

Publishing Peace
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Publishing Peace

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“Behold on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace!...” (Nahum 1:15)



From the Associate Director's Pen

WVSOP.com

Jefferson A. Sole

The Bible is proven to be authoritative because: 1) God is the eternal Creator (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3), Sustainer (Acts 17:25), and Ruler of mankind (Acts 17:24); 2) the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim 3:16); 3) God expects us to follow His Word (Col. 3:17). Understanding that the Bible is authoritative, we recognize that we have an obligation to follow the words contained within its bounds, because we love God (John 14:23-24) and will be judged according to His Word (John 12:48).

Within the realm of obligation are explicit commands to do (or not to do) certain things. Sometimes God tells us how to perform these obligations; other times God allows us to use our own judgment to determine the best way to carry them out. This is what is often referred to as expediency. For instance, the Scripture explicitly commands us to teach and to preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15; 2 Tim. 2:2) but leaves it to our judgment to determine how to expedite the teaching and preaching obligation. For this reason some have chosen to use print, radio, and more recently the internet as a means to teach and preach the Gospel.

The elders, directors, faculty, and alumni understand the importance of using the internet as a tool to proclaim the Gospel and to effectively inform others about the West Virginia School of Preaching. For this reason, there has been a collaborative effort to launch the new **WVSOP.com**.

While the new **WVSOP.com** has an entirely fresh look it also has several new features. Here are a few new features that are particularly exciting:

1) **We offer an online application which will allow an applicant to submit an application electronically.** Please tell anyone that is interested in becoming a preacher to visit WVSOP.com and fill out an application today!

2) **Donations may be made online for the benefit of the school through a secure PayPal account.** Several of our students such as Ricardo Mesidor and Gavin James are still in need of funds to cover their living expenses, please help them meet their needs.

3) **An individual/congregation may register to receive *Publishing Peace* by email, USPS, or change the format by which they are currently receiving *PP*.** In fact, we would like to encourage those who are currently receiving *PP* by way of USPS to consider receiving it by email instead. **Each copy that is sent by USPS costs approximately 70¢. This means that each individual receiving our paper by USPS has an opportunity to save us \$7.70 per. year!** If 1,000 of our current USPS subscribers would request to receive *PP* by email instead, we would save \$ 7,700 per. year!

We hope the new **WVSOP.com** will prove to be an expedient way for you to stay involved with the school and give you the opportunity to inform prospective students what the West Virginia School of Preaching has to offer. Ω If you would like to preach and are interested in knowing more about the WVSOP please check out our website and call us at 304-845-8001/1-888-418-4573 or email us at dirwvsop@aol.com.

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The Love of Christ

Andy Robison

“For the love of Christ compels us,” said Paul in 2 Cor. 5:14 (NKJV). The word *compel* is translated *constraineth* in the King James and *controls* in the RSV. It comes from the Greek *sunecho*, indicating the idea of holding something together lest it fall apart or be broken into pieces (Vine). It is used with a curious variety of connotations, including the crowds pressing Jesus (Luke 8:45), Jerusalem being surrounded by armies (Luke 19:43), and the affliction of the sick with various diseases (Matt. 4:24). Is Paul saying, “The love of Christ holds us together”? A familiar verse bears even another nuance: In Phil. 1:23 Paul expresses his plight of being “hard-pressed” between two options—staying and working with brethren on earth or going on to be with the Lord. Perhaps the best reflection of the 2 Corinthians contextual meaning is found in Acts 18:5, where “Paul was compelled by the Spirit,” and so “testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.” The Spirit pressed Paul to do the necessary work of evangelism. The Spirit held him together as he engaged in a most difficult task that often invoked the disdain of the listeners.

That seems to be the meaning in 2 Cor. 5:14. Earlier in the chapter, the apostle had cited the coming judgment and “terror of the Lord” as a motivation for persuading men of their need to turn to the Savior (vs. 9-11). Fear of an afterlife of torment is still and shall always be—in spite of the naysayers—an appropriate motivation for the preaching of and obedience to the Gospel. Nevertheless, the later verses of the chapter turn toward the positive view of salvation from such a plight. (Note: The positive deserves an exalted place in preaching. The message of Christ is positive. Yet, as pleasure is the counter to suffering, who would know the meaning of the positive without the offsetting homiletic exposure of the negative?)

That positive view is that the love of Christ holds the messenger together and motivates him to the proclamation of the message of reconciliation to God in Christ (vs. 15-21). Separation, particularly from Creator and Savior God, is the negative. It is caused by selfish living and the resultant sin. Reconciliation (“to change from enmity to friendship, to reconcile” [Vine]) is the positive. Disjoined elements (in this case, God and man) are brought back together. “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, blameless, and above reproach in His sight” (Col. 1:21-22). The “word” and “ministry” of reconciliation had been committed to Paul and the apostles (2 Cor. 5:18-19), so that their function as “ambassadors of Christ” was not only

to persuade out of terror (2 Cor. 5:11) but also to plead from the compelling nature of the love of Christ (vs. 20, 14). After all, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (5:21).

Separation from God is terrifying. Salvation is ever-so-pleasantly reconciling. Both ought to compel all men to live and preach the saving Gospel of the Christ. Ω

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Are Babies Sinners At Birth?

W. Terry Varner

A quick check of most denominational creeds will reveal that babies are born in sin. This is a religious doctrine of many, denominational churches. Members may be unaware of this teaching, but their creeds are clear.

Total Hereditary Depravity. “Total Depravity” means there is no evident good within a baby at birth and for that matter in conception. Augustine developed this doctrine by saying that sin is so widespread and so common it needs a *cause* and that *cause* is Adam’s sin. John Calvin taught that if all men are born sinners, they are corrupt; i.e. incapable of doing any good, they never know *when* and *how* to obey God, *unless* and *until*, God intercedes by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the Bible.

Babies are Born Pure. While we can set forth various arguments to prove this point, we can at the same time disprove, “The Hereditary Depravity”. We set forth the following syllogism:

Major Premise: If babies receive their spirit (soul) from God at conception, then babies are born pure and without inherited sin.

Minor Premise: Babies receive their spirit (soul) from God at conception.

Conclusion: Therefore, babies are born pure and without inherited sin.

In the above argument, I am required to prove the *Minor Premise*: Babies receive their spirit (soul) from God at conception. I will set forth two arguments as sufficient evidence to warrant the *conclusion*: Therefore, babies are born pure and without inherited sin.

Argument #1: This involves the origin of the spirit (soul) as from God. “[T]he LORD...forms the spirit of man in him” (Zech. 12:1). God is “the Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9). This is true, “For we are the off-spring of God” (Acts 17:28-29). When man dies, the spirit leaves his body (James 2:26). Where does the spirit go? “[T]he spirit shall return to God who gave it” (Eccl. 12:7). *Why?* Because man’s spirit emanating from God is eternal and returns to its source, God (2Cor. 4:16-5:1-10).

Argument #2: This argument involves the nature of God. God is pure (1 John 3:3), holy (1 Peter 1:16), and good (Matt. 19:17). There is no “darkness” (sin) in Him (1 John 1:15). God’s holiness and purity are such that He cannot look (with approval) on sin (Habakkuk 1:13), as He hates sin (Nahum 1:2; Ps. 5:5). God cannot be tempted by sin and does not tempt man (James 1:13). A sinful spirit cannot originate from God.

These two arguments are sufficient evidence to prove the *Conclusion*, Babies are born pure and without the inherited sin of Adam. Ω

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