSE MINISTERS (v.17).

QUESTIONS:

1. What responsibilities do you have to your minister? Are you satisfied that you are doing all you can and should for him?
2. Put yourself in your minister’s shoes for a moment. Have you given him the freedom to speak the truth? What things in your life could be barriers to enhancing your relationship with him?
3. Have you made a commitment to pray for your pastor in areas where he might be weak? When he asks you to pray for him, do you?

Note that the false teachers (Judaizers, religionists) were zealous in their teaching, and they were out to secure as large a following as possible. Note how they went about it: by excluding the people, trying to cut them off from the minister of God. They not only sought people through the merits of their own teaching, but they attacked and tore down the minister in order to alienate the people from him.

Note the difference between what the Christian minister (Paul) was doing and what the false teachers were doing. Or, to put it in the form of a question: What is the difference between the evangelistic efforts of the true minister of God and false teachers?

- ⇒ False teachers seek to focus people upon law, works, effort, ritual, ceremony, observances, sacrifice, rules, and regulations—upon something that requires man to work at being good or doing good in order to become acceptable to God.
- ⇒ The true minister of God seeks to focus people upon God Himself: His love, honor, and praise—upon the fact that God Himself has provided the way for man to become acceptable to Him, and that way is through His Son Jesus Christ.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mt.7:15).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Ti.4:1-2).

QUESTIONS:

1. What things does a false teacher focus upon? What does a genuine Christian teacher focus on?
2. Would you consider yourself to be “easy prey” for a crafty false teacher? Why or why not?
3. What sort of protective barriers does your church have in place in order to protect the sheep from wolves (false teachers)?

4. RECEIVE THE TRUE MINISTER—ALWAYS (vv.18-20).

Paul said that the church should always welcome ministers who seek to do well, ministers who labor for the church’s welfare. Note that he was encouraging the church not only to accept his ministry

but the ministry of other true ministers. They must reject false ministers and have nothing to do with them, but they must receive the ministry of true ministers in order to grow in Christ. Paul himself demonstrated three reasons why the church is to receive true ministers of God.

1. True ministers hold believers within their hearts as dear children. The minister's heart is ever so tender, warm, caring, protecting, and providing toward the church.

2. True ministers agonize over the growth of believers. They seek "Christ to be formed" in the believers. They want them living as Christ lived and conformed into the image of Christ.

"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" (Mt.23:37).

3. True ministers guard the church against error. Note: if there is any doubt about the matter, he warns the church.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Ph.3:18).

APPLICATION:

No believer or church should ever reject the ministry of a minister who seeks to help them and to grow them in Christ.

ILLUSTRATION:

How open is your church's pulpit to visiting ministers? Does your pastor have every gift in the Bible and a resume that lists every possible spiritual experience? Of course not. A healthy church wants and needs input from other parts of the body of Christ. Without an extended vision, a church will never grow; eventually it will dry up and die.

About 350 years ago a shipload of travelers landed on the northeast coast of America. The first year they established a town sight. The next year they elected a town government. The third year the town government planned to build a road five miles westward into the wilderness.

In the fourth year the people tried to impeach their town government because they thought it was a waste of public funds to build a road five miles westward into a wilderness. Who needed to go there anyway?

Here were people who had the vision to see three thousand miles across an ocean and overcome great hardships to get there. But in just a few years they were not able to see even five miles out of town. They had lost their pioneering vision.

With a clear vision of what we can become in Christ, no ocean of difficulty is too great. Without it, we rarely move beyond our current boundaries.

Without a vision from outside our walls of comfort, we'll never know what God is doing in His world. Don't you want to know?

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES

(Reflection & Response)

QUESTIONS:

1. Who has come to your church recently that gave you a bigger picture of what God is doing in the world?
2. Does your church support any missionaries, evangelists, mission churches, or student ministers? Do they come and share their experiences with your congregation? What does your congregation do for them? What can you do?
3. Is Christ being formed in you? If yes, in what way?

SUMMARY:

Do you have a better understanding of how to relate to the minister of God? You must realize that they are all human just like you, and they need your prayers and support as they follow God's will for their lives. God's will for you is to...

1. Treat the minister of God as a brother.
2. Welcome the true minister of God.
3. Guard against and reject all false ministers.
4. Receive the true minister—always.

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

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Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. John 4:35.



The key to understanding this verse is in understanding how and where Jesus made this statement. Jesus said this at the beginning of His own ministry. He spoke with a woman of questionable character and brought reconciliation to the despised Samaritans, whom the Jews hated and shunned. Also, when He called His followers, He did not go to Jerusalem to seek Jewish leaders, but He called some itinerant fishermen of Galilee, who willingly followed him.

Likewise, in the great coming harvest, He will be calling forth an untold multitude that He has been grooming in the wilderness. These unknown men and women, coming

from the most unlikely places, will go into the fields boldly, bringing in the harvest.

In the past 70 years, a great number of powerful men and women of God arose out of the western church and laid the groundwork for this coming harvest. Among them were men like John R. Rice and Dr. Jack Hyles, men of renown among the Baptist movements.

As this great harvest comes into view, it will be known for the deep trenches trodden by an unknown remnant of God's hidden army, an underground army groomed to face death without wavering. They know what is coming: either death to self or death to the body. These people will never flinch, waver, back down, or fear any attacks against them. Their banner and foundation is Jesus Christ, the crucified. Nothing will shake or move them. A great number of these are unknown to the public. Their work is behind the scenes. Their presence must be searched out if we are to find them or walk alongside them. This is rarely done, because the average Christian tends to shy away from the deep trenches these men trod.

These men and women are like the woman at the well, coming out of all walks of life and from the most unlikely places. Among these are a rising number of Anabaptists. They are re-digging the wells of

their shining inheritance, paying the price of discipleship, and making disciples of all nations. Another long lost people group coming out of the wilderness and taking their place in the Kingdom are the Native Americans. If we knew their status in the Kingdom, we would quickly repent and align with them.

Many ministries of the past have come and gone. The reasons are many and varied. Without doubt, however, some were unable to recognize their pride. They rose from humble and unknown beginnings to a much higher status, where they began overlooking the lesser and often uncomely vessels that the Lord was grooming for the great harvest and the coming Kingdom. Large ministries would do well to open themselves up to and embrace what western Christianity generally shuns.

A final reminder from John 4:35, the harvest began with Jesus, who sought out the lost, forsaken, and rejected remnant. When given the opportunity, they wrought great exploits, taking the gospel to the nations with untold power. We would do well to come alongside the hidden vessels of today.

Ben Girod
59 Promise Lane
Moyie Springs, Idaho 83845
Phone: (208) 267-0631
www.anabaptistconnections.org

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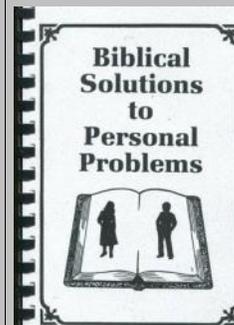
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Each of the twenty-three chapters has questions regarding specific problems. Scripture references and a space to write are provided to encourage individuals to research the answers.



Over the Christmas season, we travelled as a family to visit some family and friends. Nobody told me how much work it is to travel with two little ones and three bigger ones in the wintertime, especially going from house to house visiting friends. It is exhausting! Come to think of it, many things about being a mom are exhausting, as you moms know well.

Being a mom means self-denial, putting someone's needs before your own, keeping on when you think you simply can't, doing things no one else wants to do, and seeing the things no one else sees. Being a mom means you are needed and touched, used and drawn from all day, every day. While it is

very fulfilling, it can be exhausting. It is even more exhausting when we lose sight of what is important and no longer feel fulfilled.

God has been reminding me of something recently. It is found in Luke 12:31 which says, "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you as well.*" It also mentions how God takes care of the birds and lilies, and not even a king is arrayed with such splendor. What are we worrying about? I tend to wear myself out trying to keep things neat and clean and doing other projects. But I forget the most important things. God has allowed me to feel frustrated, so I realize that when my spirit is fed in Him, and my children feel loved and appreciated, He will be able to bless me with these other things also. That is why He says, "Seek Me first."

When we seek our own things first, and try to put them before our children, husband, or God, we only end up spinning our wheels and becoming exhausted. I am not saying we will never be tired or busy or frustrated when we put God first, but we will eliminate much frustration from our lives and find more rest. Being a wife and mom is a very demanding, exhausting job, but if we can learn to "come apart and rest awhile," we will find more peace, joy, and fulfillment. God will give us wisdom for the different situations we face as we learn to give situations to Him as they come up, instead of wasting time and energy worrying and fretting. Most of all, we will find that rest in Him, the fulfillment that comes from being in His will, and seeing the fruits of our labors manifested by happy, satisfied children and a happy husband.

—Lynn Miller

Seven "Mark of the Beast" Texts in Revelation

—Dr. Conner



In Revelation 13, two animals are pictured representing two nations or entities that would rise to power in the world. According to Daniel 7:17, animals in prophecy represent nations or powers. The first power is pictured as a composite beast: part leopard, part bear, and part lion. We shall explain this beast in the next article. This composite animal is the one known as the "beast" in the rest of Revelation. Always keep this in mind! The "mark" (or sign) of the beast is then some special characteristic of this power. We will study the "mark" in the second future article. The second animal is not described with an animal name, but has two lamb-like horns, and is later called "the false prophet" in Rev. 19:20. This power will be the one that sets up the "image to the beast" or the "image of the beast" that we read

about in Rev. 13:14-15.

Keeping these facts in mind, now let us look at the seven texts that mention the "mark of the beast," and see what we can learn.

Revelation 13:17

"And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

The first thing that we see here is that economic pressure will be put upon those who refuse to follow the beast or his image by receiving his mark. People won't be able to make a living or buy any goods unless they follow the law laid down by the beast or his image (which is set up by the second power in Rev. 13).

These laws will eventually lead to a death decree against those who refuse to bow to the beast and his image. Rev. 17:15 states: *"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not WORSHIP the image of the beast should be killed."*

This scenario reminds us of Daniel 3, where the king of Babylon set up a golden image

that everyone had to worship. God's followers would not worship the image and were cast into the fiery furnace. That story is the basis for what John is telling us here in Revelation. It will happen again.

Note these points:

- The "mark of the beast" has something to do with worship.
- Failure to worship as proscribed by the beast leads to economic pressure and a death decree.

But there is more. In Rev. 13:14, we see that all the miracles done by the second power to convince the world to worship the first beast are for the purpose of **deceiving** the world: *"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."* Deceive them about what? In Rev. 13:6-7 we read that the first beast is "against" God and his true people: *"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and*

Continued—Next Page

them that dwell in heaven. And it was given to him to make war against the saints and to overcome them. . . .”

The deception is to get the world to believe that the “beast” is on God’s side or is God’s representative on this earth. Previously, in verse 4, we see that this entire conflict is about worship, or religious matters and laws. It is not about oil; it is not about who rules the Middle East; it is not about anything political as we know it, but it is about WORSHIP. The beast and his “image” want us to worship according to their ways, but this is a deception or deviation from God’s law! We also see in verse 4, that the dragon (Satan) is behind this power and its desire for worship. This should remind us of two Old Testament texts. The first is Isaiah 14:12-14 which says: *“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, who did weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High!”*

The second text is from Ezek. 28:2-18 (too long to quote here), where Satan is described as the beautiful angel that God created, but who fell because of his pride. He wanted the same worship as God. So we see in Revelation that Satan has not changed, and wants the world to worship him. Thus, this battle is not a battle of nations, but a battle between Satan and his followers against God and His followers. The deception will be so great that MOST of the world will follow the beast (see v.3), and very few will stand up for God (in Rev. 12:17, it calls this group a “remnant” or a small part that is left). Revelation 12:17 also gives us a hint of what will separate this group from the large majority who follow the beast, when it says that they *“keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ”* (or faith in Jesus). So this battle will be something about keeping ALL the commandments of God, instead of following the rules of man **against** the commandments of God. Keep

this fact in mind; it is very important, and we will talk of this later.

A final thought is that verse 8 states that NO ONE who follows the beast will have his name in the Book of Life when Christ comes the second time. This really will be a battle of life or death! It will be a battle over whom to worship in the end: God or Satan. This is a battle that started in heaven, and will not fully end until Satan and all evil is destroyed in the lake of fire after the 1,000 years. **Revelation 14:9-10**

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. . . .”



*You receive the “mark” by worshipping the beast and what he has set up.

*Those who receive the “mark” will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which in Rev. 16:1 refers to the seven last plagues.

This text and the next one we will study (Rev. 14:11) are part of what are called “the three angels’ messages,” where God gives the world a final choice.

The first angel says in Rev. 14:7: *“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters”* (quoting the 4th commandment of Exodus 20: 8-11).

The second angel says in Rev. 14:8 (paraphrase), that the alternative is to worship “Babylon,” but she is fallen (which in religious terms means she has fallen away from God’s truth).

The term “Babylon” is also used in Rev. 17:5 to picture the scarlet woman. In Bible prophecy, a pure woman signifies God’s true church, while a scarlet woman or whore is a church that has gone astray and no longer

follows God, but has gone after the world and its gods. The “Babylon” of Rev. 14:8 is shown in verse 9 to include both of the two beasts of Rev. 13 that we have been talking about. Rev. 16:19 actually states that when “Babylon” is taken down by God, it has three parts. They are named in verse 13 as the beast (first animal), the false prophet (the second animal), and the dragon (which in Rev. 12 is identified with Satan himself).

The third angel says in Rev. 14:9 (paraphrase), that if you choose to follow Babylon, this is what will happen to you (just a warning!).

Revelation 14:11

“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

This is part of the third angel’s message. Not only do those who worship the beast and his image receive of the seven last plagues of God’s wrath, but they also receive NO REST day or night until their lives are ended. What could that mean?

A study of the word “rest” in the New Testament gives us a clue.

- 1) Matt. 11:28-29: It is accepting and following Jesus (taking His yoke) that gives us rest and assurance of heaven.
- 2) Acts 2:26: “. . .my flesh shall rest in hope” (of Christ’s salvation).
- 3) Heb. 3:11 Rest = the Promised Land (for us—heaven).
- 4) Heb. 3:17-18 Belief and obedience were prerequisites for entering into Canaan for the Israelites (It is the same for us).
- 5) The promise still remains for us of entering into God’s rest, but some fall short.
- 6) Rev. 14:13 Being “in the Lord” is what brings rest to us (the rest of death, and the rest of the Promised Land).

Conclusion: Those who get the “mark of the beast” will neither have the rest of assurance of salvation while here on earth, nor get the rest of eternal life in heaven.

Revelation 15:2

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.”

John, in this vision, sees the righteous in heaven standing on the sea of glass after the Second Coming. They had gotten the victory over the beast, and had been delivered from his laws of death. That is why in verse 3 they can sing the “song of Moses,” which the Israelites sang after their deliverance from Pharaoh at the Red Sea. To further show this correlation, the first five plagues in Revelation are patterned after the plagues in Egypt that God sent upon them in order for them to finally free God’s people to go to the Promised Land. Nowhere in this picture do you see those who have received the mark of the beast participating in these heavenly exercises.

Revelation 16:2

“And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which had worshipped his image.”

The seven last plagues are poured out ONLY upon those who have followed the beast and “received” his mark. This is similar to what happened in Egypt. The plagues fell on the Egyptians and their cattle and land, but the Israelites were protected from their effects.

Revelation 19:20

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

This verse is a summary of what happens to the two animals or beasts of Rev. 13, which we have been studying. They both “deceived” the world into accepting the

“mark,” mostly by doing Satan-inspired miracles that they “claimed” were from God. Think about that for a moment. “Deception” in the spiritual world describes something that is so close to the truth that most people will find it hard to distinguish it from the truth, but only because they have not bothered to read and understand God’s truth. They have willingly followed the beast and his interpretation of worship. “Miracles,” like fire coming down from the sky, are things that most people believe can ONLY come from God; but it comes as a deception, which means it is coming from Satan instead. Rev. 16:13-14 makes this very clear: *“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”* (Armageddon). Matthew 24:24 makes the same point: *“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and*



wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

These two powers who enforce the “mark of the beast,” and all those who follow them and their laws, will be destroyed by fire when Christ the Lamb comes down and gains the final victory. Rev. 17:14 states, *“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen,*

and faithful.” What most people thought was truth turns out to be a lie. BEWARE: only by studying and understanding what the Bible really teaches will you be able to see and understand the counterfeit!

Revelation 20:4

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Those who reject the “mark of the beast” and who suffer persecution because of that, are pictured as reigning with Christ in the New Jerusalem (read John 14:1-3) in heaven, before it comes back down to this earth (pictured in Rev. 21:2). Those who follow the beast and who are deceived into receiving the “mark” are NOT pictured here in the New Jerusalem, but are said to be raised from the dead at the end of the 1,000 years, to be led by Satan himself in an attempt to overthrow God and all His people who are in the New Jerusalem (see Rev. 20:9). Their judgment is shown in Rev. 20:11-14, where they are found guilty before God, and sentenced to the Second Death, which is for eternity.

Final Remarks: So much has been written about the “mark of the beast,” and much of it silly and ridiculous. Here in Revelation is pictured a battle for worship between God and Satan. Everything in this battle has to do with whom we worship and how we worship. This battle (spiritual, but with literal consequences) will lead to worldwide religious laws of worship which the beast will put forth to prove his power. Through the miracles done by those following the second power of Rev. 13, Satan will deceive most of the world into thinking that the beast is correct and truthful; they think they are following God, when in reality they are following Satan. Pretty heavy stuff, when you stop to think about it! It really WILL be a matter of life or death, not only physically, but also spiritually.

If the “mark of the beast” is bad, then we had better be positive that we know who the beast is that sets up this mark, according to the Bible. That will be our next subject. After that, we will identify the “mark.” Remember,

Revelation makes it very clear that MOST of the world will be deceived on this point, so we had better get it right before it is too late. That also means, by inference, that any majority opinion on this subject is probably also the wrong opinion. So look for something Biblical that represents the minority opinion, and

you might be closer to the truth than you think. Don't be fooled just because the “whole world” teaches things on this subject. Christ's true teachings have never been accepted by the majority, but only by those who have studied their Bibles well enough to know the difference between truth and error. —End

Pride and Its Consequences

—Eli Stutzman

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. —James 4:6

One definition of pride is this from yourdictionary.com: *an unduly high opinion of oneself; exaggerated self-esteem; conceit haughty behavior resulting from this; arrogance*

Jonathan Edwards wrote this about pride over 250 years ago: *Pride is much more difficult to discern than any other corruption because, by nature, pride is a person having too high a thought of himself. Is it any surprise, then, that a person who has too high a thought of himself is unaware of it? He thinks the opinion he has of himself has just grounds and therefore is not too high. As a result, there is no other matter in which the heart is more deceitful and unsearchable. The very nature of it is to work self-confidence and drive away any suspicion of evil respecting itself.*

I believe we can always spot pride in others much easier than in ourselves; yet finding pride being present in another person is usually rather fruitless. Rarely will anyone admit to being proud, because it seems to them, they are being perfectly reasonable. Therefore, it is only possible to work on yourself. I don't think you can make someone else humble. They have to humble themselves. To oppose pride, we need to practice humility.

Be careful of disregarding the opinion of others. God often uses the weak things of men to work his perfect will. The proud man often forgets that the church is a body, and all parts have a place of usefulness. He feels others may not even be believers.

The Bible has some details of incidents that show us what took place when pride had its way. One consequence of pride is that God will oppose us. We certainly don't want that.

Nebuchadnezzar thought of his power as com-

ing from his own cleverness. Uzziah, king of Judah (2 Chronicles 26) became strong and he, too, thought too highly of himself, contracting leprosy as a result.

Pride is often present in politics, in business, in every race, and I suspect in every church—all kinds of places where people deal with each other. We are all aware of the feeling inside ourselves when someone says to us, “See, I was right!” or “Didn't I say that's what would happen?” or “You should have listened to me.” Yes, we can feel it when we are wronged.

There are quite a number of things that I could say about pride. The proud man can barely fit into any church, but the humble will fit in many. Others have to come to this understanding of what is right or he will be gone.

Pride The famous Bible teacher H.A. Ironside struggled with pride. After a period of struggle he went to a friend for advice about how to deal with this pride. Someone counseled him to put signs on his front and back with large written Bible verses about pride. He was to carry them throughout the city streets calling out these verses. This was designed to abolish his pride. Dr. Ironside said, “I followed that advice.” When he finished, his first thought was, “There is no other person in this area dedicated enough to do such a thing!!!”

Proud people on a committee can only work if they are in charge. Often they do in fact lead, but it does not go well. Other voices are often simply ignored.

Pride has consequences whether we recognize it or not. Pride affects people of all types. It affects people in all nations. From the tip of South America to Alaska, and on to Europe and Asia, all can be guilty of thinking too highly of themselves. Never will pride be a desirable attitude in any man anywhere.

Nebuchadnezzar was not Jewish, yet God punished him just as if he were one of his own people. It was simply a case of the famous,

successful king taking the credit for his success. Being a Gentile did not get him out of experiencing its consequences. Being born in this century or the last century will not get you out of the consequences of pride, either.

See Daniel 4:28-30. *All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?*

The consequence was immediate. The Bible says he ate grass like cattle for seven years.

The Bible also tells us that Satan was cast out of heaven for the sin of pride. Ezekiel 28:17 says: *Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.*

Here is another key identifier of pride: “I am right and I need you to admit that.” When I was young, we would sometimes argue endlessly that we were right. Little did we suspect that we could be wrong in motive when we were right with our facts. We can know our Bible from front to back and prove that we are right; yet in all this,

if our motive is to get others to see it our way, we have already lost the battle.

Pride will not allow itself to be taught. It is convinced that it already knows the truth. It always needs to win the argument. Winning the argument proves I was right. I am right because I am older or smarter or have more education. You may be right with your facts, but you may have just lost a friend or disappointed a loved one.

Those who seek to avoid pride do well to pay close attention, because the world around us is not very aware of pride at all. It will

Continued On Page 10

without doubt have consequences, whether we do or don't identify it correctly. If we identify it wrongly, it is like getting a wrong

diagnosis from your doctor. We take medication, but it doesn't do any good.

Lord, give me the wisdom to properly see pride in my own life and then deal with it so

that I may experience your tremendous grace. Amen. *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. 1 Peter 5:6 — End*



1. Why are you attracted to Rachel?
2. Describe for me what you think dating is about.
3. How would you describe a good husband/leader in the home?
4. Tell me about the day you recognized your need for a Savior and called out to God for salvation.
5. How is your walk with the Lord (past and present)?
6. What areas of serving the Lord have you been involved in?
7. What are three things written in the Bible that you feel very strongly about?
8. Whom do you look up to? Who has been your mentor?
9. What is your relationship like with your family?
10. Where do you want to be one year from now? Five years? Ten years?

Our meeting ended on a positive note, and Rachel and David began to date. Over the next year and a half, David and Rachel read through seven love, dating, and marriage books. During that time, it became more and more obvious that David's face belonged to the faceless drawing in the picture frame. And then it happened. The moment Esther and I were waiting for. David let us know that he would like to meet and talk with us. We knew exactly what it was about; he was going to ask if he could marry Rachel.

Once again, I was just a step ahead of the game. I had prepared several pages of personal thoughts and questions I had written down for the moment when David would ask for our daughter's hand in marriage.

Note, I would like to make a strong point to every person reading this testimony: I believe with all my heart that when we make a big deal of love, dating, and marriage, so will our sons and daughters. If we don't, they won't either. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Those who have children who turned out well know how much time it took. It takes much prayer and spending time together as a family, but in the end it is well worth the effort. You see, you are not only raising one generation, but you are also impacting generations to come. If you do it right, your children will do it right. And if your children will do it right, so will their children. Yes, it is well worth the extra effort.

We barely sat down before David eagerly and hesitantly popped the question, "Can I marry your daughter?" I responded, "David, your question does not come as a surprise. Esther and I have something we would like to read with you before we say yes." At that point, I handed each person a copy of the things I had written out for this moment.

It reads:

David, as we have explained before, our family has prayed thousands of times over many years that God would send Rachel a godly man; one who would protect her as well as lead her in the Lord's way. We do not want to sound controlling, nor do we want to hang onto Rachel for the rest of her life. The Bible clearly states in Matthew:

And he [Jesus] answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He [God] which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall

cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? — Matthew 19:4-5

Since the beginning of time, God meant for children to leave their parents and cleave only to their spouse. As parents, we are grateful and feel very blessed that God allowed us to pour our hearts and lives into Rachel. Our goal from the beginning was to prepare her for the man that God would someday send her way. We may not always have measured up, but one thing is sure: we gave it our very best.

In our home we have a prayer couch. Year after year, we sat down on the couch with Rachel every morning and asked God to protect her, fill her with His Spirit, give her wisdom, and lead her in the right direction. It was also during those prayer times that we asked God to provide a born-again, godly husband for her; one who was raised in a home where God and family were first and most important.

Twenty-two years ago, when Rachel was just a baby, we brought her before the church and made a commitment to God and His people that we would do our very best to raise her in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. When she turned ten, we sat down with her and read through a series of four books that

explained how the Lord had made her body in fear and wonder.



See these books advertised on the foldout page—this issue of the Amish Voice

It was also during those times that we shared what she should expect as she grew older—she would marry, enjoy God's gift of sex, and have her own children. Later, at the age of 16, we invited eight godly men and

Love, Dating, Continued On Page 11

women to come to our house to pray over Rachel. That same day, Rachel made a vow to stay sexually pure until marriage and follow the Lord all the days of her life.

David, now that you and Rachel found each other and have been dating for just over a year, we have also added you to our daily prayer list. Almost every morning for the past year-and-a-half, we have sat down together on the couch and prayed for the two of you.

It's been exciting to watch as God gave you and Rachel a desire to read book after book on healthy, godly marriages and families. You get ten stars for doing a GREAT job and leading the way. We are impressed by your knowledge of the scriptures and the stand you have taken to stay sexually pure until married. Truly, the Lord has answered our prayers and done a great work!

Our family loves you and your family. We consider all of you as dear friends and co-laborers in the Lord. We love the way you all have made God and family most important in your lives. Truly, we share many of the same values and beliefs; only God could have made such a connection.

Having said all that, let us conclude by saying thank you for coming and talking to us about your future dreams with our daughter. It is at this point that we would like to ask you some questions before we round the next bend in the road. Please answer them honestly and to the point.

Questions and Commitments

1. Why have you chosen our daughter as the partner you wish to marry and spend the rest of your life with?
2. What do you expect being married to Rachel is going to be like?
3. Have you considered where you will live after you get married?
4. What have you learned from your dad about being a husband and a father?
5. What do you consider your role as a husband and parent should be?
6. What are your goals for the near and distant future?

Can you assure us that you are you going to take care of our daughter financially? Will you work hard, provide for her and your family, and never use money as a weapon?

She doesn't have to live in a castle, but she should have a safe and comfortable home, clothing, and food.



—Illustration by Lydia Chorpeneing

Can you see yourself being happy and content with our daughter even if life deals you a blow and you both end up being poor?

Will you take care of her emotionally? Two things will destroy your marriage: self-centeredness and bitterness. Guard against these. Inside our daughter's heart is a round hole we call "emotional need." Inside of your heart is a square peg that is somehow going to have to "fit" with her. Are you willing to knock off the edges of that square peg in order to fulfill her emotional requirements?

She doesn't think or react like you do. You may see something and laugh; she may see it and cry. You may say something that you thought was the sweetest thing in the world, but it may make her very upset. God designed you to be the one who can meet her needs; are you willing to go out of your way to guard against self-centeredness and bitterness and take care of Rachel's emotional needs?

Will you take care of her physically? As a father, it has been my job to protect my "princess." As her husband, it will be your job is to protect your "queen." If someone were to threaten her, will you step in front of her? By protecting her physically, I also mean intimately. Consider that she is the weaker vessel, as described in the Bible.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto

the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. — 1 Peter 3:7

Will you take care of her spiritually? Do you know that 33 times in the Bible, men are told to love their wives? But it tells wives to love their husbands only twice. You are asking for our daughter's hand. I know what a woman of God she is right now. When I place her hand in yours in marriage, I am no longer responsible for her spiritual health and training. One day, after living together for many, many years—you are going to present her hand to God. Will she be a godlier woman at that point than the day we gave her to you?

Esther and I strongly believe that you must be the spiritual leader of your family and future children (our grandchildren) according to God's design. Will you take responsibility to read the scriptures to Rachel and your children? Pray over them? Take them to church on a regular basis?

Will you, as the leader in your home, put forth your best efforts to pray regularly for the salvation and marriage partners of your children?

If you can take care of our daughter financially, mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually as outlined in this letter, then you have our blessing. If you can't, we need to know now.

After every question was answered and we spent time in prayer, Esther and I both said, "Yes" to David. From there, things moved right along. On May 18, 2013, Esther and I willingly and wholeheartedly gave our precious little bundle of joy over to God's appointed man in marriage.

May I encourage you, dear reader, to follow a similar pattern with your own children, regardless of their age? If your children are already grown, don't forget: you can still make a difference in the lives of your grandchildren. —Joe Keim

This article was written for the Amish Voice, but if you would like a copy of this in booklet form, please write to MAP, P.O. Box 128, Savannah, Ohio 44874 and ask for the Love, Dating and Marriage booklet. (\$.50 each—postage paid)—End

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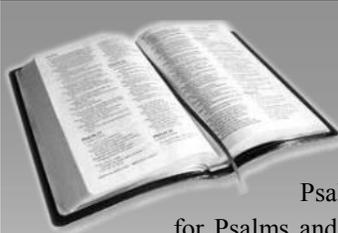
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Love, Dating and Marriage

—Joe Keim

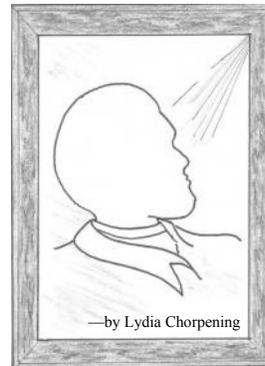
The goal of every parent is to see their children grow up, marry a godly spouse, and live for God all the days of their lives. As parents, we are well aware that we have one shot at getting it right. Just one shot. If we fail and the child follows a bad way, it is impossible to turn the clock back and re-do it. For that very reason, I have felt burdened to share the following testimony of our family and a few things I have learned along the way. Because of the nature of this article, I will mostly focus on our daughter, Rachel.

From the day Rachel was born, Esther and I knew that one day a young man would come along, fall in love with our daughter, and ask to marry her. However, we didn't realize that 22 years would go by so quickly. Honestly, if you have walked in my shoes, you know what I'm talking about. It seems like one day you're rolling around on the floor and chasing monsters from under her

bed, and suddenly you hear those dreadful and scary words: "Dad, I want you to meet David. He asked if he could take me on a date, and I informed him that unless my dad approves of him, it isn't happening." As a father I began to strut like a peacock, feeling good inside and out, because Rachel asked me to meet David before their first date.

Finally David and I met. We shook hands and sat down. I said, "David, I have no idea who you are and what your family life was like growing up. For that reason, I'm going to ask you some personal questions, and I want you answer them honestly and to the point." I was not going to let just any young man walk into our family and snatch my daughter away, and I wanted him to know that.

The first thing I did was show David a hand drawn picture of a faceless man. Then I



—by Lydia Chorpening

said, "David, for the past 20 years, Esther and I have prayed earnestly that God would one day show us whose face belonged to this young man." I proceeded to let him know that, throughout the years, our prayer to God was that the faceless man in the picture was being raised in a home

where Christian values were both taught and followed. Secondly, we prayed that one whom God was raising up for Rachel would lead well in the home and make the Lord his highest priority in life and family. Lastly, we prayed that Rachel and her man would stay sexually pure until the day they married.

Next, I proceeded with the following ten questions:

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