

# Thus Saith God's Word

by Rev. Ted Brooks, West Saddle Creek Baptist Church

## Sin, Sorrow and Death

"And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David." (Acts 13:34)

David and Saul were both kings over Israel. Both had been anointed by God to be Israel's king, but there was a difference between the two. God chose David, his servant, and took him from the sheepfold: from following the ewes great with young. He brought him to feed Jacob, his people and Israel his inheritance. "So he fed them according to his heart and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." (Psalms 78:70-72) "And Samuel said to Saul, thou hast done foolishly, thou hast not kept the commandment of God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue, the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people. Because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee..." (1 Samuel 13:13-14) Someone once said, "If Israel had been a car lot, Saul would have been the Cadillac's Classiest Model, loaded with all the extras. He was the tallest, most handsome man among them. Saul looked good in the Israelites' eyes, but his height and good looks couldn't hide his small and homely heart which showed itself in selfishness, egotism, paranoia, depression and violence.

But David was God's man. He had God's heart and he had the ways of God. You see David in En-gedi, Saul had three thousand chosen men out of Israel to seek for David's life. Both were inside a cave. Saul was unaware that he and David were in the same cave. David's men were convinced God had delivered Saul to David so that David could kill him (Saul). The men encouraged David to revenge himself, but David rather than kill Saul, cut a small piece of Saul's shirt. Later David wept because he had done so to God's anointed.

David could have based his argument on the fact that Saul had made attempts on his life. David could have said, "I have a right to. I am no door mat to be walked on. It is me that has been done wrong and if I don't stick up for myself, no one else will." Well, you and I can call it what we may, but God calls it revenge. It is better known as getting even.

But here in 1 Samuel 24:1-8, David refused to take revenge. Beloved, David left his revenge to God. "For it is written I will repay saith the Lord." (Romans 12:17-19) (Deuteronomy 32:35-36)

David suffered un-deserved persecution which brought him to his lowest point in life. It was there while in that cave that David cried unto the Lord. "With my voice, with my voice, unto the Lord did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him. I showed before him my trouble. My spirit was overwhelmed within me. Then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked, I looked on my right hand and beheld there was no man that would know me. Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." (Psalms 142:1-4) Let me ask you a question, have you as a Christian ever been to this cave? Do you know what it is like to look to your left and to your right and there was no man that would know you? You thought if there was anyone that would have aided you that one person would have? David cried unto the Lord and said, "I cry with my voice. I make my supplication. I showed before him my trouble." And David said when I did, I was overwhelmed within me and it was then that God himself knew my path in the way wherein I walked because David said they secretly laid a snare for me. (Psalms 142:1-4)

David was suffering un-deserved persecution from Saul and the only place David found for a hiding place was in a dark, damp cave but it was here that David saw the light of God's deliverance. My friend, if you ever find yourself being persecuted remember God said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay said God." (Romans 12:17-18) When David had finished his prayer, David refused to get even with Saul. God blessed David. When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. (Proverbs 16:7)

When you read the rest of 1 Samuel 24:1 it tells when Saul left the cave, David followed him out to talk to him. David had the torn garment in his hand. Let me ask you a question, is there someone that you have wronged and they have been following you around for a long time with a piece of your persecution in their hand? David followed Saul and David wanted to prove both his innocence and his integrity. Notice these words of the man who has God's heart. David called after Saul saying, "My Lord the King, and when Saul looked behind him and

David was bowed with his face to the ground. (1 Samuel 24:8) David said, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying Behold, David seeks to harm you." (Verse 9)

"You have seen that God hath given you to my hand in the cave. Some even asked me to kill you, but my eyes had pity on you and I said, I will not stretch out my hand against my Lord, for he is the Lord's anointed."

What David did not know was that God has said, "But now thy kingdom shall not continue." The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart." (1 Samuel 13:14) Saul had been rejected as God's king. Saul had finally made his last mistake when he followed David into the cave at En-gedi. It was there that David poured out his heart to God. "I cried unto thee, O Lord. I said thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my prayer, for I am brought very low. Deliver me from my persecutors for they are stronger than I." (Psalms 142:5-6)

I will ask you again: is there anyone following you for the wrong that you have done? If there is and you fail to reconcile the difference, there's a cave just ahead for you.

Let me say this, David did sin, but David was a man who would repent. Three times a day David prayed, even was said that he prayed continuously. He prayed with a broken and a contrite spirit. In other words, David wept, cried and pleaded for forgiveness. You don't read where David claimed that he was always saved. David said "When I held the wife of Uriah in my arms it was a thing which displeased the Lord." (1 Samuel 11:27)

"From the day Uriah slept at his door, David even made him drunk but he was there with a piece of David's conscience and it was there that David cried out. "Day and night, thy hand was heavy upon me, it was when I kept silence my bones become old." (Psalms 32:3-4) That is the difference between David and this new age. David knew to repent and live.

Saul's last words were "Behold, I have played the fool." (1 Samuel 26:21) My friend, I have been in this ministry of Jesus Christ and I have seen men and women who have played the fool as Saul did. I have witnessed persons in the church who would not go and seek forgiveness from a brother or sister, saying that they were still saved. Jesus said, not I or your preacher, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:15) Now, listen to Saul's last words, just minutes before his death, no where does he say tell David I am sorry. No where does he even call upon God. Not one word of a plea of saying, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee." No where does Saul say, "I will confess my sins." No where does Saul claim God to be his hiding place.

No, my friend, the Bible tells us that "The battle went hard against Saul and when the archers hit him and Saul was severely wounded by them, he said, I have played the fool."

My friend, I have even sit by the bedside and pleaded with folks to make things right (repent) before they die and they still would not. Death, my friend, will go hard against you. I have seen people get so sick they could not pray for themselves.

Saul went on in his madness, seeking witchcraft and the likes, but the word tells us the battle went hard. Notice another thing about Saul. When he was severely wounded, he said to his armor bearer, draw thy sword and thrust me through with it. When no one would aid Saul in killing himself, Saul took a sword and fell upon it. (1 Samuel 31:4)

There are some whispers among church folks saying "Don't put me on life support. Just let me die." Oh, my friend, it is not easy to die, if you die as Saul. Folks often ask how did they die? My friend, it is not how you die, but is how you live.

Next week the conclusion of Sin, Sorrow and Death.



In Scandinavia, Christmas elves known as *tomtes* are used to decorate everything from Christmas trees to packages to tables.



For beautiful Christmas decorations in a window with panes, hang a cluster of berries or a sprig of evergreen tied with a ribbon from the middle of each pane and wreath the whole window in long-needled evergreen.



# From the Desk of the Superintendent...

by Dr. Barry Harding, Public Schools of Robeson County

How is it possible that another Christmas is with us? Didn't we just start another school year with Christmas still a long way off? Still there's no doubting the facts and so this column which is usually devoted to discussion of educational issues facing the Public Schools of Robeson County will, instead, set aside those daily concerns and devote itself to some thoughts about this holy season.

Our young people are at home taking a holiday break until after the first of the year. I sincerely doubt that they are giving any thoughts at all to school as they involve themselves in the joy and excitement of the season. I'm certain that also holds true for our teachers, administrators and other employees who are likewise taking a break from their daily routines and spending some well-deserved time with their families.

If you had the occasion to visit any of our schools in the days before the students' vacation got underway, you would have seen signs of the season everywhere. Decorations depicted both the secular and religious side of the holiday with many of the decorations demonstrating the talents of many of our advanced art students as well as drawings by youngsters just learning to express themselves artistically. Christmas music filled the air as children in all our schools presented programs ranging from all-music programs to plays - some for their fellow students and some for

their school's PTA.

Some schools took part in various area civic celebrations sending their bands to march and play in Christmas parades. Others visited rest homes spending time with the residents and singing songs of the season helping them, in many cases, to bring back memories of earlier happy times. Still others reached out to people less fortunate than they are by conducting drives for food and sundries as well as toys and then hand delivering the items to help the recipients to have a happier Christmas than they might have otherwise had. I believe it's important that you know that these were activities that were not forced on the students. They cheerfully undertook them on their own time in the spirit of giving which is such an important part of the season.

I believe that knowing about such efforts on the part of our young people will help people realize that the stories they hear in the media about the misdeeds of some students do not refer to the vast majority of them. It's unfortunate that the deeds of the relatively few should reflect on the many. At this time of the year, I would encourage you to take a long hard look at our young people and the good that is in them.

Now, may I take this opportunity on behalf of myself, our school board, our administrators and all our students to wish for you and yours the happiest of Christmases and a New Year with health and well-being for all.

## Obituaries

Mr. Percell Scott, Sr., 72, a resident of West Fifth Street, Lumberton, NC died Tuesday morning, December 14, 1999 at Southeastern Regional Medical Center, Lumberton, NC. He was born in Robeson County, North Carolina April 5, 1927; a son of the late John Bennie and Mary Jane Spaulding Scott.

Mr. Scott was a member of the Hestertown Church of God where he was active in the Mens Bible Class of the church Sunday school. He was a former teacher of the Adult Sunday school class, a clerk of the church, having served some thirteen years and was custodian, a former manager of the Scott's Texaco on Fifth Street and a retired farmer. Mr. Scott was a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II.

Funeral services were conducted at 2 pm Saturday from the Hestertown Church of God with the Reverends Ronald Scott, Dufrene Cummings, Harry Lee, John L. Locklear and Dr. Millard Maynard officiating. Interment followed in the Lumbee Memorial Gardens under the direction of Biggs Funeral Home.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Clara Bell Locklear Scott of the home, his family, Renferd and Andrena Scott of Pembroke, NC, Harold and Sandra Scott, Percell Scott, Jr., Ida Marie and Winston Hunt, Teresa and David Goins, Ricky and Ruth Scott all of Lumberton, NC, Jeffery Scott of the home, Tammie and Roosevelt Scott of Lumberton; four brothers, Earl C. Scott of Lumberton, Lindberg Scott James Frand Scott both of Pembroke, and Vardell Scott of Lumberton; three sisters, Nevelyn Graham, Willow Dean Locklear and Patricia Ann Chavis all of Lumberton, fifteen grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Gaynor Leach, at the residence.

Memorials may be directed to the Hestertown Church of God, P.O. Box 35, Lumberton, NC 28359.

Pallbearers were Delton Locklear, Marvin Chavis, Jerry Hunt, Donald Jacobs, Hohny Lowery and Edward Oxendine.

Honorary pallbearers were the Men of the Church.

### Rev. Jack M. Hunt

Rev. Jack M. Hunt, age 73, a resident of 614 Deep Branch Road, Lumberton, NC died December 17, 1999 at Southeastern Regional Medical Center.

Rev. Hunt was born on October 6, 1926 in Robeson County; son of the late Javie and Lonnie Smith Hunt.

He was a Minister for the Church of God Conference and was a member of Saddle Creek Church of God.

Funeral services were held 2:30 PM Sunday, December 19, 1999 from Saddle Creek Church of God with Dr. Millard Maynard, Rev. Kenneth Locklear, Rev. Buddy Bullard, Rev. Stafford Smith officiating. Interment followed in Lumbee Memorial Gardens.

Surviving are his wife, Grace Brewer Hunt of the home; three sons, Roger Hunt, Bobby Hunt and Billy Hunt all of Lumberton, NC; one sister, Rachel Smith of Traverse City, Michigan; five grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

## ATTENTION A Campaign Fundraiser For REPRESENTATIVE RON SUTTON N.C. House of Representatives

WHAT: A Drop-in Reception (Non-Alcoholic) Fundraiser for Rep. Ron Sutton, Democrat of Pembroke

WHERE: Pembroke Jaycee Building  
Club House Road, Pembroke, N.C.

WHEN: 5:00 - 9:00 P.M., Thursday December 30, 1999

WHY: To raise funds for Rep. Sutton to use in his up-coming campaign for a 5th term in the N.C. House of Representatives, District 85, serving parts of Robeson and Hoke Counties.

EVENT: Drop-in Reception; Stay for one of the live shows.  
-No political speeches  
-Visiting candidates will be recognized  
-A great opportunity to have an alcohol free event during the week after Christmas

FOOD: Hors d'oeuvre refreshments will be available

DONATION: \$50.00 per couple - Pay at the door. If unable to attend, mail your donation by personal check to Sutton For N.C. House, P.O. Box 787, Pembroke, NC 28372. All donations needed and appreciated.

MUSIC: Local radio personality and gospel recording artist, CHARLES BELL will perform two (2) shows - 6:00 and 8:00 p.m.

DRESS: Casual; or wear your Christmas attire

"AN ALCOHOL FREE ALTERNATIVE EVENT"

# INTRODUCING OUR LATEST MEDICAL ACHIEVEMENT

Rajesh D. Sakala, M.D., has joined the medical staff of Southeastern Regional Medical Center. He is associated in private practice with Robeson Family Practice in Red Springs.

A native of India, Dr. Sakala attended Bangalore Medical College and earned his medical degree in 1992. He completed residency training at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Michael Reese Hospital in 1998, where he served as chief resident in internal medicine last year. Dr. Sakala is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

We can all feel good about each new addition to the medical staff at Southeastern Regional Medical Center. Each physician brings years of education, specialized training and personal expertise to our highly diversified health care team - and to our community.

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to our newest doctor. With your arrival, there is a significant improvement in the general health of this community.



Rajesh D. Sakala, M.D.

**SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER**  
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