

# Alternatives

Man was created by an all-wise, just, and benevolent God. We are free to acknowledge that fact, or to speak as a fool and say there is no God (**Psa. 14:1**).

by Irvin Himmel

We have the power to establish whatever lifestyle we wish. God wants us to honor Him and pattern our lives according to His commandments and the divine principles He has revealed. But we are free to reject the will of God and serve our own lusts (**Tit. 3:3**), if that is our preference.

God loved us and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins. We may respond to that love by obeying the gospel, or we may choose to decline God's grace and judge ourselves unworthy of everlasting life (**Acts 13:46**).

We can allow Jesus Christ to be the Lord and Master of our lives, or we may decide that eternal life is not worth the price of following Jesus (**Matt. 10:37, 38**).

Each one has the choice of sowing to his flesh and reaping corruption, or sowing to the Spirit and reaping life everlasting (**Gal. 6:7, 8**).

Every accountable person has the option of serving Satan and receiving the wages of sin, or receiving eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (**Rom. 6:23**).

We may make up our minds to walk by faith, or we may determine to elevate our own wills above the will of Him who created us. The choice is to walk in the good way, or to say, "We will not walk therein" (**Jer. 6:16**).

God sets before us life and death (**Deut. 30:15**). Our alternatives are heaven and hell.

**Guardian of Truth - February 11, 1982**



Classes This Week	
<b>Monday 7:00 PM</b> Ladies' class at Rouse's at 7:00 p.m. on Matthew	<b>Monday 8:00 PM</b> Class on Hebrews at 8:00 p.m. Crawford's house

Lisa Carter (Daniel's mother)	Jesse and Martha Godwin (Troy's parents)	Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joannetta's aunt)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's nephew)	Mary Edwards (Sandra Chason's mom)	Kimzey Simpson	Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie)
Tory Colvin (sister of Case O'Dell)	Austin Rush (Katie Gentry's cousin)	Barbara Weeks	Brooke Perkins
Joel Black	Emily Thompson (Abbie Harrison's cousin)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Abbie Harrison
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joannetta's aunt)	Charles and Jane Hunt (Chuck's parents)	Doug Bailey (Keith's brother)
Gay Ulrich (Emma's mom)	William and Toni Herd	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	Shawn Lauderdale (Larry and Joannetta's son)

### July Birthdays

- 1 - Collins Hanners
- 2 - Josh Gooch
- 5 - Weston Luther
- 8 - Angela Fernandez
- 11 - Chase Winslett
- 11 - Madi White
- 11 - Clay Morris
- 14 - Laurel Jerkins
- 14 - Megan Hester
- 15 - Bradley Seymore
- 16 - Katie Martin
- 16 - Brittany Waddell
- 18 - Hannah Hinson
- 19 - Jay Borden
- 20 - Anna Maxson
- 20 - Josh Maxson
- 21 - Tori Luther
- 21 - Ron Russell
- 22 - Kate Fortenberry
- 24 - Carla Zacarias
- 25 - Betty Bradford
- 25 - Yvette Rouse
- 26 - Brandon Hester

### News and Notes

- ☑ - We rejoice that Ronaldo Henriquez has put on Christ in baptism this week!
- ☑ - Tonight is singing night!
- ☑ - We also will have a singing on Wednesday night related to VBS!
- ☑ - Payton Davis' grandmother, Linda Beich, remains in rehab.
- ☑ - Orie Cecil's grandfather, Wayne Shockley, will have additional tests due to his possible stroke.
- ☑ - The Elders would appreciate your prayers as we seek a Hispanic preacher to work here in Auburn.
- ☑ - We are thankful for the safe return of Chase and Abbie Harrison after her knee surgery in ATL!
- ☑ - Please continue to pray for Barbara Weeks as she recovers from her recent fall.
- ☑ - VBS will be this week Mon-Thurs, 9:30-11:30 a.m. on the life of Joseph. Please register at [www.auchurch.com/vbs](http://www.auchurch.com/vbs) ASAP!
- ☑ - Pray for our expectant mothers: Hannah Hinson and Hannah Morris.
- ☑ - All audio is immediately uploaded to [www.auchurch.com](http://www.auchurch.com) and Audio CD's placed in the foyer.

# The Auburn Beacon

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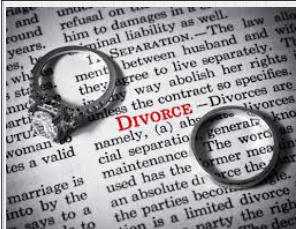
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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## Taking Exception to Making an Exception

By Gary P. Eubanks



### Thoughts to Ponder

"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery. (**Luke 16:18**)

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### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class ..... 9:30 AM  
Worship ..... 10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**  
Bible Classes ..... 7:00 PM

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Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

There is one point which requires clarification, if not correction, in an otherwise excellent and important article written by Dub McClish (The Auburn Beacon, June 24, 2018) to address a couple of misunderstandings of Paul's instructions regarding marriage and divorce (**1 Cor. 7**). Brother McClish rightly says that fornication on the part of one's spouse is the only exception Jesus cites to His statement that divorcing one's spouse and marrying another involves one in adultery (**Matt. 19:9**).

However, he also says, "Jesus teaches that when a marriage dissolves apart from the cause of fornication, neither party has the right to remarry unless and until the one abandoning the marriage has committed or commits fornication (**Mat. 19:9**). In such a case, only the innocent spouse has that Scriptural right." Thus, he envisions "a marriage [which] dissolves apart from the cause of fornication." He correctly concludes from this that "neither party has the right to remarry ... ." (His use of the word, "remarry," in this clause, also shows that the divorce has occurred.) Yet, he proceeds to qualify this by saying "unless and until the one abandoning the marriage has committed or commits fornication (**Matt. 19:9**)." It is apparent that he includes, or is referring to, fornication which is committed following the dissolution of the marriage by the spouse

The Scriptures know nothing of any kind of divorce except one which is implemented and recognized by the law which is applicable to the couple involved. God has never given to individuals the strictly independent, personal power to divorce outside the procedure established by law (**cf. Deut. 24:1; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8**).

who obtained the divorce. Otherwise, why would he have said earlier in the sentence that "a marriage dissolves apart from the cause of fornication"?

So, he conceives of a divorce which one spouse secures on a basis other than the fornication of the other spouse. He acknowledges that, at this point, "neither party has the right to remarry." Yet, his implication is that, if "the one abandoning the marriage has committed or commits fornication (**Matt. 19:9**)," at some point subsequent to the divorce (or, perhaps, before the divorce but without the knowledge of the divorced party until afterward), then "the innocent spouse has that Scriptural right" (to marry another).

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Thus, he seems to allude to “mental divorce,” a concept so called because of the insistence of its proponents that an unwilling spouse in a divorce which has taken place on grounds other than fornication has the right to “divorce” the spouse who commits fornication subsequent to the divorce and marry another. This later, second “divorce” is essentially mental in nature, rather than civil or legal. This is because a court has already granted a divorce, thus depriving the innocent spouse of any recourse there. Hence, any “divorce” on the part of the innocent spouse basically can only take the form of a personal resolution to repudiate the spouse in a marriage which has already been legally dissolved.

Much could be said in opposition to this concept, but in the interest of brevity, only three points will be considered:

First, it contrives a “divorce” which does not, and cannot, take place. The simplest and most obvious way to put this is to observe that a person who has already been divorced by a spouse cannot then divorce that spouse who has already divorced him or her, any more than one can kill someone already dead. It ought to be evident that two people married to each other once cannot get divorced from each other twice.

The Scriptures know nothing of any kind of divorce except one which is implemented and recognized by the law which is applicable to the couple involved. God has never given to individuals the strictly independent, personal power to divorce outside the procedure established by law (cf. **Deut. 24:1; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8**). Perhaps more to the point is the fact that once a divorce has taken place through compliance with whatever the requirements established in the law might be, then it is simply not possible for either party to divorce the other (unless they remarry each other between the divorces).

Indeed, there is no mention of, or provision for, “mental divorce” in the Scriptures. Its proponents cannot point to a single instance therein where people “divorced” spouses by whom they had already been divorced. [In fact, no necessity to do so would have been felt. It was not until Jesus explicitly stated that the divorced person who marries another commits adultery (**Matt. 5:32; Lk. 16:18**) that anyone even conceived of the need for a “second, mental divorce” (cf. **Deut. 24:2**) in order to change the status of the martially-ineligible “put away” person into that of a martially-eligible “putting away”

person. Since this cannot be done in the court, which has already granted a divorce, the only resort of the “put away” party is “mental divorce.” Hence, “mental divorce” is a concept specifically concocted for the purpose of circumventing the celibacy requirement which Jesus implied was the consequence of being divorced.]

Second, it contradicts Jesus, who said, “... And whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery” (**Lk. 16:18b, KJV**). Jesus made no exception to that, but mental divorce, in effect, says this is not true. Instead, it makes a big exception, or loophole, which largely negates what Jesus said. Contrary to what He said, mental divorce proponents say that the man who marries a woman who is put away from her husband does not commit adultery, as long as this woman has waited until her (former) husband commits fornication, whereupon she can (mentally) “divorce” him for fornication and be free to marry another man.

Third, mental divorce corrupts the order given in the Scriptures. That order is: marriage, fornication (on the part of one’s spouse), divorce (for that cause), and marriage to another (**Matt. 19:9**). However, the order according to the mental divorce concept is: marriage, (civil) divorce, fornication, (mental) divorce, and remarriage. Of significance is the fact that, in these two scenarios, the order of fornication and divorce is switched. (Beyond this, in the first, or Biblical, scenario, there is just one divorce. In the second scenario, there are two divorces: one civil and the other mental.)

Mental divorce proponents would not tolerate additions to, or changes in, the order of God’s terms of pardon for the (alien) sinner. For instance, who would allow the order of belief and baptism (**Mk. 16:16**) to be switched to baptism and belief, as in the case of infant baptism?

It is difficult to overstate the seriousness of this point. Since the person who does not have enough respect for God’s law not to divorce a spouse will probably not have enough respect for His law to remain celibate, “mental divorce” has the effect of “allowing” remarriage to many who would not otherwise feel free to marry another. If the “mental divorce” concept is right, then many are guilty of unnecessarily imposing the hardship of life-long celibacy on themselves or others (**1 Tim. 4:1-3**). On the other hand, if the “mental divorce” concept is wrong, it encourages many to commit adultery by entering marriages for which they are not Scripturally eligible. This is not a point on which anyone can afford to dither or obfuscate.



# Baptism And Salvation

By Steve Wolfgang

In an article discussing the definition of baptism, which appeared in this journal some time ago, we noted that “many who would leave baptism so undefined also deny the necessity of the act for salvation.” Such individuals ignore or pervert passages such as **1 Peter 3:21** (“the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us”) or **Mark 16:16** (“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”). We recently heard an illustration of such an effort on a television program regularly featuring Jerry Falwell (of “Moral Majority” fame). A guest speaker on that program made the following argument. “It is true,” said he, “that one should be baptized, but it is not absolutely necessary, because in the phrase ‘He that gets on a plane and is seated shall arrive at his destination’ everyone recognizes that getting on the plane is essential to reaching the destination, but sitting down is not; one will get to the destination whether he sits or not, as long as he gets on the plane. Now, any fool knows you ought to sit down, but it is not necessary” (chuckles from audience).

Those familiar with the past controversy on the role of baptism will recognize this as nothing more than a warmed-over re-hash (though modernized somewhat/ of an “argument” made popular by the Baptist debater Ben Bogard. (1) Bogard was an Arkansan who was perhaps as well-known a half-century ago as Jerry Falwell is today. He used an earlier version (involving a train) to construct the following “parallel:”

He that believeth and is baptized shall he saved

He that gets on the train and sits down shall go to Little Rock

Bogard argued that while there are advantages

When one studies the history of the early church and the letters written to those churches by Christ’s apostles, one learns that this was a universal requirement for salvation and for inclusion in the body of the saved, the church. We are simply trying to teach the same thing today. Have you obeyed this fundamental command?

to sitting down once one is on the train, one will still arrive at the destination whether he sits or not; likewise, while one should be baptized, it is not absolutely necessary since he is saved by faith only regardless of what else he may do.

If one were to dignify such an argument by replying on a serious level, one could simply point out that an analogy (even a good one, which this one is not) does not prove a proposition; it merely illustrates (and then only if valid).

If you have no doubts about the validity of this analogy, try that line on the stewardess the next time you fly and see where it gets you.

However, the best answer may be the one used by W. Curtis Porter, a gospel preacher, to reply to Bogard’s illustration. If one diagrams what Bogard, Falwell, and many other denominationalists actually teach (“He that believeth is saved and can be baptized if he chooses”), and parallel that with the inane plane or train illustration, it comes out like this: “He that gets on the train is in Little Rock already and doesn’t need to sit down!”(2)

We conclude this article simply by pointing out that from the very first preaching of the gospel of Christ on the day of Pentecost, people who inquired as to what to do to be saved were told, “Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins.” When one studies the history of the early church and the letters written to those churches by Christ’s apostles, one learns that this was a universal requirement for salvation and for inclusion in the body of the saved, the church. We are simply trying to teach the same thing today. Have you obeyed this fundamental command?

