

BIBLE EXPLORER

News

"Featuring News That Shouldn't Be News

But Is News"

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Online Newspaper

INTRODUCTORY SERIES

— Why We Believe Whatever We Believe About The Bible —

#int-1 of 2— Introduction to the **Online NEWSpaper**. Each new editorial will build on the aggregate foundation of all the previous ones.

"I Believe
What We Believe."

A preacher's kid, I grew up in church. After graduating from children's church, I was surprised to learn that we were to sing some of the same songs in our youth groups and then, too, in "big church."

Yes, we adults continued singing songs of jubilation like "I'm saved and I know that I am!" and "I'll Fly Away!" It always amused me when the adults would sing children's songs like "Jesus Loves Me." Well, it amused me, but I still enjoyed the nostalgia.

During my teenaged years I became progressively less certain that I was "saved." Why? Because I was keenly aware of all the dirt God had on me. Inside, I felt like a dirty rotten rat most of the time. "Saved" people don't feel like that inside; I was sure of it. But there were times of respite: I'd "get 'saved'" all over again with every new revival and super preacher[^] evangelist who'd come to our church.

[^] Paul called them "super apostles" in the KJV See 2 Corinthians 11:5.

Each of those revivalists would confirm my suspicion that I had clearly backslidden and was in need of a brand new

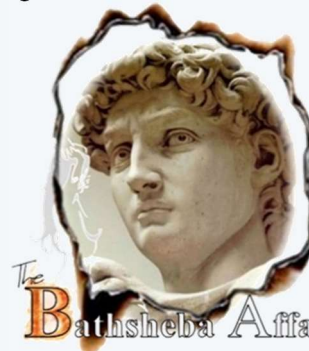
dose of God's merciful saving grace. I observed my teenaged friends going through cycles that were strikingly similar. And I wondered about the adults... what about the adults? I mean, hey! I knew the not-behind-the-pulpit version of my dad! When my primary interest turned to learning everything I could about the human female anatomy, my desire to "stay 'saved'" began to fade. I was obsessed.

A buddy and I decided to skip a Sunday morning service to raid an adjacent back yard's fruit trees. One of the church deacons caught us and slipped a note to the pastor (not my dad, at that point) who dragged us before the really large Sunday AM congregation to confess.

Our lesson? We learned that while it can be lots of fun to be bad, it feels really awful when you get caught at it. So we resolved never to get caught again. But if we were to get caught...well, we'd just deal with that, too, you know?

When the pastor announced another revival, my buddy and I immediately knew that the new super preacher would bring an even heavier blanket of conviction on us. At some point during the next week my buddy asked me if I remembered that King David, a man after God's own heart, had done some stuff that was a lot worse than any-

thing he and I had done. "David 'got saved' again," he said, "and he even got to keep that hot nude rooftop sunbathing babe, Bathsheba!" Vivid, full-color moving pictures of that story dominated my consciousness again for weeks!



My buddy "got 'saved' again" during that new revival. I sat back. Somehow, in spite of the King David-Bathsheba story, it seemed hypocritical to me to repent when my intent was clearly to continue catering to my carnal consciousness.

So who was right? Me or my buddy?

My buddy, whose dad was one of the church leaders, had also grown up in church. He and I were typical of the teenagers, in that we had learned a lot about "what 'we' believe" but had gained little knowledge and understanding about what God's written word might have to say about "what 'we' believe." I was to learn, later, that very few, if any, of the adults in that large church had acquired such knowledge.

How could that have been? Is it still the observable rule today? Had our preachers (including my dad) intentionally kept their trusting faithful flocks "in the dark?" If so, had they done that on purpose? Is it even possible that they didn't know any better, themselves?

I was able to ask my dad about all that before he died. He convinced me that pastors do not *intentionally* keep the trusting faithful "in the dark." After extensive further analysis I concluded that most preachers are, themselves, uninformed or misinformed.

But how could that be? Surely they've done their *basic* homework, at least! Haven't they...?

The culprit is subtle...and barely detectable It is this: Every denomination owns a "what 'we' believe" franchise. Every seminary teaches its students what to study—to confirm "what 'we' believe."

Denominations and their seminaries employ theologians. Those theologians hold one another accountable to "what 'we' believe."

Would you be surprised if that were to work differently? Then you may also know that peer pressure among adults is much stronger that it is among children. It is stronger, yet, for adults who get paid to toe-the-line. Golden handcuffs...

