



When the LORD Became Angry



By

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"And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? BUT THEY HELD THEIR PEACE.

"And when He had LOOKED ROUND ABOUT ON THEM WITH ANGER, BEING GRIEVED FOR THE HARDNESS OF THEIR HEARTS, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

—Mark 3:4,5

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Why did our Lord become angry when the spiritual leaders of Israel refused to answer His questions?

He was "*grieved for the hardness of their hearts.*"

Their silence was not the silence of ignorance but of willfulness.

They had "watched Him whether He would heal . . . on the sabbath day; *that they might accuse Him,*" but they could not tell Him what was wrong about it. Indeed, when He *asked* them what was wrong with healing a man on the sabbath day, they refused to answer His questions.

How unreasonable! How unjust! And, as we read the context, we are amazed to find that this sullen, stubborn opposition came not from the Sadducees but from the Pharisees, not the Modernists but the Fundamentalists, the Bible-believers of the day!

The Pharisees were the orthodox group among Israel's leaders. Nevertheless, our Lord reserved His most scathing denunciations for them (Matt. 23) and their pride and bigotry has caused succeeding generations to look

down upon them and to pronounce with contempt the word *Pharisee*.

Shall we be classed as dissensionists if we venture to state that the same condition has prevailed among Fundamentalist and Evangelical leaders for the past half century? Nevertheless it is a fact.

It is no secret that many of our spiritual leaders have relentlessly (though seldom openly) opposed "*the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery*," the glorious message which Paul labored and suffered to "make all men see" (See Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:1-3,8,9; 6:19,20; Col. 1:24—2:3; 4:3,4).

Those who dare to proclaim openly this message of pure grace, with its "one body" and "one baptism," with its "complete in Him," and its "all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies," are still looked upon with suspicion by the majority of Fundamentalists as holding some Satanic heresy. But the leaders who have planted and who keep watering this suspicion cannot themselves tell what the heresy is, or what is wrong with our teaching. Some, indeed, invent heresies with which to charge us, but when

brought face to face with what we actually teach, they generally reply that they would rather refrain from engaging in controversy!

We call upon our spiritual leaders to face these questions in time, lest they heap upon themselves the reproach of future generations and/or suffer serious loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Below we list a few of the questions which thousands of sincere believers are asking and which our Fundamentalist or Evangelical leaders should answer candidly *with the Word of God, rightly divided.*

Paul says in Eph. 3:2,3, "If ye have heard of *the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me THE MYSTERY.*"

He says in Col. 1:27 that God would make known to His saints "*what is the riches of the glory of THIS MYSTERY*"

He says that believers are established by "*MY gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY . . .*" (Rom. 16:25).

He says he was *in bonds* for preaching "*THE MYSTERY*" (Col. 4:3).

He asks the Ephesian Christians to pray that he might have boldness to proclaim "*THE MYSTERY*" (Eph. 6: 19,20).

He says it was given to him "to make all men see what is the fellowship of *THE MYSTERY* . . ." (Eph. 3:9).

Question: WHAT IS "*THE MYSTERY*"?

If the mystery is so precious, if God wants it known, if Paul wanted all men to see it, if it was the theme of his message, if it establishes believers, if Paul went to jail for it and prayed for boldness to proclaim it, *why do so few preachers proclaim it today?*

Why did God raise up Paul, another apostle, years after Matthias had been chosen according to Scripture, to make up the number of the twelve, "and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4)?

Why did Paul speak again and again of "*my gospel*" and continually use similar phraseology? Does not this distinguish his message from that which the twelve had previously proclaimed?

Does not the book of Acts close with the words: "*the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles*" (Acts 28:28)? Is not the Church today made up almost entirely of *Gentiles* in the flesh? Did not Paul write, by inspiration of the Spirit: "*I speak to you Gentiles . . . I am the apostle of the Gentiles*" (Rom. 11:13)? Did he not communicate to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem "*that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles*" (Gal. 2:2)? Does not this indicate a dispensational change *since Pentecost*? Must we not recognize the apostleship of Paul *to us*, and preach the message of Paul, if we would be in the will of God? Are we not *out* of the will of God if we seek to carry out the "great commission" to the eleven, instead of the greater commission to Paul and to us (II Cor. 5:14-21)? Is it not a sin to twist the so-called "great commission" to try to *make* it agree with Paul's commission? Are we really carrying out *either* commission if we do this?

If the so-called "Great Commission" embodies Christ's marching orders for the Church today, should we not observe the legalism of Matt. 28:20, the baptismal salvation of Mark 16:16, the miracles and signs of Mark 16:17,18, the "Jerusalem first" of Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8 and the absolution of John 20:23?

Is it Scriptural to say, "He that believeth and is saved should be baptized," when Mark 16:16 clearly says, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*"? Why do so many preachers distort this Scripture to make it conform to their own teachings? Can those who willfully do this be trusted not to handle other Scriptures in the same way?

You say, "But it doesn't say, 'He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be condemned.'" Well, would one be apt to be baptized if he didn't believe? And if an unbeliever were baptized—and many are—would he be saved?

Is it consistent to say that members of the Body of Christ should practice Mark 16:16 but not Mark 16:17,18? Is this not "putting asunder" what "God hath joined together"? Are not our Pentecostalist brethren more consistent when they insist that water baptism is necessary to salvation and that miraculous signs are the evidence of salvation?

At Pentecost and shortly after, Peter, "*filled with the Holy Spirit*," cried to the "men of Israel": "*Repent, and be baptized*

every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38), and: "Repent . . . the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ . . ." (Acts 3:19,20). Are we to preach this today? Exactly this? If not, has there not been a change in dispensation since that time?

You say the word "for" in Acts 2:38 should be "unto"? Pray tell, what would *that* mean? What would it mean to be baptized "unto the remission of sins"? Wouldn't it be just about the same thing?

We all agree that water baptism *in itself* never saved anyone any more than "the blood of bulls and goats" could, but is it not a fact that water baptism was once as *necessary to salvation* as the blood of bulls and goats under the dispensation of Law?

Was salvation offered apart from blood sacrifices in Moses' time? See Lev. 4:20; 17:11; Heb. 9:22.

Was salvation offered apart from

water baptism from John the Baptist through Pentecost? Let us see:

Mark 1:4, "John did . . . preach the baptism of repentance FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS."

Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized SHALL BE SAVED . . ."

Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized . . . FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS."

Was *John the Baptist* sent to baptize? See John 1:33.

Were *the twelve* sent to baptize? See Matt. 28:19.

Was *Paul* sent to baptize? See I Cor. 1:17.

You argue that he meant that he was not sent *primarily* to baptize? Then you should have some Scripture to show that he was sent to baptize at all. Do you?

You say, "But Paul *did* baptize some." True, but he also spoke with tongues, wrought miracles and circumcised Timothy during his earthly ministry. Are these things also in order today?

Is there any place in Paul's epistles

where he, or the Holy Spirit, sends *us* to baptize?

If you make Col. 2:12 refer to water baptism, do you not pervert the plain words of Scripture, for the passage does not say we were buried *like* Him; it says we were buried *with* Him, i.e., we were made one with Him in *His* burial.

We cannot be buried *with* Christ in His baptism by water, and the burial we do share with Him was not in water. He was not buried in water, but in a tomb in the earth. Thus, as we have been "*crucified with Him*," have we not also been "*buried*" and "*raised with Him*" in a spiritual, supernatural baptism?

If we read *water* baptism into Col. 2:12, do we not impose upon the believer an ordinance which, when in order, was required for salvation and "the remission of sins" (See Mark 1:4 and cf. Acts 2:38 and Mark 16:16)?

If you make Col. 2:12 refer to the "burial" of believers in water baptism, do you not bury the believer *after* he has

already been raised to new life in Christ (See Eph. 2:1,4,5)?

Some use Acts 8:38 to prove baptism by immersion, but if the words "into the water" mean "under the water," then were not the Eunuch and his baptizer *immersed together*, for the passage clearly states that "*they went down BOTH into the water, BOTH Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.*"

Is there one Scripture that says or proves that burial with Christ is by *water* baptism? If I am saved today and baptized with water next week, when am I buried with Christ? When John and Peter cried: "Repent and be baptized," did they mean "Repent and be *buried*," or "Repent and be *washed*"? Do we generally bury people in water? Did they do this in Bible times? Was not water baptism associated with *purifying* during our Lord's earthly ministry (John 3:22-26)? Was not water baptism associated with *purifying* during the Acts period (Acts 22:16)?

But when we come to Col. 2:12 we have truth that was revealed to *Paul*, that *other* apostle, by the risen, glorified Lord in heaven. Here all is grace, and

believers are assured that they have been "*crucified with Christ...buried with Him...raised with Him*, and made to sit together in heavenly places *in Christ*." How could we be buried *after* having been *raised* with Him to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4)?

Some argue from Acts 8:37 that baptism is *optional*, but the word "mayest" does not prove this. If I say to a friend, "You too *may believe* and be saved," would this mean that he did not *have to believe* to be saved? Do Mark 16:16, Luke 7:29 and Acts 2:38 sound as if water baptism, when in order, was optional?

Some point to such cases as the Ethiopian, Cornelius, Lydia and the Philipian jailor, contending that water baptism is merely a testimony, a confession of Christ before men.

It is true, of course, that much that we do is a testimony. If you go to church or to a dance it is a testimony. If you hold a rosary in your hands and bow your head and repeat twenty "Hail Marys" it is a testimony. What you *do* testifies to what you *are*.

But is not the real question: Was the

ordinance of water baptism given to members of the Body of Christ *to be* a public testimony of their faith in the Lord Jesus? Was this its primary purpose? Does the Bible say it is? Some preachers use the phrase "confessing Christ in baptism," but the Scriptures never do. They rather teach that "with the *mouth* confession is made" (Rom. 10:10).

And would not a godly life be a far more effective testimony than merely *having been baptized with water at one time?*

Do you know of any *record* in Scripture of infant baptism? Do you know of one verse or even one line of Scripture that *teaches* infant baptism?

Water baptism, in the Bible, is consistently associated with repentance and faith (Mark 1:4; 15:16; Acts 2:38; 8:36, 37). Can infants either repent or believe?

The subject of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is: "*Not Circumcision but Christ.*" Paul sternly rebukes the Galatian believers for departing from the

message of grace and going back to circumcision and the Law.

In view of this, is it not a grave error to teach that baptism takes the place of circumcision? Is there any Scriptural ground for changing God's declaration: "*Not Circumcision but Christ*" to "*Not Circumcision but Baptism*"?

When Paul, by divine inspiration, writes: "...if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Gal. 5:2), is it not entirely out of order to substitute another religious rite "in the place of circumcision"?

Do you know of any Scripture that teaches that baptism has taken the place of circumcision? Do you know of any passage that even infers this?

Dr. Albertus Pieters, a leading Reformed theologian, once acknowledged:

"If some intelligent being from Mars should come to visit our earth, and we should hand him a Bible . . . he would not find infant baptism in the Bible, because it is not there, and cannot be gotten out of the Bible" (From Pieters' book, "*Why We Baptize Infants*").

How then did this "ordinance" come to take its place among the cardinal doctrines of some of our greatest denominations? Can those who teach and practice this rite escape our Lord's reproof for *"teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matt. 15:9)?

It is not strange that Paul had a spiritual battle on his hands over the subject of circumcision.

For 1900 years this rite had been practiced by God's people, and long-established customs are not easily shaken.

Paul had proclaimed the *finished* work of Christ and with it the abolition of the rite of physical circumcision. Yet even believers in Christ kept reverting from the Substance to the shadows, from the reality to the rituals. They even sought to persuade each other that circumcision was "necessary," though they did not always make clear what they thought it was necessary *for*.

Today do we not have a similar spiritual battle on our hands where the rite of water baptism is concerned? Many sincere believers cling to this rite, and it is difficult to make them see how this logically affects the truth of the finished work of Christ. We can show how water

baptism, when in order, was required for salvation (Mark 1:4; 16:16; Acts 2:38; *et al*) and that to add it now is to cast reflections on our Lord's *finished* work and to involve us logically in legalism to the same extent that circumcision once did. But, as it was in Paul's day with circumcision, it is often hard to make men see this.

Is it merely unnecessary to be baptized, or is it wrong?

Let's answer this question by asking another: Would it be merely unnecessary or would it be *wrong* for the believer to rear an altar and offer blood sacrifices to God in this dispensation of grace?

You say, it would be *wrong*, for the Apostle Paul has now shown by revelation how the blood sacrifices found their great Antitype in Christ, who shed His blood for us. To offer blood sacrifices today would dishonor God for it would cast reflections upon the all-sufficiency of Christ's *finished* work.

But suppose I should reply that I am not offering blood sacrifices for salvation, but merely as a graphic picture of Christ's death for us. Would you not rightly reply that in God's order these

sacrifices *were* once necessary to salvation and that to offer them now *for any reason* would cast shadows upon His finished work?

Is this not also true of water baptism?

These and many other questions concerning God's message and program for this present dispensation are on the hearts and lips of increasing numbers of earnest Christian believers all over the world.

We beg our spiritual leaders to cease opposing those who, like the Bereans, would search the Scriptures daily to make sure they have the truth. We beg of them to face the above questions without delay, lest they, like the leaders of our Lord's day, should prove unfaithful, not only to the people of God but to God Himself, and to Christ who died for us.

DOESN'T IT MATTER?

Doesn't it matter that preachers of the gospel teach us to obey the so-called "great commission," when they themselves have no intention of *really* obeying it?

Doesn't it matter that they pick and

choose from the various records of this commission those details which *they* wish to obey?

Doesn't it matter that so many Bible teachers and pastors are misinterpreting the plain words of the "great commission" to make them conform to their teachings and practices?

Doesn't it matter that thousands of clergymen are using the Lord's name in vain in a religious rite that is now as meaningless as would be the offering of an animal sacrifice?

Doesn't it matter that the division over water baptism is so great that *there is no majority* for any view on the subject?

Doesn't it matter that thousands of ministers and evangelists do not even know what God is doing today, what His chief objective is, constantly confusing the commands of the "great commission" with those found in the Epistles of Paul, and God's program of the kingdom with His program for the Body of Christ?

Doesn't it matter that almost all of the above minimize what God has magnified; the apostleship of Paul? Do they imagine that he boasted when he wrote

(by divine inspiration) "*I magnify mine office*" (Rom. 11:13)?

Doesn't it matter that only a small minority of God's ministers faithfully engage in proclaiming that message which God says establishes believers: "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery" (Rom. 16:25)?

Shall we relax or abandon our efforts to recover this great body of truth, so long hidden under denominational debris?

SPIRITUAL BOLDNESS

What did Paul mean when he requested prayer for boldness to proclaim "the mystery" (Eph. 6:18-20; Col. 4:3,4)? Isn't the language perfectly clear: "That I may *open my mouth boldly* to make known the mystery of the gospel..."?

Do *you* pray for boldness to make this message of grace and glory known to others?

Should you find fault with those who, like Paul, seek to proclaim this message boldly? Should you not rather find fault with those who oppose this message, or who refrain from preaching it for fear or favor of men?

Prov. 29:25 says: "The fear of man bringeth a snare." When men of God, therefore, fail to stand openly for "the mystery" through fear of men, have they not fallen into Satan's trap?

Should we not all ask God to *deliver* us from "*the spirit of fear*" (II Tim. 1:7) and to *give* us "*the spirit of faith*": "*I believed, and therefore have I spoken*" (II Cor. 4:13)?

It is very well to sigh for peace, but can we expect that Satan will ever allow us to proclaim God's truth in peace?

Which should we covet most, peace or faithfulness to the One who *died* that we might enjoy "peace with God" and "the peace of God" even in the fiercest storms?

In I Tim. 6:12 and II Tim. 2:13 Paul exhorts Timothy to be a "good soldier of Jesus Christ" and to "fight the good fight of [the] faith." If we merely preach what we believe to those who already agree, is this "fighting the good fight of the faith"? Does it take "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" to do this?

Surely you hope, some day, to be able to say with Paul: "*I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*" (II Tim.

4:7). Do you also hope to be able to say with him: *"I have fought a good fight"*?

If you have been a *poor* soldier of Jesus Christ, or no *soldier* at all; if you are not openly making known "the preaching of Jesus Christ *according to the revelation of the mystery*," will you *now* earnestly join in this Spirit-inspired prayer:

"...THAT UTTERANCE MAY BE GIVEN UNTO ME; THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY, TO MAKE KNOWN THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL...THAT THEREIN I MAY SPEAK BOLDLY, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK" (Eph. 6:19,20)?

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