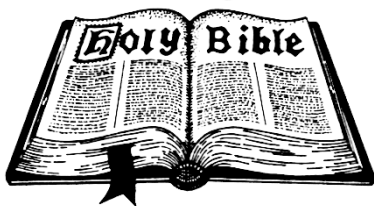


Second Annual
TRUTH IN LOVE
LECTURESHIP

Theme:
"... live soberly, righteously,
and godly, in this
present world"
(TITUS 2:12)



May 13-17, 1992

PAUL SAIN, DIRECTOR

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INTRODUCTION

The First Annual **Truth In Love Lectureship** enjoyed great success, by many standards. The theme last year, "**Stedfast, Unmoveable, Always Abounding**" afforded the opportunity of diligent study in areas vital to our time.

We express our appreciation to each one who helped to make the first year so beneficial. Each speaker presented the thrilling gospel of Christ in a plain and understandable way. The attendance was wonderful – with dozens of congregations represented from many states. The overall response from faithful brethren has indeed been a great encouragement to the East Hill church. Hundreds of audio and video tapes, along with the outline book have been distributed to MANY places over the world. To know the lessons are available in this form means that they will outlive the participants in the lectureship.

The elders of the East Hill church sincerely believe in preaching and teaching the "*old paths*" (Jer. 6:16). Their valuable support is appreciated by this preacher beyond expression in words. The East Hill church is known for their love of truth and teaching the lost. Under the elders' oversight, the East Hill family has been actively involved in evangelistic efforts in the United States (Tennessee, Georgia, Idaho, etc.) and foreign countries (Korea, Brazil, Thailand, Africa and several others).

One of the major tools in presenting the unadulterated gospel in recent years has been the **Truth In Love** publication. More information

on this work is found on page five of this book.

The East Hill membership has cooperated in an outstanding manner. The diligent ones who have given of their time and efforts to make this possible are to be commended. Appreciation is once again hereby expressed.

From the earliest planning stages of this annual lecture series, frequently the elders have expressed the desire to have each speaker "*Preach the Word.*" It has been the purpose to have some of the most outstanding men available, to present the powerful, soul-saving message of Christ.

"To God be the glory" is our fervent desire, as we send forth this volume. We acknowledge that truth will live on and on, and pray that the lessons contained herein will do much good for generations yet unborn.

Paul Sain

Lectureship Director

"TRUTH IN LOVE"

Under the sponsorship of the East Hill eldership, **Truth In Love** is now in its fifth year of existence. Each issue develops a specific theme or subject. Great emphasis has been placed upon "*The Bible, Our Only Authority,*" "*Sin Is The Problem,*" "*Christ Is The Answer,*" "*The Church That Christ Built*" and similar studies. It has been our exclusive purpose to go back to the Word, study and teach the Word, plead with others to learn and obey the Word of God.

Six times a year this 16 page periodical is provided (free upon request) to the brotherhood.

As of the current issue, we publish over 20,000 per issue. Our major thrust is in the Giles County area, with over 10,300 copies mailed to individual homes. Over 150 bundles are mailed to congregations in almost 30 states and foreign countries.

The **Truth In Love Lectureship** was developed from the same desires as expressed above.

Many who attended (or ordered lessons, tapes, etc.) the lectureship last year were those who have received the periodical.

DEDICATION

It has been my privilege and rich blessing to work with the wonderful East Hill church for almost five years.

The faithful Christians who comprise the work force are dedicated and inspirational workers. They willingly give of themselves to accomplish the many works of the Lord to which they have been challenged. They sincerely love the truth; are determined to walk in the way of righteousness; offer great encouragement to ones who proclaim the gospel from the pulpit; and are loving, sharing, caring, tender and kind followers of Christ.

Without doubt, one of the most encouraging factors in my work has been the opportunity of working with, and serving under, the faithful eldership that oversees this family of God.



To the valuable ones with years of service and experience; to the hard-working, growing young adults and the sincere, precious children – this volume is dedicated in deep appreciation of your love of God and His Word. May the Lord ever bless you in your sacrificial labors in the kingdom.

While a perfect congregation of the family of God does not exist, this church is *"one of the best."*

Paul Sain, Director

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Our Theme:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Titus 2:11-15

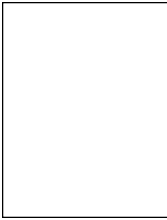
Section 1

**Salvation
Of Man**

Chapter 1

SALVATION – PROVIDED BY THE GRACE OF GOD

WINFRED CLARK



Began preaching in 1946 • All local work in Alabama and Georgia • Education received from Montgomery Bible College, Alabama Christian College, Jacksonville State College and Alabama Christian School of Religion • Director of the **School of Bible Emphasis** • Edna (Stephens) and Winfred have two children • Serves as an elder of the Hobbs Street church in Athens, Alabama.

Introduction

One will find grace referred to time and again in his Bible. In fact, you will find that word approximately one hundred and thirty times. It is addressed as a very popular subject and one that deserves very close attention. When we speak of the Lord's grace, we are speaking of,

... the friendly disposition from which the kindly act proceeds (Vines).

This is just another way of saying "*God's favor.*" In fact you will see it in this way by a comparison of the KJV and the ASV. For example (Gen. 6:8). One will say,

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

The other will say "*favor.*" Such is surely in keeping with the character of God.

You will find the apostle Paul, with other New Testament writers, time and again, magnifying

the grace of God. Paul would again and again identify himself in relation to the grace of God. The writers of the New Testament would speak of *"the grace of God"* (Acts 11:23; 13:43; 14:26; 15:40; 20:24). There was no doubt in the mind of Paul and others about the fact of *"God's grace."* That grace is also described as being abundant (II Cor. 4:15). It is called *"exceeding grace"* (II Cor. 9:14). There is also the reference to the *"manifold grace"* (I Peter 4:10). There is also the *"true grace"* (I Peter 5:12).

You will find that this tremendous thing called grace is related to all members of the Godhead. There is the *"grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Acts 15:11). The Holy Spirit is known as *"the Spirit of grace"* (Heb. 10:29). So we know of the importance of grace because of such a relationship. Surely divine beings would not be identified with that which would be below their nature. This would thus raise the level of grace to tremendous heights.

Since this is the case then men need to be careful concerning the doctrine of *"the grace of God."* We are well aware of cases where *"grace"* has been misrepresented. But this is not a new or novel thing. You had this sort a thing in the days of the early church. Did not Jude speak of,

... ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4-5).

This would mean such men would make the grace of God into something that it was not. This would mean a perversion of grace.

We must approach a study of this subject in a very reverent and careful manner for in it we are attributing something to God. We do not want

to misrepresent the character of God and say that His grace will do what it does not. Neither do we need to deny that His grace will accomplish that which it is designed to accomplish. We shall therefore seek to see the effect of the Lord's amazing grace.

1. This Grace Is Related To Salvation

This statement can be proven beyond any doubt. This is affirmed by Paul, an apostle, when he said,

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men (Titus 2:11).

This grace would surely be personified in the person of Christ who came on a saving mission. You will remember that Simeon said after seeing Jesus brought to the temple by Mary and Joseph as a babe,

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation (Luke 2:29-30).

He saw in the coming of Christ, the salvation man longed for. So no person can deny the fact that salvation and grace are connected. This is affirmed time and again in your New Testament (Eph. 2:5,8; Acts 15:11; II Tim. 1:9). All would have to understand that salvation and God's grace are inseparable.

But we need to note that the salvation that was brought by grace is not an unconditional salvation. It is not by grace alone. We need to be able to see that the one whose grace provided salvation also set forth conditions or works. But they are not just any kind of conditions or works. They are of a certain kind. This is what Paul had in mind when he said.

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace (Rom. 4:16).

If they were not of faith, then such would not be by grace. These conditions are tied to faith. The apostle Paul said,

For by grace are you saved through faith (Eph. 2:8).

Any works or conditions established by the Lord would be designed to express one's faith or trust in God who set the conditions. That would remove from such the element of boasting. One cannot boast of the thing he is commanded of God to do (I Cor. 9:16). When Paul spoke of, "*not of works lest any man should boast*," he was not speaking of all kinds of works. The works that one does in order to be saved under the terms of the gospel are "*not of yourselves*" (Eph. 2:8). What they are to do in obedience to the gospel, which is called "*the obedience of faith*" (Rom. 1:5), is not that which would originate with themselves. This can be easily illustrated by looking at those people who heard the first gospel sermon. When these people learned they were lost, they asked "*men and brethren, what shall we do*" (Acts 2:37)? They were told to "*repent, and be baptized*" (Acts 2:38). You surely would not say that what they were told to do, and what they later did, was of themselves. This is seen in the very fact that they would ask what to do. If it were of themselves they would not need to ask anyone. In this case God's grace would teach them through the preaching of the apostles what God would have them to do. When this is done they would surely be indebted to God for their salvation. Their faith would be evident in repentance in the name of Christ. Their faith would

surely be evident in their being baptized for the remission of sins in the name of Christ. Do you conclude for a moment that these, if asked, would tell you that they saved themselves independent of God? These are not attempting to be saved by the works of the law nor by their own systems. They have not decided as did the rich man, *"this will I do"* (Luke 12:18). They are humble enough to seek an answer from the apostles and then follow those instructions. When these *"gladly received his word, and were baptized"* (Acts 2:41): these could say what Paul said,

... having been buried with him in baptism,
wherein ye were also raised with him through
faith in the operation of God (Col. 2:12).

You would have to affirm that these were saved by God's grace, but their salvation was not without condition. So when you speak of *"the grace of God that bringeth salvation"* you would have to include those described in this second chapter of the book of Acts. But these would have to be obedient to the commands set forth by inspired men. They are described as being saved (Acts 2:47). But if these are saved, then they will have to be saved in harmony with the language of Paul in (Eph. 2:8-9). If such was not the case, then you would have the Holy Spirit opposing or contradicting himself. The Holy Spirit inspired the sermon of Acts 2 but he also inspired the writing of Ephesians 2. I would not want to be placed in the position of trying to set one of these against the other. That would surely be the case if you were to say one is saved by grace alone. But it would be just as true if one were to say such was by works alone. It is not a question of, either/or, but is a question of both. Yes, the

Lord's grace does indeed bring salvation but that grace does not bring salvation apart from man's obedience to the gospel. This fact can be clearly demonstrated in the case of the Ephesians. Yes, we know they were saved by grace for Paul said they this was the case (Eph. 2:5,8). But such does not rule out the fact of their believing (Eph. 1:13). Paul says, "*in whom also after that ye believed.*" We know they believed. We also know these folks were baptized (Acts 19:1-7). But Jesus said "*he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16). It must therefore follow that these were saved. But if they are saved, they are saved by the grace of God. You cannot separate these facts.

We might do well to look at another passage at this point. Listen to Paul,

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness... (Rom. 5:21).

Notice that this passage will say that "*grace reigns.*" That is grace rules or controls. Now, how does grace control or rule? Let Paul tell you. He says, "*through righteousness.*" So it is not "*grace alone.*" But what is righteousness here? Would this not be that which is revealed in the gospel. Would this not be equal to the gospel. So in simple terms, "*grace reigns or controls through the gospel.*" Grace takes over our lives and controls them through the gospel.

II. This Grace Brings About A Separation

Titus will not only set forth the fact that grace brings salvation; he will also show that this grace will lead to separation. Notice that he will say of the grace that hath appeared that it appears,

...teaching us, to the intent that, denying

ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:12).

There can be no question as to whether such teaching would keep us away from the evil of the world. This grace brings about this separation by directing us how not to live and also how to live. It does not create a vacuum.

One would make a grave mistake to think that the grace of God would give one a license to sin. This seems to be what some were doing when Jude says,

...ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 4).

The assumption would be that since grace forgives sin, then one can live a sinful life. But grace does not give one the liberty to live a sinful life. Listen to Paul,

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Rom. 6:1-2).

Here are a group of rapid fire questions which address this very point. There is no inclination toward umbrella grace that would tolerate sin. God's grace will bring forgiveness, but it will not allow one to continue in the practice of sin.

Grace will not cover and make guiltless a life of sin. It is utter folly to think that grace will ignore the fact of one's disobedience or lack of repentance. Such would make a mockery of the Bible. There must be an adherence to that which grace will teach concerning sin. As we have noted, this grace that brings salvation, also comes teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Can we ignore what grace would

teach concerning these matters and yet expect the salvation which it brings. In short, can we ignore the teaching of grace and at the same time enjoy the salvation by grace? If we can, then what is the purpose of the teaching of grace? Why would grace teach us to live a separated life and then bring us salvation when we ignored such? Why would an inspired apostle ask *"shall we continue in sin"* and then say *"God forbid"* if such could be done and still enjoy all the benefits of grace?

III. This Grace Genders Thankfulness

When men truly see, understand and appreciate the grace of God, you will have gratitude which will well up in the heart and overflow in praise and service. When one truly comes to understand what he is and what he enjoys by grace; you will have a person who will show his gratitude. This principle will appear a number of times. There is example after example where this is the case. Take for example a Syrian captain by the name of Naaman. You will recall that he was a leper. After he came to the prophet of God and was cleansed, you will find him seeking to show his gratitude in offering a gift to Elisha (II Kings 5:15). He was so thankful for the blessing that he had received.

Take the case of those lepers who stood and said, *"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us"* (Luke 17:13). You will recall that they were ten in number. They were told by Christ to go and show themselves to the priest and they went. On the way they were cleansed and one of them turned back to give thanks to the Lord (Luke 17:15-17). Though nine did not return to give thanks, one did. That is what he should have done. That is the effect that grace should have in the hearts of those who are effected by such.

Perhaps one of the best examples of this is the apostle Paul himself. You will find that Paul was so very thankful for God's grace. You will see in his life that God's grace becomes the motivating factor that caused him to become such a great sacrificial servant of the Lord. Paul would see himself as an unworthy recipient of God's grace. Take a moment to note some of the things he would say about this to his brethren in Corinth. When he had spoken of all the witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, he comes to talk about himself. He said:

And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me (I Cor. 15:8-10).

One can not read this without understanding Paul's appreciation for the grace of God. He was so very thankful for God's goodness and mercy toward him. This would move him to see his work as a privilege and not as a burden. Listen to this great apostle as he writes to his brethren in Ephesus.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8).

Paul was so very thankful for God's grace. He would say,

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry (I Tim. 1:12).

Yes, grace should usher in overflowing gratitude in the heart.

IV. This Grace Will Usher In Service

It would seem that this would be a natural product of gratitude. It was in the case of Naaman. He wanted to do something to show his gratitude.

Grace surely stimulated the service of Paul. Listen to what he would say to his brethren in Corinth,

But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me (I Cor. 15:10).

You cannot fail to see what motivated him to such a degree of service. Paul would never be able to repay the Lord for all that the Lord had done for him. He did not see himself in this way. He saw himself as one who could only do what he was doing because he was allowed to do so. This was the effect the grace of God would have in the life of Paul.

Was not the same thing true of the churches of Macedonia? Notice what Paul will say of them.

Moreover, brethren, we make known unto you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia (II Cor. 8:1).

But what does this grace cause these churches to do? You will find that they would want to have a part in the collection for the poor. This they would want to do in spite of the hardships they might have to face or the difficulties they would endure. They would give out of deep poverty. They would give when they did not have that much to give. They would not have to be asked to give but

would do so because they wanted to give and would not be satisfied if they could not give. The grace of God would surely motivate these people to serve.

When people serve out of gratitude, you will find that such service will be of longer duration and with more quality. It will be a better kind of service and will last longer. If only all of us could learn to appreciate the *"Lord's Amazing Grace"* more, then our service would be abundant. This is surely the thing that Paul would ask. He did so of his brethren at Corinth when he said:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, by ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58).

Thus you would have overflowing and unending works to come from grateful saints in that city.

V. This Grace Will Support Us

One of the best known cases of such would be Paul's thorn in the flesh (II Cor. 12:7). Though we do not know what it was; we know that Paul prayed about it. In fact, he said,

Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me (II Cor. 12:8).

Whatever that thorn was, it was something that would afflict. It was something that Paul would carry as a burden to the Lord. But take a moment to see what God's answer would be to such a request.

And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee (II Cor. 12:9).

God's answer is that his grace is able to sustain

Paul in the suffering that he would face. When Paul heard God's answer, there seems to be no other request that the thorn be removed. God's grace would sustain him.

When you read the first epistle of Peter, you find him writing to people who faced suffering. In the very chapter where he will speak of the suffering as a Christian, he will also speak of the "*manifold grace of God*" (I Peter 4:10). Such would be able to sustain them in the midst of the suffering that might come their way. There might be occasion when one or more of these might have to face the sword of the enemy; but knowing they could rely on the grace of God would surely sustain them.

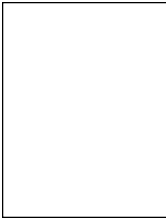
Conclusion

Yes, there is much more that could be said of THE GRACE THAT PROVIDES SALVATION. But when we know this grace brings salvation, that it leads to a life of separation, that it will generate gratitude in the heart, such will cause us to serve joyfully. and we can bear our burdens and suffer patiently.

Chapter 2

SALVATION – PERVERTED By Foolish Mankind

JIM LAWS



Raised in Murfreesboro, TN • Preaches for the Getwell church, Memphis, TN • Associate Editor of the **Spiritual Sword** • Regular radio speaker • B.A. (Lipscomb), M.A. (Harding Graduate), and Ph.D. (Tennessee Bible College) • Taught in public schools of Tennessee, and at Christian college level • Married to Jan Pendergrass; they have two children.

Introduction

Salvation is the most important subject that one could discuss today and every day. Yet, unfortunately there is so much confusion about it. Paul's discussion of this in Ephesians 2:8-13 will be helpful.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

One is immediately impressed with the wonderful truths of this great passage. It teaches of God's tender consideration for His erring human children. It inspires in us admiration, wonder and awe when we become conscious of the fulness and glory of God's amazing grace. Paul's emphasis of the fact that this great salvation is to be enjoyed "*in Christ*" (v. 7) is an ever present thought to be found throughout his writing.

Paul discusses this matter of our salvation in Romans 5:15-18. Paul states,

But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift of grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life (Rom. 5:15-18).

Once again the theme of this passage is salvation. Once again Paul presents the matter of the saving grace of God as being a gift to man (vs. 15, 16, 17, 18). When we look closely we find that what is discussed is not man's part in salvation, but rather God's part which necessarily involved the part Christ played in bringing salvation to mankind. The benefits of Christ's death are here spoken of as a "*free gift*."

This also holds true for Paul's discussion of the matter found in Ephesians which has already been mentioned (Eph. 2:8-13). In these passages Paul talks about the Divine part of salvation – grace is what is mentioned in both instances. It is salvation being made possible to sinful man that is in focus in these Scriptures. It is by these wonderful verses as well as others that we learn that God's Divine grace enters into the picture of man's salvation. God has done His part in making salvation possible to man. What a wonderful message that is. It is a message of hope, a message of salvation. Praise God for His wonderful gift of salvation.

This Divine plan of salvation was gradually revealed to man over centuries of time. Beginning as early as the first human pair (Gen. 3:15). God began unfolding a Divine plan whereby sinful man and righteous God could be brought back together again. God knew beforehand what He would do in saving sinful man (Rom. 8:28-30). He appointed these great events to come to pass until one day the invitation of the Lord would go out to every accountable person to hear and obey the gospel (Matt. 28:18-20). According to His Divine plan, He would ultimately give salvation to all who will trust and faithfully obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9). Paul mentions such in II Timothy 1:9.

... God who saves us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal.

Satan's Attempt To Thwart The Salvation God Has To Offer

It comes as no surprise to the Christian that Satan is described as the deceiver of the nations

(Rev. 22:9; 20:10). He attempts to accomplish his purpose in every age. That purpose is to deceive mankind regarding his responsibility to God. He does this by using counterfeits, substituting falsehood for truth, hindering the obedience of man to God's will, and by making disobedience appear better than actual obedience. Since the very beginning he has tried to destroy the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15) that he might destroy God's Divine plan of salvation. His agents have been actively engaged in this pursuit in every generation and consequently Satan has used foolish man in his part of the battle over the hearts of men.

Satan attempts to pervert the salvation God has to offer by removing the knowledge of God from the mind of man. Satan has used foolish man to deny the actual existence of God the Creator of heaven and earth. The first testimony of Divine revelation is the great truth of God and His sovereignty over the physical: "*In the beginning God created*" (Gen. 1:1). It is the first great truth God would have man to know. The Scriptures plainly affirm this fact.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them, and on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made (Gen. 2:1-3).

In addition to the fact that the world was miraculously created by God, the Bible also affirms that as a material universe it is temporary and deteriorating (Psm. 102:25-26). Peter tells us that,

... all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away (1 Peter 1:24).

Third, God has given man dominion of the physical realm of the universe.

And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (Gen. 1:26).

God has given man the authority to manage and control the physical universe. Naturally, Satan will not allow the rightful place of God as Creator and Sustainer of the universe to go unchallenged in the hearts of men. Therefore, he gives man the atheistic alternative with organic evolution as the supposed "*scientific*" explanation for the origin of the world as we know it.

The truth of the matter is, the existence of God can be seen by the created contingent universe. He has caused us to be, but nothing caused Him to be. God the Father is the Creator of man. David's statement that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handywork (Psm. 19:1-6), is but an implicit reference to the fact that the universe is the result of an outside cause. To David, the creation was particularly revealing and expressive. A careful consideration of the universe revealed knowledge to him (v. 2). The sun, moon, and stars attest to their Creator as they do exactly as God intended without fail. There is no language barrier for this type of revelation (vs. 3-4). All men can see if they will, that such heavenly elements are the creation of God. This heavenly message is universal in its scope.¹

To combat this, Satan has tried to deprive man of a knowledge of the true God by proposing to him objects of worship, counterfeit gods. By

exhibiting a glorious object in creation as an emblem of the Creator (the sun, moon, etc.) Satan has offered it to man as an item of worship. Consequently, man has worshipped the sun and countless other objects. The Egyptians, Philistines, etc., have turned to Ammon, Isis, Ashtoreth, Molech, etc., false gods as objects of devotion and reverence. Because of these practices and the practices that came from them, God commanded Israel to destroy these nations which inhabited the land of Canaan.

The Jews themselves seemed to be addicted to idolatry (Ezek. 8:16-17). Most of the kings of Israel gave themselves to idolatry (I Kings 11:5-10. Manasseh as one example

... reared up altars of Baalim, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them ... he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the Son of Hinnom (II Chron. 3-6).²

In New Testament times idolatry was commonplace (Acts 17:16-34). Man had given himself over to idols refusing to give God the glory that was due Him (Rom. 1:18-32). Satan in a cunning way placed objects of worship before man. The worship of such false gods degraded man, and it defiled the vilest of passions. Satan has been very effective in this method of destroying the knowledge of God in the minds of man.

Satan attempts to pervert the salvation God has to offer by attacking the Bible. The gospel of our Lord, as proclaimed originally by His apostles, was indeed invaluable. It proposed salvation to the lost, pardon to the guilty. The gospel of Christ gave light to those who were in darkness and it gave enjoyment of spiritual blessings to those who were obedient to it.

God has offered salvation to all men. The invitation from our Lord is:

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls (Matt. 11:28-29).

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

There is hope for fallen man,

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

By the grace of God, Jesus Christ,

... became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:9).

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men (Titus 2:11).

None is excluded: man has only to come into Christ for salvation! Yet once again, Satan has tried to pervert "*the glorious gospel*" by raising the counterfeit.

The latest attack on the Bible to pervert the salvation God has to offer has come to be known as "*The New Hermeneutic*." Hermeneutics is simply the science of Bible interpretation. Every document is subject to hermeneutical analysis. When one is referring to the Bible then, one is looking at a correct interpretation of a passage. However, the so-called *New Hermeneutic* among other things attacks the role that human reason has in the interpretative process. In fact, no conclusion, so they say, which has been drawn as the result of human reasoning, can be established as a test of Christian fellowship.

The fundamentals of the Faith must be held onto at all costs ... They are the only

"absolutes" I know. All other matters must be arrived at "hermeneutically" (that is, by a process of reasoning!) ... But any conclusion reached by such a process should not be made a test of fellowship.³

In this article, "*fundamentals of faith*" were considered to be the existence of God, the Lordship of Christ, Bible authority, etc. However, even in these matters human reason is essential. How would one draw the conclusion of God's existence from the evidence if it were not for human reason? One must reason about the world (Rom. 1:21; Heb. 3:4) properly so as to come to the conclusion that God exists. The individual truth seeker must assemble testimony from the Bible regarding Jesus, draw the conclusion from the evidence that the Biblical record is accurate, and then draw the conclusion from this evidence regarding the matter of the nature of Jesus. How could one ever know that the Bible is authoritative without human reason? One must examine the Scriptures regarding their claim that they are Divine. One must then consider the evidence in support of those claims. He must then arrive at the deduction that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God. Not even the "*fundamentals of the faith*" are accepted independent of human reason.

When one begins to think about it, the aforementioned position is itself unreasonable. How did the author come to the conclusion that "*any conclusion reached by such a process should not be made a test of fellowship,*" if it were not by human reason itself? One simply cannot consistently use human reason in order to reach a conclusion which says that human reason is somehow an invalid approach. To do

such is inconsistent and unreasonable. Any such position is itself untenable.

It seems the defenders of "*the New Hermeneutic*" are determined to "*fellowship*" whom they will, regardless of what the Scriptures may teach. Hence, it constitutes a serious attack upon the Word of God itself.

Satan attempts to pervert the salvation God has to offer by convincing man that he cannot understand the Bible. The modern day position of Calvinism with its attended doctrines is yet another attempt of Satan to take the Word of God away from man. When Jesus taught His disciples the parable of the soils, He made reference to the fact that Satan comes and removes the seed (the Word) taking it away from the wayside soil. Jesus' reference to this matter was simply His way of saying that Satan, if we will let him, will take the Word of God away from us. Once again, the reason for this is clear. Satan wants the Word of God out of man's heart because he knows, just as God's Word teaches, that the Word of God will:

Draw mankind to God rather than to Satan
(John 6:44-45).

Convert the soul of the sinner away from Satan
and his error (Psm. 19:7).

Save the soul of the sinner preventing him
from being lost (James 1:21).

Free man from sin (John 8:32).

It is clear from this that Satan cannot allow the Word of God to remain in the human heart, and at the same time be successful in his efforts to lead man to condemnation. Therefore, he must devise a way that will tempt man to remove the Word of God himself and so Satan does.

First, he will convince man that he is so morally corrupt and depraved due to the sin of Adam that he cannot understand the Word of God. Many men then pervert the salvation which God has to offer by believing that he as man inherits sin and an evil nature. Man thinks of himself as always being inclined to do evil. He can do nothing on his own to better his situation spiritually. To explain why some men do turn to God rather than live as Satan would have them to live, Satan convinces them that it will take a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to change the sinner. It is only then one is able to understand God's Word and act accordingly.

However, the Bible teaches that man can understand God's Word. Man must learn that when he allows Satan to take the Word of God away from him in this way or in any other, that he is committing spiritual suicide. The Bible teaches, whether he be saint or sinner, that he can go to God's Word and understand what it teaches.

Paul mentions the fact that the great mystery of salvation has been revealed and that it has been written so we may understand it (Eph. 3:1-4). The Bible teaches that man can know the will of God (John 8:32). The Lord admonishes each to listen to what the "*Spirit saith unto the churches...*" (Rev. 2:1, 7). The message we have in the Bible is a Divine message. It is the mind of God revealed to man. It is a message man can understand if he will freely choose to study and learn.

Calvinism's view that one must have the direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon his heart before he can understand and respond to the Word of God is false. To say otherwise eliminates the gospel (Rom. 1:16; Rom. 8:2;

I Cor. 15:1-4) as it would not be needed. One would eliminate the work of evangelists (II Tim. 4:1-5; I Cor. 1:21) as they could not be successful because a direct operation of the Spirit, given the Calvinistic position, would be needed to cause the sinner to understand and respond. It would make God a respecter of persons as He, given this false view, would have chosen some to be saved and some to be lost for all eternity. Our Lord's command to go into all the world to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-16) would be meaningless as he would be telling man to do what could not be done due to the fact that the sinner could not understand nor respond to God's Word. However, the great commission of our Lord does have great meaning because sinful man can understand God's Word and God expects him to freely obey it.

Second, it is simply false to say that the Bible teaches that man is so depraved that he cannot freely choose to obey God's will. Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Sin changes man's relationship with God but the Bible does not teach that sin changes man's nature (Isa. 59:1-2). God is trying to reach the world with the gospel (Matt. 28:18-20). God has revealed His will to lost man (Eph. 3:1-3). Man is free to choose to obey or to disobey God (Acts 17:27). Man is not totally depraved.

Third, man does have free will. Sin is a transgression of the law of God (I John 3:4), an implicit reference to the moral freedom of man. Moral obligation presupposes freedom. If man inherently has no freedom then he can not be held accountable for what he cannot freely choose to do. But man does have moral freedom and therefore God holds man accountable.

Satan attempts to pervert the salvation God has to offer by his attacks on the church.

The church which one reads about in the pages of the New Testament is under serious attack by Satan and his agents. In fact, one can see the intrinsic value of the church by looking at the number of counterfeits that it has today. The New Testament teaches of the close relationship that exists between Christ, the church and salvation (Eph. 5:22-32; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:10). Satan has attacked every aspect of the Lord's church. He has tempted man to change its simple form of government which has Christ as its authority and head (Eph. 1:22-23) as well as godly qualified elders to oversee it in matters of expediency (I Peter 5:1-5). He has done his best to tempt man to change the teaching of the church from the power that is to be found in the gospel to the decrees of councils, synods, conventions, conferences, presbyteries, associations, etc. He has done his best to tempt man to change the simple and reverent form of worship which has been given to the church through the pages of the Bible. He has done his best to pervert the very plain and simple plan of salvation by enticing men to deny the terms of entrance into the kingdom of God or to tempt them to deny essential elements of it.

Satan Has Been Very Successful

As you might surmise, Satan has been very successful in convincing mankind to turn from the way of God to the way of error. The Bible clearly teaches that few will be saved (Matt. 7:13-14). The fact of the matter is, in comparison to the millions of humanity, a minority is all that is ever saved (I Peter 3:20). Many seem to choose the broad gate. That way is easy to find and to enter.

Few can find the strait gate much less enter it when they find it. Luke 13:23-24 states,

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Even after finding the gate it involves effort – we must strive to enter. Satan has been very successful. This is due to the fact that we have let him have the victory too many times.

However, even though the Bible speaks of a few faithful ones in comparison to the great mass of humanity, a few is all God needs to accomplish His great work. In fact, a few is all God needs in order to make many more. In Matthew 15:34, Jesus took seven loaves and a few little fishes and He fed 4,000 men besides the women and children (v. 38). Jesus gave thanks for the little amount that He had (v. 36), then He used what He had been given to do God's will and bring glory to Him. This is what we need to do. We need not be discouraged. We need to give God thanks for what we have and use what we have to do His will and glorify Him. By doing this, we will be able to accomplish great things in the kingdom of God and do what we can to thwart the purposes of Satan and his foolish plans.

Endnotes

1 For a fuller discussion regarding the existence and nature of God, the reader is referred to The Spiritual Sword Lectureship, **The Scheme Of Redemption**, Getwell church of Christ, Memphis, Tennessee, 1990, pp. 13-39.

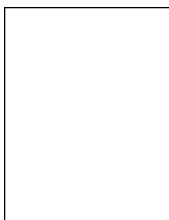
2 The reader is referred to the article, "*Satan and His Continual Attempts to Thwart The Scheme of Redemption*," by Joe Hopper, **The Scheme Of Redemption**, 1990, pp. 514-534.

3 Marvin Phillips, "*Free To Differ*," Image, May/June, 1990, pp. 5-6.

Chapter 3

SIN – CHARACTERISTICS AND CONSEQUENCES

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Introduction

From the opening chapters of Genesis to the closing chapters of Revelation, the record of sin is always dismal. It is one of clever deception by Satan and persistent failure and wrong doing by people in every generation since Adam and Eve. Written large within this history is the danger it poses to all men and women alive today. In spite, however, of its harmful nature and the record of its ultimate source in Satan, sin is still attractive and effective in reaching millions of people in leading them away from God.

For accountable people, this record of the obvious admits only one exception, Jesus, who was tempted in all points such as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). For us, as children of God, its deception and power have won victories on many occasions, as we acknowledge with shame and in repentance and prayer for forgiveness.

How are we to treat this evil which is all too

well known, in the first place? Upon consideration, it seems best to discuss this topic from two standpoints, i.e., some characteristics and some consequences of sin. Each of these will be noted in that sequence.

Some Characteristics Of Sin

Several approaches indicating the characteristics of sin might be employed. One might consider them as portrayed in certain instances or examples (Adam and Eve, David, Ananias and Sapphira, etc.). One might consider the warnings against sin to show its nature. One might consider the necessity it posed for the death of Christ and view that death as showing sin's characteristics.

The present effort will consider several words¹ in the New Testament (particularly nouns and verbs) which reveal the nature of sin as both an action and a power which works spiritual harm and loss to mankind through the devices of Satan. Indications will be given concerning the number of occurrences of the words used along with some examples of how they are translated in the KJV. Additional insights will be offered as the study proceeds. Footnotes will indicate additional areas for continued study. Eight words, out of several more, have been selected for study.

(1) **Hamartia** (173 occurrences), **hamartano** (43).² The basic thought of hamartia is to miss the mark, to fail to attain the proper goal; thus it indicates failing to attain and thereby missing the true end and purpose of our lives, which is the knowledge and service of God.³ Paul stated that he had proved of both Jews and Gentiles "*that they are all under sin*" (Rom. 3:9). In the verb form he noted that "*all have sinned*" and then explained, all have "*come short of the glory of*

God" (Rom. 3:23). Sin is presented as that which leads us to fail, to miss the intended goal of reflecting the goodness and greatness of God in the lives of all men, Christians included.

(2) **Hamartema** (5).⁴ This word underscores the individual act, calling attention to the separate outcomes and deeds of disobedience to the law of God.⁵ It refers to the eternal sin, never to be forgiven (Mark 3:28, 29). It was used of the sin of fornication, a particular sin which one can/does sin against his own body (I Cor. 6:18). Thus the particular sin, of whatever nature, considered with insight and moral awareness, is realized to be a grievous tragedy for the soul as well as for the body. Such is the import of this word, made more vivid by its infrequent use.

(3) **Parabasis** (7), **parabaino**.⁶ The noun form (**parabasis**) is found 7 times; the verb (**parabaino**) is found 3 times in the NT.⁷ The word picture is that of going by the side of, going past, passing over without touching, thus to overstep, neglect, violate, and finally to disregard the limits and boundaries of God's will.⁸ Jesus chided his Jewish adversaries by showing that they transgressed the commandment of God (Matt. 15:3). Adam disregarded and transgressed God's will (Rom. 5:14). The boastful Jew in breaking the law dishonored God and caused the name of God to be blasphemed by Gentiles (Rom. 2:23, 24).

(4) **Paraptoma** (19), **parapipto** (3).⁹ Drawn from a verb (**parapipto**) meaning to fall, this noun (**paraptoma**) indicates a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness. It refers to the activity and passivity of the one doing the wrong involved as well as the suffering of conscience and soul of him who misses or falls short of an enjoined command.¹⁰ The verb refers to those who fall away

from God's will (Heb. 6:6), the insightful rendering "*commit apostasy*" being given in the RSV. In the contemporary literature of the New Testament times, reference is made to the breaking of a contract or the effort to treat it as invalid or as a bond which has been lost and is considered as null and void.¹¹ In the noun form, it was the breaking of the will of God, "*offences,*" which caused Christ to be delivered to the cross (Rom. 4:25). Through the reconciliation Christ provides, our transgressions can be forgiven (II Cor. 5:19). Here, then, is not a mere slip or bobble; rather there is a treating of the will of God as if it does not matter, as if it can be broken without concern, as if it can be treated as of no valid standing.

(5) **Parakoue** (3), **parakouo** (3).¹² The verb, *parakouo*, is used only of one's reaction to the words of the church when a troubling matter between brethren is being resolved. This usage, however, indicates the corresponding and equal lack of respect for and rejection of the will of God which lies behind the wrong that is done. In the contemporary literature the verb meant to hear without heeding, to ignore, and one document contains this statement illustrating the meaning: "*if any one of them pays no heed to these my letters, it will not go well with him.*"¹³ The noun refers to a failing to hear, a hearing amiss, an inattentive and careless hearing, a failing to listen when God is speaking, and includes "*every refusal to hear, even though it might not have asserted itself in such overt acts of disobedience.*"¹⁴ This portrays the sin as growing out of the refusal of man to allow God to guide and direct his life by his word. The resultant action is wrong, and is compounded by the stubborn will which does not respect God's word for what it truly is.

(6) **Asebeia** (6), **asebeo** (2).¹⁵ This word (noun, verb, or adjective) derives from a root (sebo) which means to revere, to worship. The negative of this is asebeia referred to above. The correlative adjective means to completely lack proper reverential awe toward God. Such irreverence characterized the world unto whom Noah preached (II Peter 2:5) and for such impious ones the judgment of God is reserved (II Peter 3:7). The noun means to demonstrate a lack of reverence toward God, which we are to avoid and deny by God's grace (Titus 2:12). The basic characterization of sin in this word, noun or verb, is that of *"positive and active irreligion, and this contemplated as a deliberate withholding from God of his dues of prayer and service, a standing, so to speak, in battle array against him."*¹⁶

(7) **Adikia** (25), **adikeo** (28).¹⁷ The root word for these terms means that which is right, what is pointed out as right, what is regarded as right, etc. The negative thought, then, is of that which is not as it should be or of that which ought not to be, because of divine truth.¹⁸ The Gentiles were faulted for holding down the truth in *"unrighteousness"* (Rom. 1:18). In, or by, refusing to obey the truth (*"refuse to obey his rules,"* Phillips) those who are *"contentious"* or *"factious"* (ASV) obey unrighteousness and thereby bring upon themselves the indignation and wrath of God (Rom. 2:8). The members of our bodies are not to be yielded as servants of the master termed *"unrighteousness"* (Rom. 6:13).

(8) **Anomia** (15).¹⁹ This word views sin from the standpoint of its relation to God's will and law, and indicates the two-fold ideas of a frame of mind as well as deeds which are lawless.²⁰ As to the frame of mind, this term refers to one who shows

a contempt for the law of God. Trench observed that in the word there is never *“the condition of living without law, but always the condition or deed of one who acts contrary to law.”*²¹ This thought lies at the heart of the familiar words, *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is transgression of the law”* (I John 3:4). The *“lawlessness”* (ASV, RSV, NEB, NIV), *“transgression of the law”* (KJV), or *“breaking of God’s law”* (Phillips) discussed manifests the frame of mind of one who holds the will of God in contempt, who refuses to submit to it, who in consequence lives in violation of and contradiction to His law. Such working of iniquity, lawlessness, will result in Christ’s refusing one’s presence with him eternally (Matt. 7:23). Redemption by the blood of Christ is necessary to remove such wrong from one’s soul and life (Titus 2:14).

From this array of characteristics it is easily seen that sin is no mere trifle. Instead, as already implied in the words above, sin has very serious consequences. To some of these consequences attention is turned in the next section.

Some Consequences Of Sin

As one considers the insights just noted, a sense of dread arises in the heart. How, in light of such difficulties for the relation of man to and with God, can one choose to continue further in such a path? Would the making explicit of what is already most troubling though implicit mean that one will be warned more fully against continuing such a life? Perhaps, but one cannot always be sure.

But, for sake of completeness, though with a deepening sense of concern over an attitude which

would not be warned by what has already been noted concerning sin and its damage to the soul, it is deemed appropriate to note some of the more frequently stated consequences of sin when one has fallen victim to it. Three of these will be noted, two in some detail and the third in summary.

1. Physical Death As A Consequence Of Sin

A sad realization is that a consequence of sin is the presence of physical death in the world. Without entering into the difficulties entailed in Calvinism and its treatment of the subject, there is a clear connection between sin and the death of mankind. Paul taught, *“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”* (I Cor. 15:22). The sin of Adam, detailed in Genesis 3 and alluded to again and again in Scripture, is here indicated as the entry point of death into the world. Though controverted, and worthy of continuing study from all viewpoints, it is my understanding that physical death is most likely to be the death discussed by Paul in Romans 5:12.²²

Without begging the question by a quotation, the words of the late brother Franklin Camp, who viewed the death as physical in this passage, indicate the thought of the repugnance one should have for the nature of sin as it is reflected in the searing pain of the death of a loved one. My good friend Camp told of the death of his beloved mother in a moving article he wrote years ago. As he reflected on her death, he wrote these words:

As I stood beside her bed and watched her
as she drew her last breath, I thought of

Romans 5:12, 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,' I wondered why sin could ever have any appeal for me.²³

2. Spiritual Death As A Consequence Of Sin

Sin brings spiritual death as a consequence. As with physical death, we wonder at all that is entailed in the meaning of spiritual death. Paul taught that one may be "*alive without the law.*" ("*As long, then, as I was without the Law I was, spiritually speaking, alive.*" Phillips). Then, he said, the commandment came, sin sprang to life (Phillips, NEB) and "*I died*" (Rom. 7:9). He continued by noting that what God intended to bring life, the commandment, was found to produce death because sin took advantage of the situation and, by deception, "*slew*" ("*killed*" RSV, Phillips, NEB; "*put me to death,*" NIV) *me*" (Rom. 7:11). Indeed, he stated, sin worked through what is good, the commandment of God, to bring spiritual death (Rom. 7:13).

Of this same situation Paul wrote in saying that the Ephesians had previously been "*dead in trespasses and sins*" (Eph. 2:1, 5). He noted that this situation followed in consequence of their having walked in the past according to the direction of Satan, having adopted the values and practices of this age ("*you drifted along on the stream of this world's ideas of living*" Phillips), followed the course of those who are disobedient, lived in the lusts of the flesh, and fulfilled the desires of the flesh and the mind; thus they became "*children of wrath*" (Eph. 2:2-3).

Of this condition he stated, in the well known words in Ephesians 2:12, as rendered in

paraphrase by Phillips:

You were without Christ; you were utter strangers to God's chosen community, Israel; and you had no knowledge of, or right to, the promised agreements. You had nothing to look forward to and no God to whom you could turn.

No wonder, then, that one in such a condition would cry out, "*Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?*" (Rom. 7:24, ASV). Such is the brief description of the consequences of sin as related to spiritual death one enters through sin.

3. Summary Of Consequences Of Sin

In a most informative summary chapter, Piet Schoonenberg,²⁴ a Catholic writer, provides a vivid discussion of what he terms "*The Sequels of Sin.*" One is not obliged to embrace his Catholicism in order to recognize that he has meaningfully summarized four major consequences of sin. With these brief descriptions this section of this study must close. Schoonenberg writes that the sequels of sin are:

(1) Sin itself is a punishment. Thus, sin is not only a wrong action, it lies deeper than that and does not vanish with the outward action. The core of the sin committed remains and it will not go away. Accordingly, in its deepest meaning the punishment of sin, which inevitably accompanies the sin as well as is anticipated to come both in time and in eternity unless forgiven, does not stand outside sin; in fact it coincides with the sin. Thus, sin continues its atrocities toward its agent and victim by robbing him or her of the life of grace and the peace of mind which God intended man to know in his love.

(2) Sin yields the inability to love. The

person does not stand as an empty judicial or grammatical subject behind what he is or has or does, but in fact he exists **in** it and he acts **in** it. This means, at its deepest level, that the withholding of the love and submission to God is the root of sin and the person, through sin, comes to exist and act within the nature and meaning of the wrong done and being done. Either love or sin must hold the field. The decision to allow sin to have its way is an acknowledgement that the love of God is not to be triumphant in this action. The inevitable result is the inability to allow love to be the deciding factor in one's life. Unless reversed by a love of God which issues in a faith which works thereby (Gal. 5:6), a downward spiral continues and the results are seen in broken hearts, lives, and souls.

(3) Sin inclines to evil. An action is more than an external manifestation or its limited content. The manifestation and content will pass away; they are but the expression and materialization of the lasting disposition and attitude. After murder remains hatred; after impurity remains unclean desire. Here the Bible speaks of the "*flesh,*" "*concupiscence,*" and the spiritual bondage to the devil and to sin. Thus evil men and seducers grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived (II Tim. 3:13). Of such a life one reads that some develop, by the sin of adultery, "*eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin*" (II Peter 2:14).

(4) Sin produces loneliness and anxiety of the soul. The loneliness of which we speak is the loneliness resulting from the inability to have a proper relation with God and with others because of the breaking of the ties of love, truth, and responsibility. Without this remembering and

preserving of legitimate relationships, as the history of sin has shown only too well, there is a loneliness which cannot be filled by any other means – the soul longs for God and sin has broken the relationship. The anxiety is the anticipation of the present and the future wrath of God as well as, in the more immediate sense, the righteous indignation of upright people one knows or can know. In such anxiety, life can well lose its meaning and sense of purpose. Sin is now showing its real essence and consequence.

Troubling indeed it is to consider the characteristics and consequences of sin, as done in this study. We long to speak in depth not just of sin's nature and harm, but of the love of God and the grace of the Lord by which the victory has been won and the consequent blessing can be received by obedience to the gospel of Christ (Rom. 6:16-18). But, other times and other speakers must provide this theme of the plan of salvation, a monument to the love of God which can and will prevail in Christ when we submit to His will in the gospel.

Endnotes

1 A general discussion of these words is provided in: Colin Brown, editor, **The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology**, Vol. 3, pp. 573-587.

2 Hamartia (noun) is rendered "*sin*," in most instances. Once it is translated "*sinful*" (Rom. 8:3) and "*offence*" (II Cor. 11:7). Hamartano (verb) is translated "*to sin*" in most instances. Also, to trespass (Matt. 18:15, Luke 17:3, 4), "*offend*" (Acts 25:8), and "*for your faults*" (I Pet. 2:20).

3 R. C. Trench, **Synonyms of the New Testament**, p. 240.

4 This word is always translated sin in the KJV.

5 Trench, p. 241.

6 Parabasis (noun) is usually rendered "*transgression*," but is translated "*breaking*" (Rom. 2:23). Parabaino (verb) is usually translated "*transgress*," but is rendered to "*fall by transgression*" (Acts 1:25).

7 The KJV renders "*transgresseth*" (II John 9) on a textual base which shows parabaino. The textual base in more recent Greek Testaments has proago with the rendering "*goeth onward*" (ASV).

8 See Thayer's Lexicon, p. 478, 479, for these word pictures.

9 This insightful word is rendered "*fall*" (Rom. 11:11, 12), "*fault*" (Gal. 6:1; James 5:16); "*offense*" (Rom. 4:25, 5:15, 16, 17, 18, 20); "*sin*" (Eph. 1:7, 21:5; Col. 2:13). Its usual rendering is "*trespass*."

10 Hermann Cremer, **Biblico-Theological Lexicon of NT Greek**, p. 499.

11 Moulton and Milligan, **Vocabulary of the Greek NT**, pp. 488, 489.

12 The noun, parakoe, is rendered "*disobedience*" (Rom. 5:19; II Cor. 10:6; Heb. 2:2). The verb is rendered "*neglect to hear*" (Matt. 18:17). Interestingly, the verb is rendered "*refuses to listen*" (RSV) and "*won't pay attention*" (Phillips).

13 Moulton and Milligan, **Vocabulary of the Greek NT**, p. 486.

14 R. C. Trench, *Ibid.*, p. 243.

15 The verb form, asebeo, is rendered "*live ungodly*" (II Pet. 2:6) and "*ungodly committed*" (Jude 15). The noun, asebeia, is rendered "*ungodliness*" (Rom. 1:18, 11:26; II Tim. 2:16; Titus 2:12) and "*ungodly*" (Jude 15). A related adjective, asebes, is rendered "*ungodly*" or "*ungodly man*" in its nine occurrences.

16 Trench, *Ibid.*, p. 242.

17 The verb, adikeo, occurs 28 times and is variously translated: to wrong, do wrong, suffer wrong, take wrong, be unjust, be an offender, injure, hurt. The noun, adikia, occurs 25 times and is translated: wrong, unjust (injustice), unrighteousness, and iniquity.

18 Cremer, *Ibid.*, p. 201.

19 The noun, anomia, occurs 15 times. It is translated "*transgression of the law*" (I John 3:4), "*unrighteousness*" (II Cor. 6:2, 14), and "*iniquity*" elsewhere.

20 Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT** (1957), p. 71.

21 Trench, *Ibid.*, p. 244.

22 Before deciding the matter one way or another, it gives one pause to note the contrast between two well respected commentators among our heritage. Moses Lard concluded the death in Romans 5:12 was physical death.

He wrote concerning "death" in this verse: "*By it, simple ordinary death is meant, no more. To say that it signifies mortality, or spiritual death, is to speak without warrant ... here it expresses only death.*" **Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans**, pp. 165, 166. R. L. Whiteside said on the same word: "*But what death is here meant? ... The context favors the idea that death in verse 12 is spiritual death.*" **A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome**, p. 120.

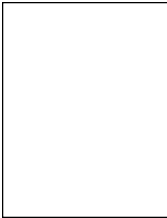
23 Franklin Camp, **Old Truths In New Robes**, II, 2.

24 Piet Schoonenberg, **Man and Sin**, translated by Joseph Donceel, pp. 63-90.

Chapter 4

CHRIST DIED TO REDEEM US FROM SIN

PERRY B. COTHAM



Preached in every state in America and on all inhabited continents of the world (over 60 nations) • Born in Murray, KY • A graduate of Freed-Hardeman College and Murray State University • Began full-time local work in Oklahoma in 1934 • World-wide evangelistic work since 1972 • Author of several tracts, books • He and his wife Teresa live in Texas.

Introduction

Man is lost in sin and has no hope in the world, separated from God (Eph. 2:11-12). He needs help. God hates sin, but loves the sinner.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins ... the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world (I John 4:8-10, 14).

In announcing the birth of Jesus, the angel said to Joseph:

... thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

The text for our subject is, Christ "*gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*" (Titus 2:14). In connection with this, note Paul's statement in Ephesians 1:7:

In whom (i.e., Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Again, from Paul:

Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us ... (Eph. 5:2).

Christ died for the ungodly ... God commendeth his love toward us; ... while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:6, 8).

Peter wrote of the price that was paid to free us from sin and its consequences:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (I Peter 1:18-19).

The word **redeemed** referred literally to a price paid for freedom when men were held slaves, the money demanded for their release. This was called "*ransom money*" - it was the means by which they were set free. So the object of Christ's giving Himself on Calvary's cross and shedding His blood was to deliver us from the bondage of sin. Man was lost in sin, exposed to eternal death. Sin must be punished. Justice demanded that the sinner must die. He needed to be rescued. Man could not make any atonement for his own sins. No human being could atone for someone else, "*for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23). No angel

could make atonement. Thus God appointed His only begotten Son to make such a ransom; He paid the redemption price with His own blood. The life of the Son of God was offered in our behalf. His life was given to make atonement. He died in the place of sinners and God accepted His death for us so that we might escape eternal suffering in hell.

The name **Jesus** means Savior. He saves men because He died to redeem them. By His own blood He purchased our redemption. Life is in the blood ("*The life of the flesh is in the blood,*" Lev. 17:11). So His life was given for our life. Furthermore, Christ tasted "*death for every man*" (Heb. 2:9; Titus 2:11). He was the pre-existent Word who became "*flesh, and dwelt among us*" (John 1:14; Heb. 10:5). He lived a sinless life (I Peter 2:22; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; I John 3:5). Christ was the great atoning sacrifice for sin, and this gift is the highest expression of love. We can conceive of nothing more valuable than the blood (life) of the Son of God. He gave up His life. Between the value of the life of Christ and the value of silver and gold - there is no comparison. One is saved from sin by the blood of Christ. As the prophet Isaiah said, Jesus took our sins and died in our stead (Isa. 53:4-6, 10, 12).

Again, Christ Himself spoke of giving His life to save man:

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).

God cannot overlook sin. This is why it was necessary that blood should be shed, a life given to redeem life; and that sacrifice by Christ for man was acceptable to God the Father in His administration of the moral universe (Rom. 3:24-

26). Without the shedding of blood, there could be no remission (Heb. 9:22; cf. I Cor. 6:20; John 1:29).

Why did Jesus come to this earth? During the personal ministry of Christ He once visited in the home of Zacchaeus, a publican, and while there He made this great statement concerning His mission to earth:

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

Christ's love for man was shown in His willingness to come to this earth, leaving the joys of heaven, to live in a body of flesh and suffer the shameful and horrible death on the cross, the most cruel death known to man, to save us from our sins. This is so adequately described by Paul:

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8, ASV).

Moreover, Jesus is man's only Savior (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). No sinner can be admitted to a holy heaven hereafter unless he repents of his sins and is made pure, cleansed, and forgiven by the blood of Christ (Isa. 55:7; 59:1-2; I Cor. 6:9-11; Matt. 5:8). So, God provided all of this "*by the riches of his grace*" (Eph. 1:7), and the redeemed in heaven will forever give praise to the Lord for having paid the price for their salvation (Rev. 1:5-6; 4:11; 5:9-13; 7:9-17).

Are We Saved By Grace Only?

God's grace does not license sin, however.

This brings us then logically to the all-important question, ***“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”*** Is salvation wholly by the grace of God? Surely not, for if so, then all mankind will be saved. For Jesus died for all (Heb. 2:9; Titus 2:11), and God does not want any one to perish (II Peter 3:9). This would be universal salvation. But Christ’s own statement of the final judgment reveals that some are going to be placed on the left hand and He will say to them, *“Depart from me”* (Matt. 25:41). *“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment”* (v. 46). Too, Jesus taught that there is a wide gate and a broad way *“that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat”* (Matt. 7:13).

It is true that one is saved by grace, but not by grace alone. Note the clear statement of Paul showing two sides to salvation:

For by **grace** are ye saved **through faith**;
and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of
God: not of works, lest any man should
boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

Faith is man’s side of salvation. Salvation is a gift of God. Grace provides, but man, by faith, accepts and appropriates it to himself. There is a great difference in saying that salvation is by God’s grace and that salvation is by grace only. One is true, the other is false. How sad indeed it is for any one to teach that obedience to Christ has nothing to do with one’s becoming a Christian or, finally, with his going to heaven when Jesus comes to judge all men. If this false doctrine of salvation wholly by God’s grace were true, then there would be no need for the preaching of the gospel, for all men would be saved without it (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Man has the moral freedom to either accept or

reject God's offer of pardon (Matt. 11:28-30; John 5:40; Rev. 22:17; Josh. 24:15; Deut. 6:24-25; Deut. 11:26-28).

Jesus said:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth** the will of my Father which is in heaven ... Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, **and doeth them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock (Matt. 7:21-25; cf. Luke 11:28).

James in his short epistle wrote:

But be ye **doers** of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves ... But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a **doer** of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (James 1:22, 25; cf. Psm. 19:11).

Peter wrote to Christians:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in your **obedience to the truth** ... (I Peter 1:22, ASV).

Then later the apostle asked, "*What shall the end be of them that **obey not** the gospel of God?*" (I Peter 4:17). The answer is found in the language of the apostle Paul:

... the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that **obey not** the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (II Thess. 1:7-9).

The writer of the book of Hebrews made it very clear that one must obey Christ to be saved:

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that **obey him** (Heb. 5:9).

Peter instructed Christians in his second epistle to add to their lives the noble graces of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (love), and then said:

... for **if** ye **do** these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:10-11).

John, on the Island of Patmos, after giving a beautiful description of heaven, wrote:

Blessed are they that **do** his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14). (Or, ASV, Blessed are they that wash their robes...).

Peter announced the Lord's principle of salvation to all mankind at the house of Cornelius in these words:

God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and **worketh righteousness**, is accepted with him (Acts 10:34-35; cf. Psm. 119:172).

There is no distinction in regard to the way in which all men must be justified. All are saved in the same way, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, rich or poor.

So, salvation by the blood of Christ is by God's grace, but not by grace only; it is by faith, but *"not by faith only"* (James 2:24). It must be by a loving, working, obedient faith that keeps the Lord's commandments (Gal. 5:6; John 14:15, 23-

24; Heb. 11:6-7). Salvation is "*by faith*," but faith is not complete until it is expressed and actualized by a whole-hearted surrender and a submissive obedience to the complete will of the Lord. Faith is taking God at His word and doing what He commands. A person is not saved by faith in Christ the very moment he believes. But one's obedience to the Lord does not annul the fact that salvation is by God's grace.

Does Man Earn His Salvation?

No one can earn his salvation. People are saved by the grace of God when by faith they obey the commands of Christ or comply with the terms of pardon (Rom. 1:5; 16:25-26). Although salvation is by no merit of our own and the acts of obedience cannot earn the forgiveness of sin, it is nevertheless true that salvation by the blood of Christ depends upon man's obedience to Christ our only Savior. One is not saved by his own works. All are dependent on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; but the offering of Christ on the cross will be of no avail without one's obedience by faith to the conditions of pardon given by Christ. Hear Paul again:

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, **by the washing of regeneration**, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his **grace**, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:5-7).

The "*washing of regeneration*" here is baptism, which is a command of Christ for salvation. In giving the great commission Jesus said:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:19-20).

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).

Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-47).

On the day of Pentecost, the day the great commission went into effect, after hearing Peter's sermon the people cried out asking, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" (Acts 2:37).

Then Peter said unto them, 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; cf. 3:19).

Baptism is the point when the change occurs from being still in sin to being forgiven or made free from sin (Rom. 6:17-18). Any one who fails to recognize that immersion in water is a command of Christ so as to be saved by the blood of Christ and by the grace of God grossly misunderstands both salvation and baptism. Baptism is for salvation, for the remission of sins, to wash away sins (Acts 22:16), to get into Christ, into the benefits of His death where the blood was shed (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; John 19:34), to get into Christ's spiritual body, the church (I Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47). These are not **different purposes** for baptism, but are **different**

ways of stating one and the same primary truth about baptism. For one to be baptized believing that salvation has already occurred nullifies every Biblical statement for baptism. In every detailed account of conversion recorded in the book of Acts, individuals were baptized (Acts 2:41; 8:5-13, 35-39; 9:6, 18; 16:14-15, 25-34; 18:8). In every statement of Scripture where baptism and salvation or remission of sins occur, baptism is placed before salvation. Peter said, "**Baptism doth also now save us**" (I Peter 3:21). Therefore, one cannot be taught wrong and baptized right.

But one is not saved by baptism alone. It is baptism preceded by a believing, penitent heart. Moreover, the water of baptism cannot cleanse from sin, but the blood of Christ can cleanse from all past sins when one obeys the Savior in baptism.

Not only does the blood Jesus of that was shed in His death cleanse us from the sins committed anterior to baptism, it also removes the guilt consequent upon sinning after we have become Christians. John wrote:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us (continues to cleanse us) from all sin ... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:7, 9; cf. 2:1-2).

Are We Saved By Works?

In the minds of some, having to be obedient to the gospel, especially to be "*baptized for the remission of sins,*" seems to conflict with the statement that salvation is "*by grace*" not "*by works.*" There are no contradictions in God's word. Truly,

as we have clearly established, salvation is by the grace and mercy of the Lord, and all ground of boasting save in the cross of Christ is excluded. By His death Jesus procured justification, bearing in Himself the sins of the world. But why is salvation by grace said to be also by faith, and how does baptism for the remission of sins fit into the plan? This is so because faith is the means by which we appropriate and enjoy that which was procured by the death of Christ (Rom. 5:1-2). Faith is not a work of merit or of man's righteousness by which we secure justification. Neither are we justified by the works of the Old Testament Law of Moses (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; 3:11).

Faith lays hold of and makes available to us what only the sacrifice of Christ could procure. Faith in itself is a work (John 6:29), as is repentance (Acts 17:30), and as is making the good confession (Acts 8:37; I Tim. 6:12), but baptism is never called a work. These are acts of obedience and are not works of the kind that the apostle excludes from justification. They are acts of faith – faith expressed or actualized. Baptism is simply an act of faith.

So, Paul in Titus 3:5 puts "*works of righteousness*" (i.e., man's righteousness) on one side and baptism on the other. "*Works of (man's) righteousness*" are excluded from salvation; baptism is connected with it. Baptism, being an act of faith, not only does not belong with the works of man's righteousness but is opposed to them. Hence, we are justified by a working, obedient faith (Gal. 5:6; James 2:24), which includes baptism (Mark 16:16).

When the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" The answer was, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,*

and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:30-31). Then we read:

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house (Acts 16:32-34).

God has never saved a man on the condition of his faith until that faith has expressed itself. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys (Rom. 5:1; James 2:22, 24, 26; John 1:11-12).

The Lord's plan of salvation then is: (1) man must hear the gospel (Acts 28:28), (2) believe in Christ (Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:17; Mark 16:16), (3) repent of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30), (4) confess faith in Christ as the Son of God (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10; I Tim. 6:12; Acts 8:37), and (5) be baptized for (unto) the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

If Christ's death by itself procures remission of sins, since Jesus died for all, then all will be saved – the atheist, infidel, agnostic, immoral. This cannot be true. There are two sides to salvation: (1) God's side, the divine side, and (2) man's side, the human side. God provides and man accepts. The sinner meets the blood of Christ in scriptural baptism. The grace of God gave Christ and Christ gave His life, but man must obey, must accept, on the terms of the gospel – to be forgiven.

Conclusion

Jesus died to redeem us from sin through His shed blood (Matt. 26:28). When one arises from the watery grave of baptism, he is cleansed, forgiven, by the blood of Christ, and can now

walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4; II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:27). Christ

... gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift (II Cor. 9:15).

I love the Lord, for He died my soul to save,
On Calvary His dear life He freely gave;
From realms above, Jesus freely came to die,
That I might live some day with Him on high.

I love the Lord, He has been so good to me,
He gave His life, from sin to set me free;
No greater love than His could ever be,
I love the Lord, because He first loved me.
- Tommy Wheeler

Section II

GODLINESS

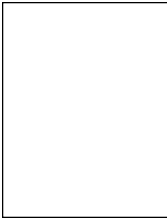
VS.

UNGODLINESS

Chapter 5

RIGHTEOUS AND GODLY LIVING – IN OUR WORLD

FLAVIL NICHOLS



Has been preaching for over 57 years • Received an AA degree from Freed-Hardeman • Also studied at University of North Alabama • Married Mary Elizabeth Hardin • Two children, three grandchildren • Local work in Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky • Devotes full-time to revivals, lectureships, etc. • Board of Trustees at Faulkner University and Childhaven, Inc.

Introduction

I truly appreciate the invitation to participate in this series of studies with this good church. I am aware that *"the glorious gospel of Christ"* (II Cor. 4:3-4) deserves a far better presentation than I shall ever be able to give it. Therefore I am sensitively conscious of the responsibilities resting on me to *"handle aright the word of truth"* (II Tim. 2:15, A.S.V.).

This entire lectureship is certainly needed today by both those within, and those outside, the body of Christ. The topics pertain to our being acceptable in the sight of God, hence they are vitally important. I invite you to humbly and prayerfully consider God's truth on the topic for this hour: *"Righteous and Godly Living In Our World."*

If you do not already know *"by heart"* our text (Titus 2:11-14) for this lectureship series, I urge you to memorize it.

Some Definitions

The Greek word DIKAIOS (which is translated "Righteous") is defined as "*Justly, agreeably to right; . . . 2. properly, as is right: 3. uprightly, agreeably to the law of rectitude*" (Thayer's **Greek-English Lexicon**, page 151). Our English word "Righteous" means "1. Morally right or justifiable. 2. Acting in an upright, moral way" (Random House Dictionary).

The Greek word EUSEBOS (translated "Godly") means: "*Piously, godly*" (Thayer, page 262). The English "*godly*" means "*devout (deeply devoted to divine worship or service) or pious*" (having or showing reverence for God). – Random House Dictionary.

"*In Our World*" suggests that we live in an "*evil*" world! Our blessed Savior,

...gave himself for us, that he might deliver us from this present evil world (Gal. 1:4).

The Judean world was hostile to the Lord Jesus Christ. This world still is "*evil*"! For,

Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived (II Tim. 3:13).

Every form of vice is hostile to Christianity.

Satan did not leave Jesus alone – but tempted **Him** (Matt. 4). Later, the devil got Judas, one of the Lord's chosen (hand-picked!) apostles (Luke 22:3). And Jesus warned Peter:

Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have **thee** (Luke 22:31-33).

Neither I nor you should imagine for one moment that: "*The old Devil will leave me alone!*" Rather, heed this inspired warning:

Be sober, be vigilant; for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8).

Friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4) for the simple reason that *"The whole world lieth in wickedness"* (I John 5:19; read also James 4:1-12). This world is unfriendly to Christianity.

In our world, sin *"abounds"* (Rom. 5:20)! Abortion, adultery, bribery, blasphemy, boasting, brutality, carnage, cheating by husbands and wives, covetousness, cursing, dancing, deceitfulness, divorce and remarriage, drug abuse, drunkenness, egotism, embezzlement, false accusations, fornication, gambling, harassment, homosexuality, immodesty, incontinent, ingratitude, irreverence, lesbianism, lewdness, lust, lying, mixed swimming, movies' trash, murder, perjury, pornography, pride, profanity, promiscuity, religious sins, sexual immoralities, sodomy, spouse abuse, suggestive music, television's filth, traitors, violence, vulgarity – the list could go on and on!

Atheistic communism has failed as an economic system in the former U.S.S.R. But even in the *"good 'ole U.S.A.,"* numerous contradictory theories of atheism abound. One of these, *"Humanism,"* pervades our whole society, including education, in America. *"Existentialism,"* with its so-called *"New Morality,"* or *"Situation Ethics,"* has bombarded America with the idea that *"Truth is not absolute;" "truth" (which supposedly evolves as man evolves), "is always relative."* *"There are no unbreakable rules and therefore, no list of things which are sins per se"* (John A.T. Robinson, author of **Honest To God**, and **Situation Ethics**). Immorality of every sort may result from the saturation of our great nation with this false philosophy.

Through *"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride (A.S.V.: "vainglory") of life"*

(I John 2:15-17), Satan appealed to Mother Eve (Gen. 3). Through these same avenues he tempted our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 4). The devil is “your adversary” (I Peter 5:8) also, and by the same means he tempts you and me today (I John 2:15-17).

Sin Is Condemned

Immorality of practically every kind is specifically condemned in the Bible. When the Gentiles “*knew God, they glorified him not as God,*” and “*did not like to retain God in their knowledge*” (Rom. 1:21, 28). The list of their sins sounds like a description of modern America:

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet (Rom. 1:21-28).

They first gave up God; subsequently, “*God gave them up ...*” (verse 21), and “*God gave them over ...*” (verse 28)!

Church: Called Out Of Sin

The Greek word (EKKLESSIA) translated

"church" means *"called out."* The apostle Paul says that God has *"called you by our gospel"* (II Thess. 2:14). God has *"called"* us out of the sinning business, and he demands that we stay out of sin! He has,

...called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (I Peter 2:9).

Inspiration urges,

...let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (II Cor. 7:1).

Jesus himself teaches that we must keep our hearts pure (Matt. 5:8), because,

...out of the heart ... proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:18-23).

To the churches of Galatia, the apostle Paul wrote:

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

Of the church at Corinth, the same apostle inquired:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves,

nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (I Cor. 6:9-11).

Notice carefully: they “were” – past tense – sinners; “*but ye are*” – present tense – washed, sanctified, and justified!

The world today is no more friendly to Christ and his church than it was in the first century. In America, materialism imprints dollar marks (\$\$\$) alone (in the mental concepts of millions) as the characteristic mark of success. The masses forget that “*The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof*” (Psm. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26, 28; Psm. 50:12; 89:11). They do not know that Deuteronomy 8:18 is in the Bible:

Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.

Two decades ago, alcohol-related job absenteeism cost American industry nearly \$10 BILLION a year, plus \$9 BILLION annually for health-care, including welfare services for alcoholics and their dependents. These staggering costs increase year by year! Abuse of alcohol and other drugs is always wrong.

“*Abstain from all appearance of evil*” (I Thess. 5:22), and “*Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*” (I Peter 2:11) are only two of many admonitions for Christians to stay out of the sinning business. Of His disciples Jesus said,

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world (John 17:14).

Christians are to “*be not conformed to this world*” (Rom. 12:1-2), and are taught to be

"blameless" (Phil. 2:10-16; read also Eph. 4:17 to 5:33).

Righteous and Godly Living Not Achieved By Accident

At Antioch, Barnabas,

... exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord (Acts 11:23).

This shows that there must be determination to please God. The Greek word (META-NOEO) which is translated "*repent,*" is defined as:

To change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of past sins (Thayer, page 405).

Thus at the point of repentance one hates his past sins, and "*turns over a new leaf*" so far as his intentions are concerned. He does not aim, or intend, ever to sin again.

Total Commitment to Christ is involved in such an attitude. But in order to "*grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (II Peter 3:18), one must be a regular **student of the Bible** (II Tim. 2:15). In no other way can he be sure that he is continuing "*steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine*" (Acts 2:42).

Regular, devout worship of God in the public assembly (I Cor. 14:23), worship that is "*in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:23-24), is also essential to righteous and godly living.

Prayer is another necessary ingredient, for we should be ashamed to try to do God's will without asking God's help (I Thess. 5:22).

Seek those things which are above ... Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2).

Love not the world, neither the things that

are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (I John 2:15).

The world is full of temptations to allure us from Christ and heaven. Fill your life with doing good, and thus,

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

Early Training Needed

Bad habits are hard to break. (You already knew this, didn't you?) Solomon did not say, *"Wait till your children are grown, and then try to straighten them out."* Rather, he wrote: *"Train up a child in the way he should go ... "* (Prov. 22:6). This is in keeping with God's instructions to Israel:

These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up (Deut. 6:6-7).

In the New Testament we read:

Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Even aged women are to be

... teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers (A.S.V.: "workers") at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:3-5).

Guide the young aright; for an old "proverb" (wise saying) reads:

As the twig is bent, so the tree is inclined.

“AS THE TWIG IS BENT...”

- If a child lives with hostility,
he learns to fight.
- If a child lives with fear,
he learns to be afraid.
- If a child lives with pity,
he learns to feel sorry for himself.
- If a child lives with jealousy,
he learns to hate.
- If a child lives with encouragement,
he learns to be confident.
- If a child lives with praise,
he learns to be appreciative.
- If a child lives with love,
he learns to love.
- If a child lives with fairness,
he learns justice.
- If a child lives with recognition,
he learns to have a goal.
- If a child lives with honesty,
he learns what truth is.
- If a child lives with friendliness,
he learns that the world is a
nice place in which to live.

(Author unknown)

Teach The Bible In Classes

Bible classes should not be “ignorance-sharing” sessions! We should remember that we are supplementing the home training for these students. Teach – both at home and in classes – what the Bible says! Train them to be honest, which includes not to steal, and involves not cheating on tests in school; and (later) means giving an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay. Teach them also to **tell** the truth – for lying is still a sin for which one’s soul will be lost

forever (Rev. 21:8). Neither happy marriages, nor successful careers, can be built upon lies and deceit. Early in life all need to learn to keep their hearts and lives pure, for only those who are “*pure in heart ... shall see God*” in peace (Matt. 5:8). The teacher’s aim should be to help each student develop the kind of character that will stand when the world is on fire!

“*Virtue*” (Greek: ARETEE) means “*an excellence of a person. . .*” (Thayer, page 73), or moral excellence, including courage, or manliness. This is one of the “*Christian graces*” demanded in II Peter 1:5-11. The apostle Paul wrote:

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit
(behave) ye like men, be strong (I Cor. 16:13).

Parents, give your children time to grow up! Don’t rush them! Do not force young girls into premature womanhood, prompting them to act like grown women by Junior High, or High School, then expect them to make wise, adult, decisions. Don’t rush your boys, either! As they do develop, be certain that you instill ideals of purity, modesty, and chastity in them – in both your sons and in your daughters! Make certain that all their activities, including amusements, are properly supervised.

Teach them the absolute necessity of choosing wisely and well their associates or companions; for “*evil communications (A.S.V.: “companion-ships”) corrupt good manners*” (I Cor. 15:33). Benjamin Franklin said:

If you lie down with dogs, you will get up
with fleas.

Bad company can tear down and destroy all other splendid traits you have taught your children! Especially should you know with whom

they go joyriding! Some things, like cheap movies, and indecent, immodest dresses, are simply always off-limits!

Fathers (Eph. 6:4), too, need to be involved in the child-rearing process. Remember Paul's secret? It involves depending on Christ to help us:

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:13).

It is sad that many fathers abdicate their parental responsibilities, and never spend any quality time with their children. I have heard that after Henry Ward Beecher's father took him fishing on his twelfth birthday, the boy wrote in his diary: *"Greatest day of my life: Dad took me fishing today!"* Years later, after he had become a noted denominational preacher, his father died; and while rummaging through his possessions, he discovered his father's entry in his diary for that same date: *"Took Henry Ward fishing today - most wasted day of my life!"* What a tragic misconception on his part! Fathers, share yourself with your children! You will be robbing YOURSELF if you don't! It is a sad day when the following is characteristic of even one man.

New Renderings Of Old Songs:

"Take my wife and let her be,
Consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my children as thine own;
As for me, I'll stay at home."

* * *

"I love thy church, O God;
Her walls before me stand.
But please forgive my absence, Lord:
This bed is simply grand."

* * *

“Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
Yes! ‘Tho I seldom pray, or pay,
I still insist I am.”

* * *

Godly and Righteous Living Requires Knowledge

Knowledge is essential to right living. When I was a boy preacher – more than fifty years ago! – my parents gave me a New Testament in which my Dad wrote:

To Flavil Hall Nichols from his parents,
Gus and Matilda Nichols.
This little book will keep you from sin;
– but sin will keep you from this little book.
Psalms 119:11.

This text says:

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might
not sin against thee.

We may not always do as well as we know to do; but it is certain that we will never do any better than we know to do! Joseph (Gen. 39:10) is a splendid example of how the knowledge of God’s will kept him from sinning, even as a slave in Potiphar’s house, far from home!

Prayer is also required if one will live right. Jesus himself taught that *“men ought always to pray, and not to faint”* (Luke 18:1). *“Pray without ceasing”* (I Thess. 5:17), and *“continuing instant in prayer”* (Rom. 12:12) are still valid scriptures.

Goodness is demanded of each Christian. Timothy was instructed to *“charge them . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works. . .”* (I Tim. 6:17-18).

Possible Through Christ

God will provide an avenue for us to resist all temptations!

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Cor. 10:13).

The apostle Peter wrote that,

Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously (I Peter 2:21-23; read verses 11-15).

The same apostle wrote again:

It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them (II Peter 2:21).

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and His word is not in us (I John 1:7-10).

Righteous To Be Separated From Wicked

There is coming a great universal, and final, judgment day, when the righteous and the wicked will be separated forever (Matt. 25:31-46).

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (II Cor. 5:10).

Only those who have obtained forgiveness of their past sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), and have striven to live right, to keep themselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27), will be saved (John 14:1-3; Eccl. 12:13-14).

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them (Rev. 14:13).

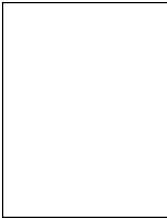
Truly, only those who *“live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world”* (Titus 2:12) will be prepared for

... the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel (Rom. 2:16).

Chapter 6

TEACHING & REFLECTING GODLINESS IN OUR HOMES

TOM HOLLAND



A graduate of Athens Bible School, Freed-Hardeman University, David Lipscomb University (B.A.), Abilene Christian University (M.A.), and Southern Illinois University (Ph.D.) • Author of 45 books • Preaches for Crieve Hall church in Nashville, TN for almost 15 years • Born and reared near Rogersville, AL • Married to Linda (Dodd); they have five children.

Introduction

Titus is a brief but powerful epistle in which the Holy Spirit through Paul's inspired pen declares the necessity and nature of the sanctified life of God's children.

Genuine Christianity both impacts the quality of life in the home and is reflected in the lives of family members, be they older or younger, male or female, unmarried or married.

Teaching

Christianity is a taught religion (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus had declared those who come to Him are drawn of God and God draws through teaching (John 6:44-45).

People cannot be taught the wrong thing and expected to do right. Titus is instructed to speak sound or healthy doctrine or teaching (Titus 2:1). Unhealthy doctrine/teaching produces spiritually weak and/or ill people.

The pure Word of God is a necessity if people are going to be men and women of purity. If older men are going to be "*sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience*" (Titus 2:2), then they must be fed a healthy doctrine.

Older women must also have the healthy doctrine if they are to be "*teachers of good things*" (Titus 2:3). They must be taught healthy doctrine and they must teach it to others, especially to the younger women (Titus 2:4).

Older Women As Teachers

A doctrine that is presently disturbing the peace and harmony of some congregations is being imparted from denominationalism, namely, that women may, and even should, have leadership roles in the Lord's church. God's Word restricts the role of a woman. She is not to teach over a man nor to have authority over a man (I Tim. 2:11-12).

But this restriction does not mean that she is forbidden to teach. In fact, she is instructed to teach, and if the women who are clamouring to fill leadership roles in teaching that God's Word forbids would get busy doing the kind of teaching God tells the women to do, then women would not have the time to be demanding teaching roles God restricts the woman from doing.

Perhaps the problem is that the kind of teaching God tells the women to do is not as glamorous as teaching a class of mixed gender.

The older women are instructed to teach the younger women (Titus 2:4). Please note the specific objects of the teaching, "*the younger women*," – not the "*younger men and women*."

Lessons To Be Taught

Older women are to teach young women to be **sober** (Titus 2:4), or **discreet**. These words denote "*of sound mind ... self-controlled.*"

Older women are to teach, or train, the young women to "**love their husbands.**" It may sound strange to modern ears that younger women need to be taught to love their husbands. However, when one becomes aware of the number of young women who forsake their husbands, repudiate their marriage vows made to God, and go out to "*find themselves,*" or, who become so dissatisfied being an "*everyday housewife,*" then the need for young wives to be taught love for their husbands is evident.

Training the young women to love their husbands was important when considered in the light of the influence of false/unhealthy doctrine which was "*overthrowing whole houses*" (Titus 1:11). False doctrine not only has the potential to divide churches, it has the power to disrupt and even destroy families. Think of the deadly influence that godless humanism has had and is having on the family today!

Donald Guthrie in the Tyndall Commentary Series observed,

Even our modern age is not without instances of professing Christian women lacking true maternal affection. For women who put their careers before the welfare of their own children are displaying a significant symptom of this weakness (**The Pastoral Epistles**, p. 193).

Younger women need to be taught by older women how a young mother is to love her children. Now if one imagines that this lesson is not needed, then consider the number of young

mothers who leave their children in day care centers, or in the care of a baby sitter, while the mother goes to work, not because of economic necessity, but because of a desire to have more and more material things: new clothes, a new car, a boat, a fancy house, and any number of gadgets and things.

If younger women are to be discreet or self-controlled, then older Christian women need to teach them this virtue. There is one thing for sure: they will not learn discretion in dress, speech, and demeanor from the media, especially television.

The younger women also need to be taught by the older women how to be chaste. Note: the word is not "*chased!*" Vine defines the word in the original translation "*chaste*" as,

... pure, from carnality, modest (W. E. Vine, **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**, Vol. I, p. 175).

Furthermore, the older women are to teach the younger women to be keepers at home, or, as the New King James renders it, "*homemakers.*" A home of peace, tranquility, productivity, and loyalty has to be made. Fortunate indeed is the husband who can come home to acceptance, appreciation, and support. These kinds of homes bless men, bless a community, and bless the Lord's church.

Burton Coffman observed,

... through the centuries, those societies in which women have honored this divine injunction (i.e., the wife submits, obeys her husband, TH), have invariably elevated women to higher and higher places of honor, respect and protection. In many cultures where this ethic is dishonored, women have ultimately been reduced to the status of chattels, as they were in the

pagan culture of Paul's day (**Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus**, pp. 333, 334)

The next virtue older women should teach to the young women is goodness (Titus 2:5). The word translated "*good*" means that which

... being good in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect (Vine, **op. cit.**, p. 493).

Finally, the older women should teach the younger women to be obedient, or in subjection, to their own husbands. This lesson becomes a real challenge to Christian women now because the spirit of rebellion and resentment of authority is a reality. The modern feminist movement resents the idea of a wife having to be in subjection to her husband.

How Will The Women Teach?

It is obvious that God wants older women to teach younger women. Too, God wants the older women to teach "*good things*" (Titus 2:3). These eight things that older women are to teach younger women are indeed "*good things*," the opinion of the world notwithstanding.

There are two ways generally that the teaching may be done: One, by words spoken in a class at the church building, or in a home meeting. An older Christian lady could invite younger women to her home for lunch and then teach them these lessons God wants the young women to learn. These meetings could be held weekly or monthly until all eight points are carefully and thoroughly covered.

Two, the older women can teach by her own example. Let her demonstrate in her life these qualities God wants taught! After all, the power

of example is still a reality (Matt. 5:14-16).

Think Of The Results Of Teaching

For one thing, God's Word will not be blasphemed (Titus 2:5). God's Word clearly instructs young women how to relate to their husbands and how to function in the home. Unless they learn the truth, their manner of life may blaspheme God's Word. Their failure or refusal to learn the lesson may cause husbands to blaspheme God's Word.

Then consider the positive aspect: the way the church would be strengthened by godliness taught in the home. Think of the blessing of security and a sense of being loved and wanted would come to little children. Too, think of the respect that women would have by people generally. Image how happy a Christian husband would be to have the kind of wife that God tells older women to teach younger women to become.

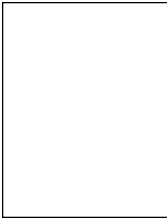
This passage from Titus 2 is surely a verbal demonstration of Paul's inspired declaration relative to God's will, namely, that God's will is good, perfect, and acceptable (Rom. 12:2).

Let older women become diligent in teaching younger women "*good things*" because the ever present world is teaching younger women evil things. Older women lovingly teaching younger women may thereby save marriages, indirectly be a blessing to little children, and they can be great servants of God by doing His will and faithfully teaching younger women as God surely wants them to do.

Chapter 7

UNGODLINESS IN OUR WORLD – OVERVIEW

RAYMOND HAGOOD



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Introduction

Ungodliness is a reality – a fact that is obvious to everyone and undeniable by anyone. From every kind of media available to modern man the palpability of evil is verified daily – yea, hourly. Hideous horror stories of murders, rapes, embezzlements, robberies, immorality, despotism, drug addiction, child abuse, corruption and a multitude of other malignancies spew across the newspapers and the television screen in a relentless stream. The scourge of sin shatters lives every day, bringing untold misery, annihilating the home, wasting human potential, extirpating souls and thrusting society into a suicidal frenzy which is the product of desperation and hopelessness.

The devil and his armies are marching across the pages of human history, leaving in their wake ruin, destruction and desolation.

The devil's cause is fueled by continued

success, the illusions of invincibility and ultimate victory and a single-minded devotion to his primary goal of destroying the church and thus defeating the scheme of redemption. He is driven by blind ambition and uninhibited by any ethics, moral principles or respect for law and authority. His cold, heartless, sadistic, bloodthirsty soul does not restrain in any way his cruelty, barbarity and ferocity. His regard for truth is nonexistent, since he is the father of lies, and, in truth, the devil views veracity with contempt.

Though his attacks on God and God's people are incessant, the devil will ultimately fail and will be defeated. He cannot win. All who foolishly follow him will be doomed to the same condemnation as that of the devil. Revelation 20 graphically shows the devil being vanquished, finally and conclusively.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev. 20:10).

Those who have followed godliness will share in the victory with the Lamb and will escape the second death. The formula for victory over the devil is clearly seen in Revelation 12:11:

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Ungodliness: The Antithesis Of Godliness

Ungodliness is not an episodic phenomenon, but rather a systemic concept. Ungodliness is a way of thinking that wars against God and refuses to honor reverentially God's sovereignty.

Ungodliness is the opposite of godliness.

Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to understand godliness. Contrasted with this, ungodliness will be clearly displayed as the grotesque monster it really is.

The word "godliness" is translated from the Greek word "eusebeia." This word signifies reverence, respect, and piety toward God.¹ Arndt and Gingrich say the word means piety, reverence, loyalty, fear of God.² The stem of eusebeia is "seb," which meant originally "to fall back before." Kittel says that seb denotes awe at something lofty and sublime.³ Vine suggests that the word "denotes that piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is pleasing to Him."⁴

Godliness (eusebeia) is the right attitude toward God, which encompasses piety, reverence, obedience and a devotion to goodness, truth and duty. Godliness is itself systemic, because it involves an entire system of thinking which recognizes and glorifies the greatness and goodness of God. Godliness is an attitude that stands in awe of all of God's attributes.

It is easy to see, then, that reverence is essential to godliness. The Hebrew writer informs us that acceptable service to God requires such.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28).

Reverence is a recognition of and adoration of the power, glory, honor, love, mercy, justice, wisdom, strength, and riches of God. John by inspiration said it best in Revelation 5:12,

Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and

riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

Recognition of who God is and what God is will produce in a good and honest heart the right kind of attitude toward Him, and, in turn, the proper attitude toward His Word, the Bible. To be godly is to seek to imitate God and, therefore, to emulate His nature, love, purity, values, goodness, holiness, and every other aspect of His Being.

Antithetically, then, ungodliness is an entirely different way of viewing God; it refuses to reverence Him and to respect His will. The ungodly person rejects God as the sovereign Creator and sovereign Power of all and gives His devotion to some idolatrous deity.

Ungodly people have no respect for God and all that God is; they discard God from their lives and view Him with scorn and disdain. They will not submit their will to God's will, but like their father, the devil, they rebel against God and against all that belongs to Him.

Portrait Of The Ungodly

These people refuse faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (II Peter 1:4-7). Instead, they choose the decadence and depravity of adultery, fornication, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, and revellings (Gal. 5:19-21).

Paul accurately describes this type of individual in Romans 1:21,

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

This repudiation of God had severe consequences which Paul goes on to discuss in Romans.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things (Rom. 1:22-23).

Idolatry is always the result of the rejection of God. As Paul said,

Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen (Rom. 1:25).

Revelation discusses at length idolatry and its consequences.

And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts (Rev. 9:20,21).

The consequences of idolatry are terrible, indeed. It produces murder (lack of respect for human life), sorceries (pharmakia, illicit drug use in connection with idolatrous worship), fornication (illicit sexual intercourse) and thefts (lack of respect for the property of others).

When we hear of murders, rapes, drug wars, fornication, robberies and every other kinds of vice, we must put the blame where it belongs. These sins are not the product of bad economies or social misfortune, but of idolatry, which destroys the very fabric of society and ravages

mankind.

The devil long ago in heaven refused to reverence Jehovah God; being lifted up by pride, he led a coup d'etat against God's supreme throne. From that moment on, Satan has been the principal enemy of God and the promoter and propagator of ungodliness. Irreverence and impiousness characterize his attitude toward God, and blasphemy spews forth his venomous hatred of God and all that is godly.

The irreligious, paganistic infidelity that typifies the world and utters sacrilegious maledictions to God is simply the result of those who reject God and follow Satan, the ultimate God-hater.

Therefore, godliness is a deep respect and reverence for God which motivates one to imitate His nature and attributes. Ungodliness is a lack of respect and reverence for God, which causes people to reject God, while at the same time imitating their father, the devil.

The Devil's Favorite Weapon

Many Christians do not really understand how temptation and sin work. Paul said,

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us;
for we are not ignorant of his devices
(II Cor. 2:11).

This word "*devices*" is a fascinating and revealing word. It is the Greek word "*noema*," which is derived from the word "*noeo*," meaning to direct one's mind to a subject, to perceive, to understand.⁵

From this word we are able to learn that Satan's schemes are designed to affect our thinking and our perception. He wants us to direct our minds to his lies and thus be motivated in

ways that war against God – that is, in ways that are ungodly.

It is very important for us to understand where the battlefield is located. That way we will not waste energy fighting in the wrong place and fighting the wrong enemy. The battlefield is the human mind. The devil devotes all of his efforts in trying to influence the human mind to imbibe his values, his "*morality*," his arrogance, his hate of God, and his rebellion to the Divine Nature.

How then does Satan work? How does he influence our minds? What are these devices used by the destroyer? These are important questions which are essential to understand.

The principal weapon of the devil is a lie, and how devastating it is! In the garden of Eden we receive our first impression of the great deceiver. Satan uttered five words which changed the course of human history. Sadly, Eve believed these words, "*Ye shall not surely die*," and partook of the forbidden fruit. The devil not only lied about this, he even slandered the motives of God by telling Eve that the only reason God did not want them to partake of the fruit was because it would make them like gods, knowing good and evil.

The Saviour gave an accurate description of Satan when He said,

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44).

Paul makes it clear in Romans 1:25 that when people do not know God and do not glorify

Him, the result is that they "*change the truth of God into a lie.*" The devil's power is encapsulated in the aspects of deception, falsehood, lies and fabrication.

John describes Satan in this way:

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Rev. 12:9).

When the deceiver was bound in Revelation 20:3, notice that he was prevented from deceiving the nations any more.

It is important not to underestimate or relegate the power of even one lie. What people believe to be true determines their motivation or lack of it. There was a time when people honestly believed that the earth was flat and that if they sailed too far, they would fall off the end of the earth. The belief of this one lie prevented societies from exploration and thus from progress and commerce.

Look at the effects of the one lie that Eve believed!

Over in East Tennessee there is a group of people who honestly believe that they can drink deadly poison and handle rattlesnakes and that God will protect them from the effects of these toxins. About 17 years ago several of these people died as a result of drinking poison and of being bitten by venomous snakes.

A lie is a potentially deadly thing. If it is believed and acted on, it can have serious consequences and even fatal results.

Sin, Temptation And Divine Protection

While the lie is the devil's principal tool, it

is certainly not the only weapon in his arsenal. There are several factors in the sin-temptation equation. An analysis of these reveals much about the devices and schemes of the master deceiver.

In I Peter 1:5 the inspired apostle says this:

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The American Standard Version says,

Who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

At first glance this scripture may not seem to be closely related to the subject at hand. However, an important principle presented here figures into the problems of sin and temptation.

The word "*kept*" ("guarded", ASV) is a key concept in this passage. It is the word "*phrouomenous*," which is a present participle of *phrouoreo*. This word means to guard, to protect by a military guard.⁶ The word is used metaphorically and describes soldiers who surround the faithful to guard or protect them. This is a present tense verb and thus denotes continuous guarding, that will not fail as long as the Christians remain within the garrison.

Notice that God's protection of His children is accomplished "*through faith*." Clearly, then, human beings have an integral part in this process. Peter does not depict an unconditional safe-guarding, nor is he teaching the impossibility of apostasy. A ship-wrecked faith would destroy the means of protection and thereby security itself.

God, in essence, guarantees that Christians

are inviolable as long as they remain within the walls of the fortification. This, of course, does not mean that Christians cannot sin. Faithful children of God stumble from time to time, but they do not serve the devil and do not live a sinful life. The difference is in committing occasional, unplanned transgressions, which are promptly corrected by repentance and confession, as opposed to living in sin and walking in ungodliness.

The devil, of course, cannot enter this "*garrison*" of protection for children of God. Therefore, his only option is to try to draw Christians outside this realm of safety.

This is exactly the process that James describes in James 1:14:

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Notice that James talks about someone being drawn away. From what? The answer is obvious – from the phrouomenous, garrison of God. What lures a man from a position of absolute safety inside God's fort? James' answer is clear – it is human lusts (illicit desires) that accomplish this.

The devil cannot get inside, and so he appeals to illicit human desires in an attempt to draw Christians outside of the garrison and thus into his deadly lair.

Satan employs three avenues to entice this lust into carrying men and women away from God's protection. John describes these in I John 2:16:

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and

the pride of life have long been the devil's methodical modus operandi to beguile people into danger and destruction.

It is obvious that the critical danger point in the temptation process begins when Christians desire anything that belongs to the devil. This is a potentially fatal mistake. Pride, a desire for acceptance at any cost, the love of material things, illicit desires, uncontrolled anger, dishonesty, all are fertile ground for the devil. The great tempter knows where our weaknesses are, and he seeks every opportunity to offer to us those things which are the most appealing.

Love Not The World

Godliness is reverence, respect, adoration, deep love for God and devotion to Him and all that He is. A Christian devotes himself to bringing his desires, his ambitions, his motivations, his thoughts, and every other part of his being into perfect harmony with God's plan for mankind. If at any time in our lives we lose this deep desire to blend our will perfectly with God's will and to remain under God's authority and direction, we will at that point start to desire those things which the devil offers. This is why John emphatically says,

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15).

We are not to desire in any way the world or the things of the world. To love the world is to be ungodly, because we cease to revere and honor God and instead seek and value those things which are an abomination to Him. We must always love those things which God loves and despise the things which God hates.

When people fail to understand the danger point of sin, they aid and abet one of the devil's great schemes; he has long used this sort of blindness in his attempt to deceive folks into believing that they are safe, when in reality they are in a dangerous situation. The Corinthian brethren were absolutely convinced that they were safe and sound, when in reality they were standing on a slippery ledge. Paul gave this warning to those deceived brethren,

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

Paul's warning was clear and urgent. He exhorted them to examine themselves and their relationship to God because they were getting ready to fall, in spite of the fact that they were convinced that they were secure.

God's protection is absolute, as long as we stay in God's garrison by maintaining the proper faith. The moment, however, we begin to desire the devil's possessions, we place ourselves in harm's way. These lusts will pull us away from God and, unless we change course, will drown us in the quicksand of evil and depravity. James, in his graphic description of the process of temptation, says this:

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:15).

According to James, when lust and temptation come together, they will conceive and give birth to a child by the name of sin. Sin that is allowed to grow up will eventually lead to spiritual death – eternal separation from God.

God's Answer To Ungodliness

The lesson text (Titus 2:11-12) provides the

Divine solution to the problem of ungodliness. To come within the realm of God's grace and to stay there, we must follow the instructions of this text.

We learn first that grace teaches or instructs. The word "teaching" is from the Greek word "*paideuouosa*." This word is derived from the word "*paideia*." Paideia "*denotes the upbringing and handling of the child which is growing to maturity and which thus needs direction, teaching, instruction and a certain measure of compulsion in the form of discipline or even chastisement.*"⁷ Grace instructs in the way that a parent would instruct a child. This instruction is fundamental, step by step, and is, in reality, a training process. Grace therefore instructs and trains Christians to full spiritual maturity.

This teaching is both negative and positive. Negatively, grace demands a total rejection and denial of ungodliness. Remember that ungodliness is idolatry, a rejection of God and impiety and manifests itself in many evil ways, as we have discussed at length.

Positively, grace instructs us to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Robert Taylor offers an excellent comment on this matter.

God's child is to live soberly, righteously and godly. Sober living is living right with one's self; righteous deportment is living right with others; godly deportment is living right before God – it is the dedicated decorum that discharges all expected and commanded duties to God.⁸

Conclusion

Human beings can choose to revere God or to reject God. This is the most important decision

that we can make in life. It will determine the quality of the time we spend on this earth – a life with meaning and direction or a chaotic existence of blind alleys and false turns. Above all, it will determine our eternal destiny.

Satan offers much pleasure and many promises, but the pleasure is temporary, and all of his promises are empty. Following the great deceiver can only produce hollowness and emptiness, which lead to misery, untold anguish and, ultimately, to defeat and death.

The only way to be truly happy and to have the fullest, most productive, meaningful life is to serve God faithfully until death, with the glorious anticipation of living through eternity with Him in heaven. The victory belongs to the faithful – those who deny ungodliness and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Endnotes

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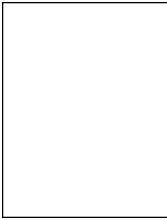
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Chapter 8

UNGODLINESS: ADULTERY, HOMOSEXUALITY, ETC.

H. A. (BUSTER) DOBBS



Preaching for over 50 years • Elder, debater, writer • Born in Houston, TX • All local work done in Houston, TX • Owner and editor of the **Firm Foundation** • Speaker on many lectureships and in gospel revivals • Married Martha DeWoody (both Buster and Martha from families of elders and preachers) • Three children, eight grandchildren.

Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Corinth was famous for its wealth, and infamous for its vice. It was a cesspool. The name Corinthian is associated with evil. A Corinthian woman was a proverbial phrase for a tramp. To play the Corinthian was to play the whore. One thousand religious prostitutes, male and female, served the temple of Aphrodite in that wicked city.

Paul mentions fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, and abusers of themselves with men and says, They shall not inherit the kingdom of God. We will look at each of these as different types of sexual impurity.

Fornication

The English Dictionary defines fornication as *“voluntary sexual intercourse, generally forbidden by law, between an unmarried woman and a man, especially an unmarried man.”* English Dictionaries define adultery as *“voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and a woman not his wife, or between a married woman and a man not her husband.”*

Marital status decides if the sin is adultery or fornication, according to the dictionary. The Bible words translated **fornication** and **adultery** have a different meaning.

The word translated fornication means

... harlotry, adultery, incest, to indulge in unlawful lust (of either sex), or (figuratively) to practice idolatry.

Fornication is a broader term than adultery. It includes any sexual perversion, including homosexuality and bestiality. Aggravated pornography that results in sexual dysfunction may also be fornication.

The English word fornication is rare in the Old Testament, and is often used speaking of idolatry. The word is more frequent in the New Testament. The incestuous offender in Corinth is guilty of fornication, according to Paul. Jesus gave fornication as the solitary acceptable reason for divorce and remarriage.

I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery (Matt. 19:9).

Miscellaneous sexual activity is deadly. Paul warns,

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body (1 Cor. 6:18).

The body is the physical body, as the expression "*his own body*" proves.

The apostle is not saying that the only sin involving the human body is fornication. Murder, drunkenness, idolatry, and lying all involve the use of the material body. He does say that fornication is a sin against the mortal body, and that all other sins are without the corporeal body. There is a sense in which fornication is against one's human body and other sins are not against that body in that same way.

Sexual license has particular dangers that are often irrevocable. Sexually transmitted disease can rot the brain and destroy physical life. It cannot end the life of the spirit—which is eternal. The evil consequence of unlawful sex will torment the offender, making his earthly life wretched, and his suffering dreadful. Mindless and purposeless and miserable existence is his fate on earth, and unrelenting fire, where the worm never dies, is his eternal future.

But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death (Rev. 21:8).

The fornicator is excluded from the company of God and the saved, and his companions are villians, knaves and fools ... for all eternity!

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that causes Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is unbearable. We have not yet grasped the full impact of this horrible malady.

Many millions may die before we fully understand its sinister message.

He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

If one partner in a marriage is guilty of fornication, the innocent mate is especially vulnerable. Perhaps this is why Jesus gives the sin of fornication as the one acceptable reason for divorce and remarriage.

Adultery

The English word adultery occurs almost equally in the Old and New Testaments. The Mosaic law legislated "*thou shalt not commit adultery*" (Exodus 20:14). The handbook of the Jewish priest said,

The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife...shall surely be put to death (Lev. 20:10).

Solomon warned,

He that committeth adultery with a woman is void of understanding: He doeth it who would destroy his own soul (Prov. 6:32).

Adultery is downright stupid. It destroys life. Paul speaks of some who were dead while they lived.

The adulterer is destitute of understanding and his sin bites like a serpent. The Old Testament calls faithlessness to the covenant adultery. This is a figurative application of the word, and not the literal meaning of it. It is basic to understanding language to take words in their literal meaning unless the context demands a figurative application. The figurative application of the word adultery is rare, but not unknown. The senselessness of the shameful act may be the

reason Jehovah calls idolatry adultery. Idolatry may involve actual, literal, physical adultery. The sin of Baal-peor involved literal adultery in the worship of idols.

Marriage is holy.

Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge (Heb. 13:4).

Undefiled means free from contamination, according to Vine. The marriage bed is to be free from unlawful sexual intercourse.

We live in a day of self-gratification. The dictum is *"if it feels good, do it!"* We want everyone to have fun. Peter Eichten, the preacher for The Church of Today in Warren, Michigan, preaches a doctrine of empowerment, based on the belief that *"the great sin is not the things that people typically see as sins, but not living up to their own potential."* People who like doing *"the things people typically see as sins"* think this is a terrific idea. Its major failing is that it does not have Divine sanction. It does have Divine condemnation. There is such a thing as self-control.

Homosexuality

The sin of homosexuality and its attendant horrors is blasted throughout the Bible. God has nothing but condemnation for men who would have sexual relationships with other men, or for women who have sex with other women. Many attempt to justify what the Bible vigorously condemns. The pressing issue in many denominational churches is whether to ordain homosexuals as preachers.

Some are trying to sell the idea that homosexuals are born and not bred. The ignorant and unsteadfast are buying the notion that perverts

are innocent victims of their genes. Simon LeVay a neuroscientist at the Salk Institute in La Jolia, California scanned the brains of 41 cadavers, including 19 homosexual males, and determined that a tiny area thought to control sexual activity was less than half the size in homosexuals than it was in heterosexuals. He trumpets this as proof that homosexuals are born that way.

LeVay admits he has been homosexual since the age of 12, and therefore has a self interest in his proposition. His lover of 21 years, Richard Hersey, died of AIDS. He admits that upon learning that the male hypothalamus that regulates sex is more than twice as large as women's, he set out to prove that the normal man's hypothalamus is larger than that of homosexuals – and, so, that is exactly what he did prove.

The homosexual community welcomes the idea that sex perversion begins in the chromosomes. It could gain them civil-rights protections accorded any “*natural*” minority, in which the legal linchpin is the question of an “*immutable*” characteristic.

Kenneth Klivington also of the Salk Institute points to a body of evidence showing the brain's neural networks reconfigure themselves according to certain experiences. In people reading Braille after becoming blind, the area of the brain controlling the reading fingers grew larger.

There will doubtless be a determined attempt to get straight people to accept the unnatural sexual orientation of homosexuals. Many will insist that homosexuals be accepted into all churches and placed in pulpits, if they want to preach. A battle is gathering.

Our interest is in what the Bible says on the subject. If the Word of God approves unnatural sex, we dare not oppose it. If the Bible condemns homosexuality, we dare not approve it. If homosexual practice is sin, it is not happenstance. If it is merely an accident of birth, it is not sin.

The law of Moses is explicit in condemning homosexuality as a sin worthy of death.

Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination (Lev. 18:22).

If a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them (Lev. 20:13).

Homosexuality is put on the same level as men or women who have sex with a beast (Lev. 20:15-16).

Sodom is a hiss and a byword. A modern dictionary says of Sodom *"a city destroyed by fire because of the sinfulness of its people."* The word Sodomy comes from Sodom and the same dictionary defines it as: *"Any sexual intercourse held to be abnormal bestiality; specifically anal intercourse between two male persons."*

The Bible says,

Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly (Gen. 13:13).

Jehovah said,

Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous.

There were not 10 righteous men in Sodom (Gen. 18:26-32). The men of Sodom insisted on having sex with other men (Gen. 19:1-13). The Word of God calls this iniquity (Gen. 19:5).

God made fearful destruction of Sodom.

And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the Plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace (Gen. 19:28).

The desolation of this evil place – a veritable slimepit – declares to all who have ears to hear and eyes to see that the God of heaven hates homosexuality.

The Bible often speaks of Sodom as despicable – scummy, shabby, sorry – and deserving condemnation and destruction. **Moses** says the Jews would be destroyed like Sodom if not loyal to Jehovah (Deut. 29:23; 32:32). **Isaiah** speaks of the utter dereliction and abandonment of the putrid, rotten, foul-smell of Sodom (Isaiah 1:9-10; 3:9; 13:19). **Jeremiah** speaks of Sodom as the epitome of evil (Jer. 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Lam. 4:6). **Ezekiel** points to the Sodomites as an unspeakable example of every rancid, rank, reeking crime and deserving terrible punishment (Ezek. 16:46; 16:48-49; 16:53; 16:55-56). **Amos** and **Zephaniah** wrote of the shame of Sodom. **Peter, Jude** and **John**, in the New Testament, refer to Sodom and its destruction as a prime example of the unavoidable fate of the impenitent. From the days of Abraham until now the Sodomite is disgusting and worthless.

It is alarming to every right thinking person that some try to dignify the sin of homosexuality as an alternate life-style. If a person speaks out against homosexual behavior, society brands him a crank, and he is condemned as judgmental and stupid. It is queer that some defend the sinner while denouncing the champion of purity.

The New Testament is emphatic in condemning both the active and passive partner

in a homosexual relationship. Bible writers look upon the practice as vile. We must therefore conclude that the Holy Spirit lambastes the strange and debased exercise as especially hateful to God.

Effeminate

Paul speaks of the effeminate as unworthy of eternal life (1 Cor. 6:9). According to Macknight the word effeminate translates a Greek word that

...describes men who suffer themselves to be abused by men, contrary to nature. Hence they are joined here with Sodomites, the name given to those who abused them. The wretches who suffered this abuse were likewise called pathics, and affected the dress and behavior of women.

They are Catamites!
Coffman says,

William Barclay's masterful discussion of homosexuality should be read by every Christian. This was the cancer in Greek life that invaded Rome, and brought the vaunted empire to destruction. Fourteen of the first fifteen Roman emperors practiced this vice...Nero castrated and married a boy called Sporus, which he held as his wife, and at the same time married Pythagoras and called him his husband!

Barclay concludes,

In this particular vice in the time of the early church, the world was lost to shame; and there can be little doubt that was one of the main causes of its degeneracy and final collapse.

Albert Barnes, **Notes on the New Testament**, states:

Effeminate denotes those who give themselves up to a soft, luxurious, and indolent way of living; who make self-

indulgence the grand aim of living. The word applies to the Pathics, or Catamites; those who are given up to wantonness and sensual pleasures, or who are kept to be prostituted to others.

Kept men who yield to the lust of homosexual deviates are as guilty as the perverts who use them. Male prostitutes are gruesome (the same is true of any prostitute).

Paul's condemnation is just:

For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due (Rom. 1:26-27).

Vile passions are disgraceful desires. The women of Lesbos are said by ancient writers to be guilty of the sin of homosexuality. The apostle brands sexual activity between those of the same sex as unnatural – *"their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature."*

Paul says homosexual practice is shameful. The Greeks not only approved this uncleanness but their lawgivers protected those guilty of it. American courts are not far behind the ancient Greek legislators. As far back as the time of Josiah who *"brake down the houses of the Sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord"* (II Kings 23:7), homosexual activity by both men and women has been used in false religious worship. It will come as no surprise if modern false religion defends and protects the abominable thing, and seeks to legalize it.

Men burned in their lust one toward

another, and received in themselves that recompense of their error which was due. It is common in our day to hear about the poor, persecuted sexual deviate who is cast out of society and is despondent. The heart of the American public bleeds for the pervert and woe to the person who speaks up for truth and righteousness.

Paul says homosexuals receive what is due. If they feel guilty, it is because they are guilty. If they feel shame, it is because their conduct is shameful. If they suffer, it is the fruit of their wickedness. We must reap as we sow. That brave law has never been revoked.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life (Gal. 6:7-8).

The law was made

...for fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men, for menstealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine... (1 Tim. 1: 10).

Jehovah turned

...the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds) (II Peter 2:8-9).

If homosexual/effeminacy is an ailment transmitted by virus, bacteria, or germ, or if like

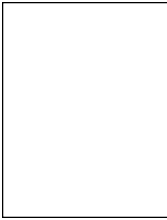
having brown hair, just an accident of birth, then it cannot be condemned as sin. If it is condemned as sin by the God of the Bible, it is sin and therefore not a birth defect or a disease. It is acquired and learned and therefore is described as lawless, lascivious, and a wicked abuse.

Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ).

Chapter 9

UNGODLINESS: DRUGS, ALCOHOL & TOBACCO

WILLIE BRADSHAW



Graduated from Memphis School of Preaching in 1979 • Local work in Paducah, KY and Atlanta, GA • Spoken in lectureships and gospel meetings in over a dozen states • Effective mission worker, speaker for youth gatherings, radio speaker, and song leader • Received numerous awards • Linda and Willie have two sons, Patrick and Gregory.

Introduction

Notice these related Scriptures:

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging;
and whosoever is deceived thereby is not
wise (Prov. 20:1).

And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that
thou mayest see (Rev. 3:18).

Salve is any soothing or healing ointment applied to wounds, burns or sores. Examples with which we are familiar is Visine or Murine.

Some one said "*Don't knock what you haven't tried.*" A doctor does not have to give birth to a baby to advise an expectant mother. One does not have to walk out in front of a car...

There is enough being said about drugs, alcohol and tobacco to **stay away**.

This Lesson Is To Show:

1. The danger of alcohol and drug abuse.
2. There is no safe amount.

3. Warning from the Bible that it is a sin.
4. Before one can be helped with an alcohol, tobacco or drug abuse problem, he/she must admit there is a problem.
5. There is help available from God and man.
6. No one is immune. It can happen to anyone.

Drug Abuse Defined:

"Use of drugs for non medical reasons in an attempt to influence the mind and body, an attempt to alter the emotions, to change the senses, to escape from reality."

We are not referring to proper use of drugs prescribed by a physician to correct an imbalance of a person's body.

There are three basic classifications of drugs: (1) Stimulants, (2) Depressants, and (3) Hallucinogens.

A Bible Subject

Drugs and alcohol and its abuse is definitely a Bible subject and the Bible clearly condemns it. The following reasons can be offered: (1) It is an enemy to your health; (2) The companion of crime; (3) A home wrecker; (4) Physical, mental, spiritual and social damage; (5) Liquor is a bitter taskmaster.

In the United State there are more than 96 million men and women (more than two-thirds of our adult population) who use beverages containing alcohol. There are more than 10 million who have become problem drinkers or alcoholics by taking that first drink.

Some say there is nothing wrong with **drugs, alcohol** and **tobacco**. Friend, you may

need some **salve** in your eye so you can see.

We can see and understand what we want to see.

II Peter 3:5 – Scoffers, walking after their own lusts. For this they willingly are ignorant of.

Romans 1:28 – And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

Jeremiah 6:16 – But they said, we will not walk therein.

Malachi 1:2 – Wherein hast thou loved us?

Malachi 1:6 – Wherein have we despised thy name?

Malachi 1:7 – Wherein have we polluted thee?

Malachi 2:17 – Wherein have we wearied him?

Malachi 3:8 – Wherein have we robbed thee?

Hosea 11:7 – And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most high, none at all would exalt him.

Alcohol Use Affects The Family

Family stability

Family unity

Family values

Family attitudes

Family mental health

Family physical health

Family pocket books

Characteristics Of Drunkenness

Irrational behavior. Ephesians 5:18:

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit.

In Genesis 9:20-21, we read of Noah being drunk and was uncovered within his tent.

Impaired consciousness. Genesis 19:31-35 tells of daughters lying with their father. This is not new today.

Inability to reason. Proverbs 31:4-5,

It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink.

The reason for not drinking was lest they drink and forget the law and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

Use of drugs and alcohol surrounded by evils.

(1) Crime.

(2) Immorality

(3) Degradation, job, school and church.

I Thessalonians 5:22 states,

Abstain from all appearance of evil.

The National District Attorney Association listed some cases of drug abuse. All drugs and narcotics do harm to either the body or mind or both.

1. Belief that medicine can solve every problem. Medicine shelves are full in parents' home; a pill for every pain or problem. If we eat too much, we demand Di-gel. If we are sleepy, take No-Doze. If we can't sleep, take Sleep-eze. We take uppers, downers, and get a'rounders. Some take pills just so they can make it through worship, because they can not stand someone and they get on their nerves.

2. Dissatisfaction with the establishment. Many don't like their home, school, government and they rebel. Instead, they should offer some constructive advice. In a few years, they will be the establishment.

Parents, teach your children to respect

authority (Eph. 6:1-3; Rom. 13:1-7). This respect should include school teachers, the elders, etc.

3. Desire for easy solution, and escape from reality. When you come to yourself, the light bill still needs to be paid.

4. Increasing, permissiveness in homes. Giving children everything they want is not giving them what they need. Parents need to exercise discipline in the home.

5. Peer group pressures. Too many children will not listen to instruction, but instead have to learn the hard way.

The Bible Condemns Alcohol, Tobacco And Drug Abuse

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are Gods (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Romans 13:13 forbids drunkenness.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Paul in Galatians 5:16-26 included the "*... and such like.*"

Proverbs 20:1,

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby **is not wise.**

Isaiah 5:11-12,

WOE unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them ... but they regard not the work of the Lord.

Notice the key verses of Proverbs 23:29-35.

- Verse 29.** Who hath woe?
Who hath sorrow?
Who hath contentions?
Who hath babbling?
Who hath wounds without cause?
Who hath redness of eyes?
- Verse 30.** They that tarry long at the wine;
they that go to seek mixed wine.
- Verse 31.** Look not thou upon the wine
when it is red, when it giveth
his colour in the cup, when it
moveth itself aright.
- Verse 32.** At the last it biteth like a serpent,
and stingeth like an adder.
- Verse 33.** Thine eyes shall behold strange
women, and thine heart shall
utter perverse things.
- Verse 34.** Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth
down in the midst of the sea, or
as he that lieth upon the top of
the mast.
- Verse 35.** They have stricken me, Shalt thou
say, and I was not sick; they have
beaten me, and I felt it not:
When shall I awake? I will seek
it yet again.

Conclusion

The church needs to know or make available institutions where members of the church may seek help if needed.

"Why preach on alcohol and drug abuse ... no one in the church of Christ is doing that."

You need some salve in your eye that you mayest see.

How shall we walk? Galatians 5:22-26,

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

How shall we think? Philippians 4:4-9,

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things**. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

What should we teach? Titus 2:11-12,

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

What must I do to be saved? Hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17); repent of your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30); confess Jesus Christ as the

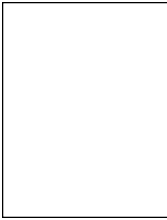
Son of God (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10); be baptized (immersed) in water, for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16).

This makes you a member of the body of Christ, the church of Christ, the one you read about in the Bible.

Chapter 10

UNGODLINESS: TV, MUSIC, VIDEOS & PORNO

TONY LAWRENCE



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Introduction

Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall; at the time I visit them they shall be cast down saith Jehovah (Jer. 6:15).

The words of Jeremiah ring loud and true in modern American society. It seems that from the vulgar language spoken by some of the news anchors to the lewd performances by such rock stars as Madonna and Prince, that there is almost nothing taboo today. Society has become so brazened and seared in its conscience that nothing could shame it. This lesson will concentrate on three related forms of ungodliness which the child of God must face in this crooked and perverse generation. It will be important to first consider *what* is happening, then to consider *why* these things are ungodly biblically, and finally to see *how* the Christian can deal with the problem.

The Current Problem

The number of avenues through which lewd and indecent material can come seems to be increasing daily. At one time the pornographic materials were confined to "peep shows" in the seedy parts of town, and the "under-the-counter" girly magazines. Today, pornography can be attained on the telephone through "dial-a-porn," on the family television set by means of video tapes and cable, on the radio in the form of graphic lyrics, at the art exhibits, in addition to being purchased in printed form at national chain bookstores and convenience stores. To use the words of Scripture,

Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions (Eccl. 7:29).

One could literally fill a book with specific, concrete instances where sinful and ungodly deeds are being practiced in our nation daily. As the topic of this lecture suggests, the T.V., Videos, and printed pornography have contributed greatly to this problem. Even the casual observer is aware that things have gotten progressively worse over the past few years. With the increase of cable channels (and their lack of restraints), the broadcast networks have pushed the limits of immorality to keep pace with the competition. On cable channels one can see almost any sexually deviant behavior. Open sex, vulgarity, and innuendo are common offerings. Children are growing up in a generation which is mentally molested by such influential mediums such as MTV. Cable offers movie channels which pipe unbridled lust and licentiousness right into the home. Often, children watch R-rated movies

with no parental supervision. If it is on the T.V., it must be O.K. Children (and adults) are being exposed to sexually explicit language and outright hard core pornography. Feeling the pressure to compete, the networks have tried to present somewhat toned down versions, but still ever testing the limits of what may be shown. Many of the more popular new shows, like the ones on the FOX network are nothing more than trash T.V. And, when one also considers the advent of the video tape movies, there has been a proliferation of ungodly material flooding into homes. Contrast the movies of just 20-30 years ago to those of today. Even the so-called religious oriented movies reflect this. The reverent and dignified **Ten Commandments** and **Jesus of Nazereth** are a far cry from the modern **Last Temptation Of Christ**.¹ Just what effect all of this video garbage is having on our children is probably immeasurable.

One must also consider the proliferation of other pornographic sources such as books, magazines, and other printed forms. These have been around much longer and their effect is quite well documented. Several reports have shown that there is a strong connection between such magazines as **Hustler, Playboy, and Penthouse**.² The big difference is that in today's society these forms have attained a sense of legitimacy. Sin will continue to be sin regardless of how much sophistication it may attain!

In addition to the video and printed versions of pornography, there is an increasing rise in another type. It goes under the guise of "art." There has literally been a battle in the U.S. Congress over funding for the **National Endowment for the Arts**. Over the past few

years some very controversial exhibits have been funded through the NEA, and this has caused a stir among many moral citizens. Some of it has been deeply anti-christian, and some has been additionally sexually graphic. Some, including this author, have written their Congressmen and Senators encouraging them to withhold funding from the NEA until they quit supporting these immoral, pornographic exhibits. However, the Congress passed the funding bill by a margin of 214 to 205, and the Senate by a 73-25 vote.³ Anyone who investigates this and has any moral conscience whatsoever will be totally repulsed by what is going on. However, some religious people have attempted to chide those who would call for removal of offensive materials. One man has written:

Third, when Christians get into the business of censoring or controlling, we run the risk of silencing an important message of an artist, even if it comes to us obscenely packaged. Some of the art forms are truly anti-religious and offensive to many Christians; on the other hand, to feel angry at God, angry toward religious authorities, or toward religious institutions is a fairly intense and widely shared emotion and as such deserves depiction. While I may not appreciate certain depictions of Jesus, Mary, or the cross, one may understand them. ... One person's art is another person's poison. But I had rather err in generosity on the side of the artist than in caution on the side of the censorious public.⁴

When one gives an honest appraisal of the current situation, the United States, among many other nations are deeply mired in a pit of smut and filth. It appears that there is almost nothing today that can be considered indecent. The

Supreme Court, in *Miller vs California*, (June, 1973) gave the following guideline regarding what may be considered obscene:

The basic guidelines for the trier of the fact must be (a) whether the average person, applying contemporary community standards would find the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest, ... (b) whether the work depicts or describes in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law, and (c) whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

However, this quite specific judgment is practically meaningless today. The “*community standards*” clause has been the key element in opposing obscenity, but those places which have attempted to challenge its promoters have found this to be very difficult. The gradual desensitization of society has left communities which are no longer ashamed at such material and certainly cannot blush.

The Biblical Condemnation

The sincere student of the Bible experiences a deep sense of regret and shame over our current moral situation. Like Jeremiah, it brings tears to the eyes for what our people have done (Jer. 8:18-9:1). In reality these are sins against God and those which sent Jesus to the cross!

There is one major element in pornography (in all its forms) and that is **LUST**. It appeals to an unholy desire within man. It entices, stimulates, and arouses tendencies which are specifically condemned. To make a proper biblical response one must consider the biblical evidence as to *why* it is sinful.

The biblical evidence will start with the word "nakedness." In the King James Version, the word "naked" appears 47 times and the word "nakedness" 57 times. In the beginning Adam and Eve were naked and did not realize the shame associated with it because of their innocence (Gen. 2:25). However, after eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they became aware of their nakedness and made themselves aprons of fig leaves (Gen. 3:7). This was a sure sign that they had attained a knowledge of good and evil, and they knew that going around naked was evil. God's attitude toward nakedness is further illustrated in the instructions to the priest to wear "linen breeches" to cover their nakedness when going up on the altar (cf. Exod. 20:26; 28:42). Though the primary intent of Leviticus 20:17-21 is incestuous relationships, the fact is that verse 17 states that it is a "wicked thing" for a man to see "her nakedness, and she see his nakedness."

Nakedness is often associated with shame in the Bible (Exod. 32:25; Isa. 20:4; 47:3; Micah 1:11; Nahum 3:5; Rev. 3:18; 16:15). Pornography attempts to remove the shame of nakedness and use it to promote lust and desire.

The evidence of the sinfulness of pornography will continue with a discussion of lust and illicit desire. The word "lust," in all of its forms, appear some 54 times in the Bible. The idea of lust appears in many more passages. Perhaps one of the clearest passages which stresses the idea is found in James 1:13-15,

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he

is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.
Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth
forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth
forth death.

Lust is the desire within man to fulfill some passion. The passion may be for material things, power, or self-gratification of the body. Lust is a stepping stone to sin. It can either be suppressed and displaced with righteous things or else it can be fostered and fulfilled. Jesus *“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15). Sin does not exist in the temptation itself, but in the giving in to the desire. Paul told Titus that Christians should deny *“ungodliness and worldly lusts”* (Titus 2:12). Jesus spoke of the sinfulness of a man who would look (present participle in the original indicates a continual looking) on a woman to (Greek: **pros** means *“in order to”*) lust, has already committed adultery with her in his heart. In this passage there is more than a simple glance. It is one who has a desire to look on a woman to lust and fantasize about her. This is exactly what pornography was designed to do!

There is a specific Biblical word which describes the subject under consideration. It is largely a neglected word in our modern vocabulary. The word is *“lascivious”* (Greek: **aselgeia**). The word is defined as,

... unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence... wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc.⁵

The places where this original word is found obviously connects it together with immoral lusts

(cf. Mark 7:22; Rom. 13:13; II Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; I Peter 4:3; II Peter 2:7,18; Jude 4). Today's pornographical products fall squarely under the condemnation of lascivious ways!

There is no doubt that the lewd, immoral material which is being promoted in our society is wrong and sinful. From the naked bodies to the suggestive speech, God's law is being violated. These things are not from God but are a product of the world.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (I John 2:15-17).

The Christian Response

The Christian is bombarded daily with wicked and vile acts through the mediums which have been described. The Bible offers encouragement for the child of God that he can survive in a sinful world, though it may vex him indeed. Peter, writing to suffering Christians stated that God,

... delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds): the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment (II Peter 2:7-9 ASV).

The Christian must live in the world, but he need not live like the world. In living different

from the world, however, the Christian will likely be reproached (I Peter 4:4) and made to think himself strange (I Peter 4:12) because he opposes such.

As a Christian, one must refuse to participate and fellowship ungodly activities. Paul told the Ephesians:

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light (Eph. 5:8-13).

Christians are light and must reprove and expose what is sinful. Under no circumstances should the child of God participate and be party to that which they are to condemn. Paul clearly charged:

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thess. 5:21,22).

Sometimes silence means approval (cf. Obad. 11)!

The Christian must learn that they must not place themselves in positions to compromise their Christianity. Specifically, Paul told the Romans:

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof (Rom. 13:13,14).

The phrase *"make not provision"* is very significant. A person should keep himself from any

situation where his faith should be unnecessarily tested. It is as Solomon warned his son:

Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away (Prov. 4:15).

Sin has its allurements, and the wise Christian will attempt to stay as far away from it as he can. The solution is to fill one's life with good and holy and there will not be either time or place for the wicked and vile.

The Christian must avoid the attitude of tolerance, for sin affects everyone, and the sins involved in pornography are not victimless. Righteousness and holiness are characteristics not only of individuals, but also of nations (Prov. 14:34). It has been clearly demonstrated that pornography has been the impetus that has moved many a person into criminal behavior of rape, child molestation, and other similar types of criminal behavior. Pornography is not for anybody. It affects the whole of society when the passions of men are aroused. Jeremiah described those who,

... every one neighed after his neighbour's wife (Jer. 5:8).

Peter speaks of those who,

Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin (II Peter 2:14).

One cannot be even tolerant of sin, for sins such as these will soon affect us and our family. David's looking at Bathsheba bathing and the subsequent certainly affected Uriah!

A person might wonder why God allowed man to have such strong passion if there was not a righteous outlet? The answer is there is a righteous outlet. God will judge those who defile the bed

through fornication, but His blessing is on the husband and wife who celebrate their love for one another (Heb. 13:4). Solomon freely speaks:

Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? (Prov. 5:15-20).

Paul stressed that the marriage relationship was to avoid fornication, and that in the marriage the bodies were shared,

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. (1 Cor. 7:2-4).

In a Christian home there is no need for the artificial stimulus, the husband and wife are free to enjoy their love together. Anything outside of that relationship is unholy. Those not yet married, or who do not plan to marry should keep themselves from any situation which would heighten their desire for which they do not have a scriptural way to fulfill.

Concluding Thoughts

When the grace of God appeared, it not only

brought “*should’s*” it brought some “*should not’s*.” The instruction is to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts while striving for soberness, righteousness, and godliness. The current situation which exists in our society makes it extremely difficult for the child of God to enjoy popular music, watch an entertaining movie, or even read some magazines. The pervasiveness of the sexually immoral material means that sometimes we might have to give up some of the things which we would otherwise like to enjoy to maintain steadfastly our Christianity. Sometimes the only solution is removal. God took righteous Lot out of Sodom and Gommorah. We may have to remove some things from our life as well to stay among the righteous.

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes (Psm. 101:3).

Endnotes

1 This writer has not seen the movie and does not intend to do so. Its blasphemous and repugnant content has been well-chronicled by several reputable news sources like that of **TIME** magazine.

2 The American Family Association produces a Journal edited by Donald Wildmon. In this monthly publication one reads of the strong connection between pornography and deviant behavior.

3 Cf. AFA Journal, January 1992, pp. 17-21.

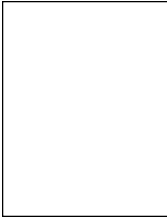
4 Perry C. Cotham, “Rights and Responsibilities: A Christian Perspective,” **INTEGRITY**, Vol. 22, No. 6, November/December 1991, p. 94.

5 Joseph Henry Thayer, **A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament**, (Wheaton, IL: Evangel Publishing Co, 1974), pp. 79,80.

Chapter 11

N. T. PERILOUS TIMES COMPARED TO TODAY

PAUL SAIN



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Introduction

The apostle Paul stated clearly,

This know also, that in the last days **perilous times shall come**,... (II Tim. 3:1).

Without fear of contradiction, these times are perilous times! If we note the thoughts immediately following the above reference, we find the inspired Scripture explaining,

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with

divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (II Tim. 3:2-7).

Does it not appear that the above words were written as a description of the time in which WE live, not necessarily for those of the first century times? We find our world accurately and vividly depicted in these strong words of denunciation.

The apostle Paul knew that the road ahead, for those who chose to follow Christ would not be smooth. He knew that Christians especially would suffer (II Tim. 3:12), and find it necessary to endure hardships (II Cor. 11:23-28), afflictions (II Tim. 1:8; 4:5) and trials (II Tim. 2:3). In fact, note the additional references he made of the departures that would take place, as he wrote to Timothy,

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, ... (I Tim. 4:1-3a).

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (II Tim. 4:2-4).

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived (II Tim. 3:13).

Christians In The First Century

As we note the warnings and exhortations of the writers of Scripture, we are increasingly aware of the prevalent problems they faced.

Paul's warnings included: (1) Not being entangled with the affairs of this life (II Tim. 2:4), (2) Youthful lusts (II Tim. 2:22), (3) Whoremongers and homosexuals (I Tim. 1:10; I Cor. 6:9), (4) Flee the love of money (I Tim. 6:10-11), (5) Fornication (I Cor. 6:18), (6) Worship of idols (I Cor. 6:9), (7) Stealing and being covetous (I Cor. 6:10), – *"for some are already turned aside after Satan"* (I Tim. 5:15). In fact, while addressing the Corinthians, he referred to their past sinful activities, saying,

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (I Cor. 6:11).

Christians in the first century faced great temptation. Sin, with its appealing pleasure, was to them, as it is for us today, enticing. They lived in the world, but as God's people, sought to keep the world out of them.

Christians In The Twentieth Century

If we take Paul's specific instruction to God's people, as recorded in Galatians 5:19-21 or Romans 1:29-32, it appears as though he is writing directly to Christians in our day. The temptations the Christians faced then are our problems today. The ways in which they transgressed then, are also the ways in which we today transgress.

Satan will utilize any and all devices to entrap, capture and seduce a child of God. Of

the many allurements, these few often stand out: materialism (love of money, covetousness, envy), sexual immorality (adultery, fornication, homosexuality, pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity), selfishness, abuses of the physical body, etc.

We have heard the phrase "*the new immorality*" used to describe the sinful actions of ones today. But the "*new immorality*" is nothing more nor less than the "*old immorality.*" People worshipped the golden calf in the day of Moses – people worship many gods today (god of money, god of pleasure, sexual god, etc.). The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their repulsive sexual lifestyle – but tragically today there are many who are guilty of the same thing. The chief priests and rulers of the Lord's day refused to give up their positions of power and prestige to follow the Lord – many religious people today would not think about changing, even if they knew beyond doubt that what they were doing was wrong. In the first century, folks loved the praise of men more than the praise of God – likewise today, many are not at all interested in the way of God, if it means not being popular, powerful, or changing their life. Upon viewing the sinless life of the Son of God, many continued to reject His appeal to follow Him – today, upon reading of the precious invitation of Christ to obey Him, in order to have their sins washed away, many still refuse.

Satan is alive. Satan is constantly busy, seeking whom he can devour. If Satan does not have you, he wants you!

When we consider the avenues of immorality that scream at God's people with

enticing pleasures, we are especially concerned about our young people and their faithfulness.

Follow The Example Of The Apostle Paul

In II Timothy 3:10-11 we read,

... thou hast known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions which came unto me ... what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

Doctrine. Paul believed and taught the doctrine of Christ, the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16). He told the Galatians that some had perverted the gospel (doctrine) and if he (or even an angel) preached another gospel, he would be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9). To Timothy he exhorted,

... the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (II Tim. 2:2).

Doctrine is important. The doctrine of Christ is the only saving one (John 8:32; James 1:21-25). Doctrines and commandments of men are worthless, vain (Matt. 15:7-9).

Manner Of Life (Conduct). From the time of the Lord appearing to him as he traveled the road to Damascus, he followed the way of righteousness. Obviously, he was not perfect (sinless). But he lived in all good conscience (Acts 23:1). He served the Lord at a great price personally, giving up many earthly prestigious honors or positions. He willingly bore the marks of a persecuted child of God (II Cor. 11:23-28).

Toward the end of his life, this servant of the risen Savior said,

For I am now ready to be offered, and the

time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day ... (II Tim. 4:6-8).

Faith. His faith was firmly based upon God!
As declared to his son-in-the-faith Timothy,

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (II Tim. 1:12).

The Hebrew writer, whom I believe to be Paul, defined faith (Heb. 11:1) and then spoke of the impossibility of pleasing God without it (Heb. 11:6).

Paul had a great faith. His faith was daily demonstrated in action. His preaching was motivated by faith in the Master. His faith made it possible for him to confidently say,

... there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day ... (II Tim. 4:8).

Let us likewise live (walk) by faith, and not by sight (II Cor. 5:7).

Longsuffering. The enemies of Paul were many, and often vicious. His Christ-like spirit of loving them in spite of their bitterness toward him, in spite of their angry actions that sought to defeat him, in spite of the great afflictions and weariness they brought him – should be our example.

Charity (Love). This great soldier was a man of great spiritual strength. He was willing to stand before the rulers and men of great power and proclaim the unadulterated gospel of Christ, even if it meant his death. But this faithful fighter was a

person of equally great love. It was his love for each soul that is worth more than the whole world (Matt. 16:26) that prompted him to so teach, serve, plead, exhort and live.

Concerning the Romans and their obedience to the Lord, Paul lovingly stated,

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved (Rom. 10:1).

His heart of love was able to care and pray for those who had mistreated and hated him.

Patience. In his faithfulness to God, Paul viewed life as a time of serving Christ, and to die was to be gain (Phil. 1:21). He patiently bore all "*that which cometh upon me daily*" (I Cor. 11:28), and much more, for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul warned all followers to be aware that afflictions and suffering would be theirs to bear, if they faithfully served God (II Tim. 3:12). He was able to know this first-hand.

Persecutions / Afflictions. Paul had suffered so greatly! He had been beaten, stoned, scourged, put in prison, shipwrecked, in perils of robbers and his own countrymen (II Cor. 11:23-28).

Today, we surely must possess an attitude of doing that which is right and refusing to do (and even opposing) that which is wrong – and letting the chips fall where they may. God has required this of His servants.

Paul remembered distinctly the many times of suffering, but graciously states that, **The Lord Delivered Him.** His faith in God was great. He gave the credit to the Lord.

The Lord had delivered him from vicious enemies. It was the Lord that took care of him and gave him up to his friends when he had been left for dead by his enemies.

God will take care of His people today! He instructs us to cast all of our cares on Him (I Peter 5:7). He is our high priest, who can be touched with the infirmities of our lives (Heb. 4:15).

Our Promise – Victory In Heaven

The Lord has promised that we can be victorious in our journey through this life, toward our heavenly goal. Though we face scores of temptations, we remember,

... God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Cor. 10:13).

Man must put forth the effort to "*resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7); "*resist steadfast in the faith*" (I Peter 5:8-9). If we "*Draw nigh to God*" He will draw nigh to you (James 4:8).

By such determination and faithfulness, we will be able to say with the apostle Paul,

... thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:57).

Conclusion

In order to please the Lord, and thereby receive heaven as our final and eternal home, we must follow His will. First, we must become a child of His (Gal. 3:26-27; John 3:3-5). This is accomplished by taking the action prescribed by the Lord: **Faith** (John 8:24); **Repentance** (Luke 13:3); **Confession** (Matt. 10:32-33); and **Baptism** (Mark 16:16).

Second, it is absolutely essential that we continue faithful, unto the end of our life upon this earth. In I Corinthians 15:58 we find,

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Matthew 10:22 states,

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

We find a similar statement in the latter part of Revelation 2:10,

... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

The world and all the works therein will be destroyed; burned up with fervent heat (II Peter 3:9-11). Why then would anyone desire to place their trust, time, and efforts in the temporary things of this world. Why would they not fervently desire to "*lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*" (Matt. 6:20), and "*seek those things which are above ... set your affections on things above*" (Col. 3:1-2).

The Lord wants everyone to be saved (I Tim. 2:4). Everyone will not be saved (Matt. 7:13-14). From the words of the loving Savior Himself, we learn that only those who do "*the will of the Father which is in heaven*" (Matt. 7:21) will inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Section III

DOCTRINE OF GOD

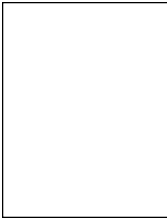
VS.

DOCTRINES OF MEN

Chapter 12

ADORNING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

BILL CANTRELL



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Introduction

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Titus 2:7-10).

The focus for our study will be in verse ten, "... *that they may **adorn the doctrine of God** our Saviour in all things.*" In analyzing the phrase one quickly observes five things: (1) There is a doctrine; (2) It is of God; (3) God is our Saviour; (4) The doctrine is to be adorned, and (5) It is to be adorned in all things.

In connection to the word **doctrine**, three

observations can be made: (1) There is a doctrine, (2) It is of God (God is its' source), and (3) It is to be adorned.

In our study we will consider the topic by developing thoughts around two key words.

First, we will consider the word **doctrine**.

Second, we will consider the word **adorn**.

The Doctrine

The word doctrine comes from the word "*didaskalia*." It denotes teaching or instruction as in Romans 12:7 and Romans 15:4. It also refers to teaching in the sense of that which is taught, doctrine as in Ephesians 4:14, I Timothy 1:10; I Timothy 4:6; I Timothy 6:1,3; II Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; Titus 2:1,10. This particular word occurs a total of twenty-one times in the New Testament, nineteen times it is rendered doctrine. There are various ways the teachings of the New Testament are identified.

They are called **the gospel, gospel of Christ or of God**.

For I am not ashamed of the **gospel of Christ**: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

Moreover brethren I declare unto you the **gospel** which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain ... (I Cor. 15:1-2; cf. I Cor. 1:17; 4:15; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 1:13; I Peter 1:25).

They are also referred to as **the word, word of God, and word of Christ**.

For the **word of God** is quick and powerful,

and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

Let the **word of Christ** dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16).

Howbeit many of them which heard the **word** believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand (Acts 4:4; cf. Acts 2:41; 6:2,4,7; 8:4; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 5:26; Col. 3:16; James 1:18).

They are further called **the faith**.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth **the faith** which once he destroyed (Gal. 1:23; cf. Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 16:5; Rom. 1:5).

They are also recognized as **the truth**.

Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth** (John 17:17).

... that they all might be damned who believed not **the truth**, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of **the truth** ... (II Thess. 2:12-13; cf. Acts 26:25; Rom. 2:8; Gal. 2:5,14; 3:1; 5:7; Col. 1:5; I Tim. 2:4).

In connection with the truth, there are several considerations worthy of note. It is indeed strange and disappointing to see how the gospel of Jesus Christ is dealt with in the religious world as well as in the body of Christ by some. The gospel is approached as though truth is relative rather than absolute. They sound and act as though truth cannot be ascertained, therefore stand for nothing and fall for anything. As lovers of truth, we **must** recognize some fundamental facts.

There Is An Absolute Standard Of Truth

By absolute I mean perfect, complete or whole. It is actual or real and is not left to the whims of men to decide what the truth is. The truth is absolute because:

(1) It is of God.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Tim. 3:16-17).

For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12). Note that '*the word of God*' is not just any word but THE WORD which is of God (Acts 4:29,31; 6:2,7; 8:14,25; Rom. 10:17; I Thess. 1:8; 2:13, etc).

(2) It is complete and final.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:13).

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).

(3) It will be the standard by which we will be judged.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty (James 2:12).

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened and another book was opened which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to the works (Rev. 20:12).

(4) It is the rule by which we all are to walk.

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing (Phil. 3:16).

If there is no absolute standard of truth then everyone is left to do that which is right in his own eyes. There must be a return to the Bible as the inspired, infallible and authoritative Word of God. It is the absolute truth that regulates and directs our life, worship and teaching.

Truth Can Be Known

In response to the declaration of Jesus, "*... for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice,*" Pilate said, "*what is truth?*" (John 18:37-38). Some today are asking the same question! Can truth be known? I am

convinced one can know the truth.

Truth can be known because the Bible emphatically declares so.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31-32).

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (1 Tim. 4:3).

I have not written unto you because you know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth (1 John 2:21).

Truth can be attained because it is the will of God.

Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).

The fact that God desires us to know the truth and through, or by, His Holy Spirit has revealed the truth in language that can be understood is sufficient to establish the case. One who does not know the truth can not blame God.

It is evident that truth can be known in light of the fact that truth produces faith. The word of God is truth (John 17:17).

The word of God produces faith.

So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17).

And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized (Acts 18:8).

If truth cannot be known, then it would follow that no one could possibly know if he believed in the right thing.

The fact that truth can be known is evident from the fact it is to be obeyed.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently (I Peter 1:22).

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you (Rom. 6:17).

Truth can also be known in view of the fact that our lives are to be directed by it.

It is not in man that walks to direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23). In light of man's inability, he stands in need of a standard by which he can be properly directed.

I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father (II John 4).

For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth (III John 3-4; cf. I John 1:7; II John 6, 9-11).

The Truth Must Be Known

The truth (gospel, Word of God, etc.) not only is an absolute standard, and can be known, but also must be known. This makes knowing the truth imperative. One of the devil's greatest tools is ignorance of the will of God (Hosea 4:6; Judg. 2:10; Jer. 4:22; John 15:21; Acts 17:23). Let it be

said of us as faithful members of the church of Jesus Christ as it was of the Bereans:

These were more noble than those of Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).

There are several reasons why we must know the truth.

First, we must know the truth **to prepare us to stand against the devil's attack.**

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ... (Eph. 6:10-17).

When our Lord was tempted of the devil, He handled His encroachment with "*It is written*" (Matt. 4:1-10).

We must know the truth **to keep ourselves from sin.** The Psalmist of old declared,

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee... (Psm. 119:11).

Those who are blessed by God are those who hear the Word of God and keep it (Luke 11:28).

Another reason we must know the truth is **to stop the mouths of those teaching contrary to the revealed Word of God.**

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine ... (I Tim. 1:3).

Paul's instruction to Titus regarding the qualifications of elders included the admonition to,

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers (Titus 1:9).

We must be ready to contend for the faith by giving verbal defense for what we believe (Jude 3; I Peter 3:15).

We must know the truth **to teach and extend salvation to the lost.**

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16). (Also compare: Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 8:1-4; II Tim. 2:2).

Finally, we must know the truth **to be saved eternally.**

One cannot keep the commandments of God if he is ignorant of them, or does not know to do them. Thus since being saved eternally is conditional upon keeping the Lord's commandments, and since keeping His commandments is conditional upon knowing them, then it seems to follow that one must **know** the commandments to be saved eternally.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of

life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14; cf. II Thess. 1:7-9; John 12:48; Rev. 1:3).

The Truth Must Be Loved

There is to be within each of us a burning love for the eternal truth of God. Whether in private study, home Bible studies, or in the heat of controversy, our intense desire should be to know the truth. We must be committed to what is right and not who is right. David the great psalmist of old in Psalm 119 spoke of his love for God's Word:

And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved (v. 47).

O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day (v. 97).

Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it (v. 140).

I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love (v. 163).

Love is directly connected to keeping God's commandments.

And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it (II John 6; cf. John 14:15, 21-24).

A failure to love the truth will result in deception and condemnation (II Thess. 2:10-12). In consideration of love for the truth, let me suggest four important reasons for it.

First, a love for the truth will help us keep our motives pure. There are diverse motives for preaching, teaching, studying, etc. (Phil. 1:15), but a genuine love for the truth will keep our motives pure and clean. It will prepare us to

rightly divide or handle aright the word of truth (II Tim. 2:15), and will equip us to study and learn the truth (not a pre-conceived notion), to teach or instruct in the ways of righteousness rather than to win an argument at any cost. A pure motive demands a search for truth and when found an unwillingness to sell or part with it (Prov. 23:23).

Having a love for the truth will keep our aim clear. Our aim or goal in life should be to know and do the will of our Father. For this to be done, we must walk in His precepts.

If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:6-7).

Having a love for the truth will help us keep our eyes focused on Jesus as we walk in His steps and our hearts firmly rooted in heaven.

There must be a love for truth to keep a firm, scriptural balance. One does not have to listen long or travel far to realize that too many of our preachers, teachers, elders and congregations are out of balance scripturally. A love for the truth is necessary to retain our spiritual balance. It will help us avoid the extremes to the right (radicalism) or the left (liberalism). The balance can be found by accepting the Bible and it alone as the final authority in what we say and do.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:17).

A love for the truth will lead us to obey God. A love for the truth will result in one obeying

the truth, and obedience to the truth is evidence of love for God.

If ye love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15).

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him (John 14:21).

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me (John 14:24).

Our lives are to be in harmony with the gospel.

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come to see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27; cf. I Thess. 4:12; James 3:13).

A love for the truth demands a disciplined and well ordered life.

The Truth Must Be Followed

The fact that truth is to be followed (I John 1:7; III John 4) indicates that it serves as a pattern. Some today, even from among our own ranks, seek to convince us that there is no pattern to be followed in religion. Such a doctrine is foreign to New Testament teaching. The word of God clearly and emphatically teaches that there is a pattern to be followed and to go beyond it is to sever one's relationship to God.

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there

come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds (II John 9-11).

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness (I Tim. 6:3).

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us (I John 5:14).

The pattern to be followed is the New Testament, for by it are we able to walk in the footsteps of our Master (I Peter 2:21).

The New Testament serves as our pattern in teaching. Paul charged Timothy:

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine (I Tim. 1:3).

It is not left up to man to decide what he is to preach. When one claims to be a preacher of the gospel, then let him speak as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11). Any man who claims to be a gospel preacher labors under the Divine injunction,

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (II Tim. 4:2).

To deviate from this teaching is to result in condemnation (Gal. 1:6-9). Those causing division and offence contrary to the doctrine are to be marked (Rom. 16:17-18). It serves as our pattern in what to teach regarding the plan of salvation, marriage, divorce and remarriage, resurrection, second coming, women's role in the church, etc. We must give deliberate attention not to go beyond the things written (I Cor. 4:6, ASV).

The New Testament also serves as our pattern in worship. One could be persuaded to believe that there is no pattern in worship by the showboating and entertainment emphasis given in some of them. A worship service is time to give homage to God in reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28). It must be recognized that in worship we labor under heaven's instruction.

*"God is a spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). To worship in truth is to worship as directed or as we are authorized.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:17).

This would forever settle the instrumental music question, hand clapping, and such like if we would but heed Divine instruction.

The New Testament also serves as our pattern in life. Paul admonished:

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27).

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked (I John 2:6).

It serves as our guide in the way we are to think.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Phil. 4:8).

It serves as our guide in the way we are to speak.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man (Col. 4:6).

It serves as our pattern in how we should act.

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy (I Peter 1:15-16).

May every effort be made to stay with the old paths and let those who have departed from them return. Let us determine to have authority for all that we do in word and in deed.

The Doctrine Is To Be Adorned

The word adorned basically means "*to put in order, arrange, make ready, prepare, to ornament, adorn.*" Metaphorically it denotes "*To embellish with honor, gain honor ...*" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 356). The word is used figuratively in Titus 2:10 to denote that one is to embellish, to dignify, to make beautiful or attractive by the orderliness of one's life. By "*denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts,*" and living "*soberly, righteously and godly in this present world,*" dignity and honor are given to the gospel of Christ making it beautiful and attractive.

We give dignity to the gospel by the love we demonstrate.

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:34-35).

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently (I Peter 1:22; cf. I Cor. 13:4-7; I John 4:7,8,20,21).

The doctrine is adorned by the forgiveness demonstrated.

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Eph. 4:32).

Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye (Col. 3:13; Mark 11:25; Luke 17:4).

The gospel is made attractive by the compassion shown.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous (I Peter 3:8).

The truth is dignified by the benevolent attributes manifested.

All that believed were together and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need (Acts 2:44-45).

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

The word of God is honored by a life of holiness and godliness.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:11-12).

But thou, O man of God, flee these things;
and follow after righteousness, godliness,
faith, love, patience, meekness (I Tim. 6:11).

The word of God is beautified by the preaching done. It must be rooted in love.

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ (Eph. 4:15).

It is to be faithful, with the intent of pleasing God, not man.

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man (Gal. 1:10-11; cf. I Peter 4:11; II Tim. 4:2).

We must have the courage of Peter and John as they faced threatenings for their proclamation of the gospel.

... whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:19-20).

The gospel is honored by the stand we take. We must stand for something or we will fall for anything. The church grew when it, in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, also stood firmly and aggressively for the treasures from heaven. Paul said he was "*prepared to defend the faith.*"

But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel (Phil. 1:17).

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (I John 4:1; cf. Jude 3; I Peter 3:15; Titus 1:10-13).

Many other ways no doubt could be listed. I encourage you to study further the ways the doctrine of God can be adorned. It will be an interesting and profitable endeavor.

Conclusion

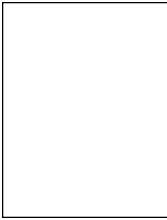
We have basically considered the subject "*Adorning The Doctrine Of God*" by focusing upon two words: **Doctrine** and **Adorning**. In the development of these we noted in connection to doctrine that it is absolute, can and must be known, is to be loved and followed as it serves as our pattern in all we do. In connection to the word adorn, consideration was given to ways the doctrine can be adorned. It can be honored by: the love shown, forgiveness demonstrated, compassion shown, benevolence offered, life of holiness, preaching done and the stand taken.

Let us all be determined to follow the old paths, remove not the ancient landmarks and heed the pattern set forth in the New Testament.

Chapter 13

DOCTRINES OF MEN PREVALENT IN OUR DAY

JOE COX



Preaching for almost twenty years • Held gospel meetings in 73 counties in Texas, plus seven states • Experienced radio and television speaker • Author of several Bible workbooks • Written for many brotherhood papers • Numerous lectureships • Vietnam veteran • A native Texan • Currently works with the church in Beeville, TX • Paula (Eckermann) and Joe have four children.

Introduction

The subject assigned to me is a topic I find tragic and deplorable. There is no joy in having to address the subject of division and those responsible for bringing in damnable heresies causing division among us. The Holy Spirit addressed this very issue in the ominous words of II Timothy 4:3-4,

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

As the Scriptures appropriately point out, it is not just the false teachers who are responsible; multitudes of people had rather have it so. Jeremiah's words are true in every generation,

The **prophets prophesy falsely**, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my

people **love** to have it so... (Jer. 5:31;
emp. mine JEC).

There is a growing movement eating as a cancer on the church of our Lord. This movement is seeking to remove the guidelines, destroy the influence, and to undermine the authority of the Scriptures. This liberal movement is bent on restructuring the worship, work, and organization of the church from the Divine pattern to a human arrangement.

What is simply amazing to me is why we are letting them do it! We have fought valiantly against denominationalism since the inception of the Restoration Movement. And now many seem to be more than willing not only to join the ranks of denominationalism but are dead set on taking all other Christians with them! They refuse to just leave and place membership with these false religions; they want to remain a member of the Lord's church and join the denominational ranks! The Lord's church is no longer the Lord's church when its doctrine is no longer pure but is adulterated with man's doctrine. If it be true that the saved can be found in the ranks of denominations, then the religious body we believe in, termed the "*church of Christ*," has no right to exist. These who believe in denominational salvation stand in an ocean of guilt by **remaining** in a group that is helping cause divisions (I Cor. 1:10).

Now let me make this point crystal clear. I am not opposed to changes that take place within a local congregation involving personal opinions, where God has given us liberty, as long as directives or works do not violate scriptural arrangements or become binding points of fellowship. However, the changes we

are experiencing today in no way fall under the heading of opinion. They are in direct opposition to the *"Divine Pattern"* laid down by Almighty God Himself, and we have not the right, the power, nor authority to change them.

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever, Amen (I Peter 4:11).

We are limited in what we speak or teach to the oracles or *"words"* of God. Again Peter said:

We have also a more **sure** word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (II Peter 1:19-21; emp. mine JEC).

The Bible is a God-given, Spirit-filled book, not a work from the minds of men. It is not a work that man planned or edited, rather the writers knew and understood the obligation levied upon them. Listen as Paul gives inspired commentary on the words of the Scriptures:

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it **is written**, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak (II Cor. 4:13; emp. mine JEC).

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light **of the knowledge** of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6; emp. mine JEC).

For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, **but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ** (II Cor. 2:17; emp. mine JEC).

The words of the Scriptures carry warnings from Christ Himself:

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

If ye love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15).

An individual has to be willingly negligent or bereft of any Scriptural knowledge not to be able to recognize the destructive fruits of liberalism (Matt. 7:16). These fruits are discernible even to one still in the milk of the Word. For the past thirty years "*Society*" has sought to remove **all restraints** that regulate right from wrong. Alcoholism, drug addiction, divorce, fornication, venereal disease, child abuse, homosexuality, and a hedonistic, humanistic attitude have all destroyed the morals and righteousness of our nation.

But ... wait a minute! That can not happen in the church! We're all trying to do the right thing, and these elders and preachers are sincere; they are loving, gentle, and kind!

Isn't it amazing? I just said you would have to be willingly ignorant or completely bereft of any Scriptural knowledge to not be aware of the destructive fruits of liberalism. The same can also be said of those **WHO DO NOT KNOW THE SCRIPTURAL WARNINGS** concerning apostasy:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as **there shall be** false

teachers among you, who privily shall bring in **damnable heresies, even** denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And **many shall follow** their pernicious ways; by reason of whom **the way of truth shall be evil spoken of** (II Peter 2:1-2; emp. mine JEC).

... but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ ... (Gal.1:6-9).

... they that are **unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also** the other **scriptures**, unto their own destruction (II Peter 3:16; emp. mine JEC).

For we are not as many, which **corrupt** the word of God... (II Cor. 2:17; emp. mine JEC).

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, ... even that prophet shall die (Deut. 18:20). Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord (Jer. 23:16).

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed to **seducing** spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron (I Tim. 4:1-2; emp. mine JEC).

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits (Matt. 7:15-16a).

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking **perverse** things, **to draw** away disciples after them. **Therefore**

watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears (Acts 20:29-31; emp. mine JEC).

HOW DO WE VOID THESE WARNINGS? Quite simply, we just invent a "*New Hermeneutic*"! These "*New Hermeneutic*" folks tell us the Scriptures are "*merely love letters*," that Scriptures are "*situational*," only applying to those to whom they were written. This did not work under the Old Testament, and it does not work under the New Testament. When we reject the Word, we have rejected God. Brother Foy Wallace used to point out that the God that created the universe wrote the book, and we cannot separate the Author from His works; they are inseparable.

Those following after "*Something New*" today are not just ignoring Scripture; they are rejecting God, the Author of this inspired Volume. And, **NO ONE CAN SAY THE THINGS BEING TAUGHT AND BELIEVED AMONG MANY TODAY ARE THE THINGS ACCEPTED BY THE CHURCH A GENERATION AGO!** Were we wrong then but right today? Are we wrong today yet right back then?

An examination of some of these "*new teachings*" is not only called for but also demanded. John told us to...

... believe not every spirit, **but try the spirits** whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1; emp.mine JEC).

We are admonished to,

... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Eph. 5:11).

Therefore, with these false doctrines I will also name names of some of the more well-known proponents of these divisive doctrines. Seeing I have already been threatened with a lawsuit, each doctrine and each teacher named will be documented with footnotes. I believe it is Scriptural to name the false teachers; it is not my intent to traduce anyone. I name these names for no other reason than my love for the Truth and my abiding love for the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. My greatest desire in this subject would be that no names could be mentioned because everyone was "*contending for the faith once delivered.*" Paul admonished Timothy,

Them that sin rebuke before all, that
others also may fear (I Tim. 5:20).

Since the New Testament is the **only** guideline and instructional manual we have, I feel safe in following it not only for faith but also for practice.

1. The Continual Compromise Of Christ's Law On Divorce And Remarriage. Man stands in open rebellion to God's laws on worship and morals. Because of our never-ending search for fulfilling every lustful desire we have, man is ever ready to distort or ignore anything in God's Word that does not suit him. The marriage law of Christ in Matthew 19:3-12 is very plain. Marriage was meant for life (Rom. 7:1-3), and the **only** reason for the dissolution of that marriage is the sexual impurity of one of the partners. Since men are not willing to be tied down to any restrictions in their lives, we are willing to find excuses for anything we do. James Bales¹ was not the first to suggest that aliens are not accountable to the teaching of Christ in Matthew

19:9, but certainly his outspoken defense and influence had a tremendous impact on the church. Today, you need a scorecard to keep track of those who are departing from the faith to follow this doctrine of man. Jimmie Allen², Olan Hicks,³ James Woodroof,⁴ and, within the past two years, countless men (once faithful soldiers of Christ) stand guilty of spiritual desertion – a treasonous act of rebellion. Clem Thurman who for years has co-edited **Gospel Minutes** has just recently shown his true colors on this controversial issue. I have in my possession a tape which records his beliefs before the elders, preacher, and a few other couples in Dumas, Texas. With one of my elders present, I called Dillard Thurman in October of 1990. During that conversation he denied agreement with his brother Clem's position, stating that he was not aware of Clem's belief. However, he stated one of the reasons he purchased the old **Vindicator** was because of E. C. Fuqua's false position on this very issue. This all sounds wonderful, yet in **Gospel Minutes** (October 4, 1991), on a question concerning I Corinthians 7:13-15 this statement is found,

She is not to renounce her faith and blindly follow him! Rather she must let him depart! And this leaves her unmarried and free to marry again: the one deserted 'is not under bondage in such cases.'

This mysteriously is signed by Dillard himself! If you are currently subscribing to this paper or know someone who is, please warn them of the doctrines being propagated.

Amazingly that's only the tip of the iceberg. Consider the following:

Preacher, before you recommend celibacy to anyone, you better think. And before you

DEMAND celibacy, you better think TWICE! It was God who said, 'It is not good for man to be alone' (Gen. 2:18). Are you going to DEMAND what God said is not good? It was Christ's chosen apostle who wrote, 'Because of fornication, LET EACH MAN have his own wife, and LET EACH WOMAN have her own husband' (I Cor. 7:2). It does not read because of fornications, I demand you to be celibate the rest of your life.⁵

Brethren, can you imagine such foolish dribble from someone who claims to be a Christian? Wait! There's more:

Paul says that the unmarried may marry. But who are those unmarried ones? There are three kinds: (1) those who have never been married, (2) widows, and (3) divorced persons. (Compare the use of **agamos**, unmarried/single in I Cor. 7:8-11.) Now wait a minute, Paul! You don't mean divorced people may remarry; you must mean 'let them marry, except for the divorced.' Paul makes no exceptions. Let the unmarried marry.⁶

Well, according to these brethren, Matthew 19:9 means absolutely nothing, never did, never will! Matthew 19:9 does not apply to anyone, never did, never will!

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery (Matt. 19:9).

Does any other Scripture forbid remarriage?

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain UNMARRIED, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife (I Cor. 7:10-11; emp. mine JEC).

We ask again, *"Does God really expect celibacy?"*

For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it (Matt. 19:12).

If these men had no following, we could dismiss them simply as misguided dividers in doctrinal error. However, they are pushing their material – sending it into homes and churches from shore to shore. And if you do not think it is having some effect on our thinking, you are dead wrong! I received a questionnaire from an elder this past month, pushing these same views. He has threatened to divide the congregation where he is, and unless he sees the truth in this matter, no doubt it will happen. Please, brethren, do not take doctrinal error lightly. It destroyed the early church, and it can and will happen again unless we take the steps to stop it.

2. The Continual Fostering And Fraternization Of Members Of The Church With The Denominational Bodies. Remember Paul said,

Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Eph. 5:10-11).

We are called to be separated from wickedness and works of Satan,

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (II Cor. 6:17-18).

Despite these warnings and a dozen more, we have many who think nothing of sharing their pulpits with denominational preachers. They take part in religious observances of so-called "*Holy Days*" from Easter sunrise services, Lenten services, Christmas pageants and so forth. As ludicrous as it sounds, I have on tape examples of gospel preachers calling denominational preachers "*Reverend,*" "*Pastor,*" and even a Catholic priest "*Father.*"

Max Lucado,⁷ author of a number of books, has appeared with Presbyterians, Catholics, and Pentecostals and has co-written a book titled **Christ In Easter: A Family Celebration of Holy Week**. When I say "*co-written,*" he linked his name in the observance of a so-called "*Holy Day*" with Billy Graham, Charles Colson, and Joni Eareckson Tada (all denominational teachers). Our brethren are falling all over themselves in a mad rush to hear Max make his denominational compromise, breaking down all barriers between right and wrong.

Periods in the history of the Church of Christ have existed when a fire-and-brimstone attitude transformed the Great Commission into 'Go ye into all the world and condemn it.' ... The more the university grows, the more it will attract members of **other denominations** who are interested in a Christian education. ACU students and faculty must prepare themselves to welcome them as **Christians** who are trying to follow Christ's example and live His philosophy of life. Students should do their best to treat these students as **fellow Christians** and not merely as prospects for conversion. The Great Commission tells Christians to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all men not to condemn them if

they do not **attend** a worship service at a **building with a Church of Christ sign out front** (emp. mine JEC).⁸

Brethren, that appeared on the editorial page in the ACU campus paper the week of their annual lectureship in 1988. These are blasphemous statements a twelve-year Sunday school student should not be guilty of making. And we wonder where on earth could a college student learn something like that! Surely they were taught this at their home congregation; no one in our universities would teach something like this! How naive are our parents and supporters of our Christian colleges! John Stevens, the chancellor of Abilene Christian University, was the final speaker for the Lenten series at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Abilene, March 11, 1989.⁹ When questioned by telephone, John Stevens not only took offense to being questioned about this, but also blatantly charged that he had done things like this for many years, would continue to do so, and saw nothing wrong with it.

Week after week, bulletins cross my desk with notices about upcoming "*interdenominational*" gatherings! Allen Henderson, a recent ACU graduate who preaches in a neighboring town of Beeville, this past year preached at an Easter Sunrise Service at the First United Methodist Church. If that was not bad enough, a Baptist preacher led the prayers and a Methodist **woman** led the singing. Before this event took place, I notified Allen and literally begged him not to put the church in this compromising position. My elders met with him and explained what the Scriptures teach – all to no avail. Then a few weeks later when I opposed Allen speaking at a

retreat put on by some neighboring congregations, I received a strong rebuke. They felt that Allen did or said nothing wrong. Their reasoning was as wrong as Allen's:

(1) You can go anywhere and preach the gospel of Christ.

(2) Paul went into the synagogues and temple, so, therefore, they could also.

My response to number one: Yes, the gospel can and should be preached everywhere if you can do so with the attitude Paul had and the place where you are going does not place you nor the gospel in bad light. No one would presume to go into a *"house of ill repute"* without casting doubts on character or intentions. When a person takes part in a celebration of a *"Religious Holy Day"* with pagan roots, he is compromising what the gospel is and represents. When Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill in the city of Athens, he addressed the topic of false religions and told them the wrong they were committing. At Lystra, Corinth, Philippi, and other places Paul's preaching was intended to convert and teach the truth. He did not choose to speak on topics of AGREEMENT but rather topics which draw lines of distinction between right and wrong. We could very well ask of these today, *"How many have you converted, and have you ever been stoned, run out of town, or left for dead?"*

As to point number two, how can a comparison be drawn between Judaism and the Methodist Church? Judaism was a God-given, God-ordained, God-sanctioned religion whose time had come to an end! Methodism never had a time! God never sanctioned, ordained, or gave Methodism to anyone, anytime, anywhere. It is a tool of Satan as are all man-made *"Denominations"*

– something they have stopped teaching or, at least, stressing at Abilene Christian University. And we've stopped teaching it in our churches! Christ built only one church:

And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

Only those in that church will be saved:

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47).

In the Ephesian letter Paul wrote,

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the **saviour of the body** (Eph. 5:23; emp. mine, JEC).

The body which Paul speaks of is further defined in the book of Colossians:

And he is the head of the **body, the church...** (Col. 1:18; emp. mine, JEC).

There is **only** one body (Eph. 4:4), and it is called the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16) as well as other scriptural designations. Friends, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16), nor do I seek to take the **power** out of the gospel. We do not now nor will we ever convert by compromise but only by speaking part of the "*truth in love*" (Eph. 4:15). I have never been opposed to preachers taking every advantage to reach their denominational friends even to the point of speaking in their buildings. I do not think it is scriptural for a preacher to join them in observance of "*Religious Holidays*" nor to act like they agree with the

pagan practices which should be opposed and exposed for what they are:

Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain (Gal. 4:10-11).

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days (Col. 2:16).

We know the origin of these days and what they represent. How can a gospel preacher look at himself in the mirror and not blush with embarrassment? Nor do I think the Bible allows an individual to place himself in a position of "fellowship" with those that he **knows** are in error. When no strings are attached and no words censored, then the gospel preacher should take every advantage in giving those hearers the reason of hope that they have. I know many preachers that have spoken before denominational gatherings; I've heard their tapes and read their lessons. These faithful men spake looking to heaven and no words of compromise were made. How we wish some of our modern Judases loved God instead of the praise of men and looked to heaven instead of friendship with the world!

3. The Acceptance Of Denominational Doctrines And Influence Into Our Worship And Work. Instrumental music has again threatened to divide us, and this time we seem to be eager to accept it.

Larry James, a preacher in Plano, Texas, stated unequivocally,

Our division in the past has been over an issue of opinion and not of revelation.

He has since defended that very position (that instrumental music is a matter of opinion) in the preachers' forum at Freed-Hardeman University.

Jeff Walling has appeared in various forums (i.e., Ozark Christian College of Joplin, Missouri, Feb. 1987) with denominational people and instrumental music being used. In December of 1988 his bulletin carried an article on *"The Use of Instrumental Music in Worship and Sin."* Notice carefully this quote:

Finally, if one believes that instrumental music in worship is wrong, yet does so anyway, he is committing sin. But, in my opinion, I must not judge the state of a fellow Christian who, in good conscience, approves singing with an instrument. To do so would place myself in jeopardy of grievous sin indeed: judging a brother by my opinion.

How, we might ask, if a thing is commanded as he admits, can it be judging by opinion? An opinion is not valid when a command is given.

Randy Mayeux in his now infamous speech at the Twenty-first Annual Youth Ministers' Seminar in 1989 stated that the split that took place in the early 1900's was not over instrumental music, rather the *"churches that could afford organs bought them. The churches that couldn't afford them condemned the groups that did."* This may very well go down in the annals of Restoration history as one of the dumbest statements of the twentieth century!

Rubel Shelly has made no secret of his defection into the apostate camp. In his speech at the Unity Forum in Hillsboro, Ohio, August 14, 1985, Rubel said, among other things, *"I don't draw the line at the instrument. I don't think the Lord died over that."* Yet ... even knowing

the stand these men take, you **still** find them listed to speak on lectureships and seminars.

When will this stop? Paul said, "*Evil men ... shall wax worse and worse*" (II Tim. 3:13), and I believe the end is not in sight even yet.

Many are already allowing women leadership roles in the church: women deacons, women elders, and soon women preachers. Also many are now advocating openly the denominational practice of "*dedicating babies.*" Special programs for holidays, Christmas pageants, Easter pageants, and re-creations of the crucifixion complete with the carrying of the cross are also being supported. Choirs are being used in worship services, and solos are "*supposed to make our worship more meaningful.*"

Our prayer is that once again the brotherhood could be united with the true unity Christ prayed for and the Holy Spirit demands (I Cor. 1:10).

When Jesus said,

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (Matt. 7:15-16).

He was admonishing His disciples to be observant – to us our ability of discernment. The fruits of this liberalism look so tempting, so inviting – the answer to a lot of misguided prayers. No longer would we have to make enemies. The church would not have to withdraw fellowship with anyone; there would be no more divisions over doctrine; everyone would be our brother; and open fellowship could be obtained. Can you imagine not being looked down on or talked about by our religious neighbors, the townsfolk patting us

on the back, and the local ministerial alliance electing our preacher as chairman?

You can not tell me this fruit does not look becoming in the eyes of our worldly members! It is bright, fresh, desirable, and, no doubt, satisfying to the flesh. Yet that fruit, when eaten, yields the same result as the forbidden fruit of Eden. It is poison to our souls, and God's justice will demand the penalty to be met unless repented of.

May God bless you as you "*stand fast in the faith*" (I Cor. 16:13); may the banner never drop as long as there is life and breath left in our mortal bodies; and may we never betray that sacred trust placed in our hands and hearts by Christ Jesus Himself (Matt. 28:19-20).

Endnotes

1 James D. Bales, "*Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage,*" Discussion Forum No. V, Studies In I Corinthians (Denton, TX: Dub McClish, 1982), p. 415.

2 **Firm Foundation**, Vol. 105, No. 14, November, 1988, p. 37. (Discussion with H. A. Dobbs on A Discussion of Grace, Law and Baptism).

3 Cecil Hook, **Free As Sons** (Cecil and Lea Hook, 1350 Huisache, New Braunfels, TX 78130), p. 6.

4 James S. Woodroof, **The Divorce Dilemma** (Nashville, TN: Christian Family Books, 1973).

5 Darrell Foltz, **Adulterous Marriages?** (A Re-examination of the Bible on the Subject of Remarriage), (Box 182, Hoxie, Kansas 67704), pp. 5-6.

6 Hook, **Op. cit.**

7 Max Lucado, **Christ In Easter: A Family Celebration of Holy Week** (NAV Press Publication).

8 **Optimist**, editorial (ACU Campus Paper, February, 1988).

9 Church Notes, **Abilene Reporter-News**, March 11, 1989.

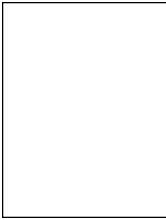
10 Allen Henderson, "*Gather The People,*" Church of Christ Bulletin, George West, Texas, 1991.

11 **Care** (Vol. 5, April 24, 1985, No. 16), bulletin article.

Chapter 14

SPEAK AND EXHORT: WITH ALL AUTHORITY

ROBERT R. TAYLOR, JR.



Graduate of Freed-Hardeman, David Lipscomb and George Peabody Colleges • Author of numerous books and tracts • Script writer for International Gospel Hour • Gospel Advocate staff member since 1969 • Began preaching in 1949 • Local evangelist in Ripley, TN for almost 20 years • Speaks on many lectureships annually • He and his wife, Irene (Crump), have two children.

It is a joyful delight and appreciated honor to speak on your lectureship as I had the privilege of doing last year. I sincerely appreciate the tone and tenor of this good and great lectureship. It is on the cutting edge of truth. Not every lectureship conducted by our brethren is so stanced at all.

Introduction

This powerful, pithy and profitable imperative is found in one of the “*evangelistic epistles*” – Titus. This appellation is much more accurate as reference to I and II Timothy and Titus than the commonly employed “*pastoral epistles*.” Pastoral alludes to elders; these three epistles were written to evangelists or gospel preachers. They detail in marvelous fashion the gospel preacher in motive and mission, in attitude and action, in life and language. Holy Scripture in general and these books in particular fit him (in character) and outfit him (in work) in all that is necessary (See

II Timothy 3:16-17).

The full verse of our selected text reads, *“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee”* (Titus 2:15).

Both Positive And Negative Enjoined

Paul was no positive only preacher; he was no negative only speaker. Neither was Titus. Titus was to speak and exhort with all authority; this was positive proclamation. He was to rebuke with all authority; this was negative and was designed to negate or refute any error, every error, all error.

Smooth speakers and inoffensive communicators today seek to peddle an all positive message with no negative notes allowed. Such is ridiculous and absolutely impossible to achieve. Every positive has its implied negative and every negative has its implied positive. Even car batteries will not operate minus the negative element. If these all-positive proponents depended on all-positive batteries in their automobiles, they would never be able to get to their scheduled places of speaking to deliver their all-positive lessons!!

We cannot be **for** God unless we are **against** Satan. We cannot be **for** Christ unless we are **against** Beliel. We cannot be **for** the Holy Spirit unless we are **against** every unholy, seducing spirit under devilish agency. We cannot be **for** the truth unless we are **against** error. We cannot be **for** the Bible unless we are **against** every creed, discipline, manual, catechism or prayer book that rises in competitive authority **against** God’s Book. We cannot be **for** purity unless we are **against** impurity. We cannot be **for** temperance unless we are **against** intemperance. We cannot be **for** righteousness unless we are **against** unrighteousness. We cannot be **for** godliness unless

we are **against** ungodliness. We cannot be **for** kindness unless we are **against** unkindness. We cannot be **for** mercy unless we are **against** the unmerciful. We cannot be **for** truth-telling unless we are **against** lying and perjury. We cannot be **for** the church unless we are **against** that which would destroy God's church. We cannot be **for** the right plan of pardon unless we are **against** all pseudo plans of pardon. We cannot be **for** true worship unless we are **against** all forms of false worship. We cannot be **for** preaching Jehovah's whole counsel unless we are **against** the preaching of a partial or incomplete gospel. We cannot be **for** Biblical authority unless we are **against** all pseudo forms of authority. We cannot be **for** the gospel unless we are **against** all perversions of the gospel. We cannot be **for** the true grace of God unless we are **against** pseudo forms of grace such as grace only, umbrella grace, etc. We cannot be **for** faith unless we are **against** disbelief – that which wars **against** our victorious, valid and vibrant faith.

Speak, Exhort And Authority – Defined

Speak here derives from the Greek term laleo which means to tell, to declare, to make known. It is the communication of God's word. The same word occurs in Titus 2:1, wherein we read,

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.

Paul had just finished a dynamic discourse in Titus 1 warning of false teachers and their infamous errors. Titus was not to be one of such; he was not to project the poison of such isms and errors. In marked contrast he was to speak sound doctrine. Sound means healthy or wholesome;

doctrine refers to teaching, instruction, imparting or communicating of truth, the whole truth and nothing but truth.

Exhort derives from the Greek term *parakaleo*. It occurs many times in the Greek text of the New Testament and with comprehensiveness of definition. Young says it means "To call near, or for."¹

Thayer, in typical fashion, piles on definition after definition for the treasured term such as:

... to call to one's side, call for, summon ... to address, speak to, (call to, call on), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction ... to admonish, exhort ... to enjoin a thing by exhortation (1 Tim. 6:2; Tit. 2:15) ... to beg, entreat, beseech ... to strive to appease by entreaty ... to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort ... to refresh, cheer ... to encourage, strengthen ... to instruct, teach.²

Authority in Titus 2:15 derives from the Greek word **epitago** and means "an injunction, mandate, command."³ The authority lies in the message the evangelist delivers. The gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16,17). The word of God is quick (living) and powerful (Hebrews 4:12). The words of Jesus are spirit and life (John 6:63). The engrafted (implanted) gospel has the ability to save (James 1:21). The word of God is called the sword of the Spirit in Ephesians 6:17 and this reflects power of an offensive nature in the proclamation of kingly, sovereign truth.

Speak And Exhort Authoritatively What Message And To Whom?

Accuracy of answer is quite obvious – the word of God, the glorious truth of God's gracious

gospel, the good news of redemption in Christ – Jesus our Lord. This is our noble norm; this is our stately standard; this is our commanded criterion; this is our attractive authority. We should want no other and have no God-given right to any other. Men digress from Deity when they desire and demand something else rather than God’s word for their religious authority whether it be Canon law or Papal bulls from Romanism, creeds and disciplines from Protestantism, so-called modern revelations from the TV electronic evangelists of notoriety or the subjective imaginations of overworked minds in the realm of religion.

Isaiah and Micah prophesied that the law of the Lord or the word of Jehovah would go forth from Jerusalem when the marvelous and mighty kingdom of God had its perfected beginning (Isaiah 2:1ff; Micah 4:1ff).

By way of preparation for the glorious coming of Christianity, John the Baptist, Jesus the Christ and His disciples preached the gospel of the coming kingdom (Matthew 3:2; 4:17,23; 10:7; 11:5; Mark 1:4,14,38; Luke 9:60; 10:9).

The gospel, its proclamation and penetration into human hearts, was the beautiful burden on the Saviour’s mind before His departure back to the Palace of the Universe. In Matthew 28:18 He laid claim to all authority in heaven and on earth. In Matthew 28:19 He issued the directive that His disciples go and teach or disciple all nations baptizing taught ones into the noble name of The Timeless Trinity. They were to impart to their auditors all He had commanded them as per Matthew 28:20. The militant, marching orders in Mark’s account of the Great Commission are go, preach the gospel and baptize those receptive

to this rousing, revolutionary message of redemption (Mark 16:15,16). Repentance and remission of sins are to be preached among all nations as per Luke 24:47. John 20:23 declares remitting and retaining powers into apostolic hands as touching pardon. People who accepted their message would know remission of sins; people who rejected it would have their sins retained. It would not be arbitrary powers within apostolic hands but they would echo on earth what heaven had already determined as provisions of pardon (See Matthew 16:19). The Lord's final words on earth, as per the record in Acts 1, touched apostolic witnessing in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). These words are even more solemn when we realize they were made on the very eve of our Lord's amazing ascension. Minus question or quibble, their message was to be the word of God – the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what they were to speak and exhort with all authority.

How did the apostles and early disciples respond to these marvelous mandates from the Messianic Master? Acts and the epistles answer with zealous eloquence. From Acts 2 through 8 they preached in Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria. From Acts 9 through 28 they preached in all nations of the world.

Peter preached the gospel in Acts 2. In Acts 3 he preached the gospel to those on Solomon's porch. Peter, John and the other apostles preached the gospel to those in high judicial circles in Acts 4,5. Enemies of Calvary in Acts 5:28 said they had filled Jerusalem with their doctrine. Here is city-wide evangelism at fervent pitch. In Acts 7 Stephen preached the gospel to Sanhedrin members. Philip, in Acts 8, took the glorious

gospel of God's Son to benighted Samaria and then to an African dignitary – the Ethiopian eunuch. Ananias preached the gospel of pardon to the fiery persecutor Saul in Acts 9. Peter took the gospel to Gentiles for the first time in Acts 10. Antioch, 300 miles north of Jerusalem, received the good news of redemption in Christ in Acts 13. In Acts 13-14 Paul and Barnabas took the gospel to Cyprus and large portions of central and eastern Asia Minor. In Acts 16-18 Paul and his missionary team took the gospel on further west. They left Asiatic soil and went to Europe visiting Macedonia and Achaian cities in Greater Greece. In Acts 19-21 Paul made his third missionary tour to distant points in the west. The gospel is preached to men and women in high places in Acts 24-26. In Acts 27,28 Paul took the gospel to distant Rome in the west. On his second and third journeys plus his stay in prison in Rome for two years he preached by the marvelous means of his pen. The Thessalonian epistles were penned on his second missionary tour. Romans, Galatians and the two Corinthian epistles were penned on his third journey. His first Roman imprisonment epistles were Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon. Hebrews, I and II Timothy and Titus also came in his last decade on earth. Hebrews was written from Italy (possibly Rome) and so was II Timothy.

Comprehensive declarations in Romans (A. D. 58) and Colossians (A. D. 62,63) tell us how successful their efforts were in speaking and exhorting. Romans 10:18 and Colossians 1:23 say respectively,

But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the

world ... If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;...

They took seriously the marching orders of their Commander-in-Chief on Heavenly High – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why "Speak And Exhort – With All Authority?"

(1) Because it is a commandment of the Almighty. It is just as much a command as that given to Adam and Eve, the original colonists, that they have dominion over lower forms of created beings and multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28). It is just as much a command as the ark construction directive given to Noah in Genesis 6. It is just as much a command as was the order to Abraham to leave Ur and later Haran and head for Canaan in Acts 7:2-4 and Genesis 12:1-3. It is just as much a command as the order given Moses that he descend into Egypt and lead captive Israel to freedom (Exod. 3). It is just as much a command as that given Joshua – cross swollen Jordan and capture Canaan (Josh. 1:2ff). It is just as much a command as that given Jonah that he go and preach to Nineveh the preaching God bade him do (Jonah 1,3). It is just as much a command as that given the fishermen in Matthew 4 and Mark 1 – *"Follow me, I will make you fishers of men"* (Matt. 4:19). It is just as much a command as that given the rich, young ruler that he sell all, dispense to others and enroll as a disciple in the Lord's Cause (Matt. 19 16ff). It is just as much a command as the charge to the Pentecostians to repent and be baptized in Acts 2:38 or that penitent

Saul arise and be baptized in Acts 22:16. It is just as much a command as that marvelous mandate that Christians add to foundational faith the valiant virtues of II Peter 1:5-7. "*Speak and exhort - with all authority*" is an intense imperative.

(2) Because the soul of Titus the evangelist was at stake in this momentous matter. Paul told a close colleague of Titus, Timothy, to "*Preach the word*" (II Timothy 4:2). This is a powerful and prominent part of doing "*the work of an evangelist*" (II Timothy 4:5). A passage in I Timothy 4:16 throws light on this projected point,

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine;
continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt
both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

To be also derelict here would be perilous to his soul and to ours/to whom the apostolic mandate likewise applies.

(3) Because the souls of his auditors were at stake. The content of what he spoke and gave by way of earnest exhortation was the inspired, infallible, all-sufficient and all-authoritative word of God. His auditors needed that marvelous message. They needed it minus addition or subtraction; they needed it minus modification and alteration; they needed it minus any and all substitution. The already quoted passage in I Timothy 4:16 says that the doctrine of Christ, when heard and heeded, will save "*them that hear thee.*"

(4) Because this was what his auditors most needed. They did not need a pep talk; they did not need an entertainment speech; they did not need a political plea; they did not need a sociological speech with total emphasis on the outer man with the heart left unmoved and untouched; they did not need a psychological or

philosophic discourse; they did not need a book review; they did not need to hear a string of pleasing platitudes and smooth sayings that enhanced every listener's self-image; they did not need a dosage of a message designed to meet "felt" needs; they did not need to hear an inoffensive message that left each one saying on leaving, *"I'm OK; you're OK; everybody's OK."* Titus' auditors needed to hear the gospel. They needed a message filled to the brim and even overflowing with the word of God. They needed to hear about Christ and Him crucified (I Corinthians 2:2). They needed to hear about God's purpose, plan, promise, prophecy, preparation and perfection as set forth in the Abrahamic promises, their development and their ultimate culmination in the Christ. They needed to hear Titus speak and exhort relative to the milk of the word for novices in Christ and the meat of the gospel for veterans of the faith most holy. They needed to hear Titus speak and exhort relative to the facts of the gospel, the commandments of the gospel, the promises of the gospel, the warnings of the gospel and the implications of the gospel.

(5) Because no one except the Lord's preaching servant is going to speak and exhort relative to the authoritative message of Christ. The Caesars and their Legion of Roman soldiers would not do such. The proud Grecian philosophers such as Paul met at Athens would not do such. The traditionally-bound Pharisees could not be depended upon to do such. The skeptical Sadducees would not do so. The idolaters of that day would not do so. The apathetic church members were not about to do so. There was no evangelistic spirit permeating the Laodician church in Revelation 3:14-22 at all! Soldiers of

Christ were the charged ones to prosecute such an unpopular directive as this proved to be in that treacherous period and it is less popular among men en masse today. BUT IT MUST BE DONE!

(6) Because of the stately, spiritual satisfaction of honoring this apostolic injunction, this dynamic directive. The Holy Spirit did not inspire Paul to write this twofold precept of a positive intent to be ignored. Paul did not pen it just to take up literary space in the message he wrote Titus. It was penned to be accepted and obeyed. Knowing Titus as we do, we know he obeyed it fully, fervently, firmly.

(7) Because he loved the Lord. This was His command to Titus through Paul's pen. We exhibit our love for Him by keeping His commandments (John 14:15).

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you (John 15:14).

There is no finer portrayal or more dynamic definition of love than the eloquent words of John, the apostle of love, who wrote succinctly,

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3).

Wonderful, weighty and wise reasons abound as to why we should *"speak and exhort - with all authority."*

His Speaking And Exhorting Authoritatively: The Book Of Titus Context

The veteran apostle does not leave the energetic evangelist in the dark pertaining to what things specifically he should speak and exhort

with authoritative articulation. The whole context of three chapters and 46 verses spells such out attractively and accurately, comprehensively and courageously.

What he was to speak and exhort authoritatively derived from an apostle who spoke with heavenly power (1:1). His message was

... the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness (1:1).

He was to speak and exhort relative to

... the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;... (1:2).

He was to speak and exhort relative to God's chosen method of imparting saving truth – preaching (1:3). The message preached had been committed to Paul as a sacred trust (1:3). He was to speak of the common faith – the grace, mercy and peace from Deity interwoven therein (1:4).

He was to speak and exhort authoritatively relative to elders – the need to have them, to have them appointed or ordained, their qualifications and the mighty mission and wonderful work they were to perform among God's people (1:5-11). They were to be men of character, integrity, experience, child-rearing success, leadership qualities and courage. They were to be men of backbone who – would and could – defeat the errorists of that day who were making shambles of the gospel message and leading the unsuspecting into ruinous falsehood.

He was to speak and exhort authoritatively relative to the false teachers that flooded the Cretan island (1:12-16). Such people were liars, evil beasts and slow bellies. They lived for

momentary satisfaction – not with eternity in their hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11, ASV) They needed to be turned from damnable doctrines to a sound faith and a faultless practice.

Titus was to speak and exhort authoritatively *“the things which become sound doctrine”* (2:1). This is healthy teaching – not unwholesome teaching depicted in 1:12-16. He was to speak and exhort authoritatively relative to class legislation (2:2-6). Sage counsel is given older men (2:2), older women (2:3), younger women (2:4,5) and younger men (2:6). Such teaching, if done and practiced surely would keep masculine and feminine roles in proper perspective for a surety.

Titus was to back up his speaking and exhorting in authoritative fashion with a harmonious lifestyle. He was to be *“a pattern of good works:...”* (2:7). His teaching was to be uncorrupt, serious and sincere. His speech content was to be sound or healthy (2:8). He was to live in such fashion and preach in such fervency and faithfulness *“that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you”* (2:8).

More class legislation is given in verses 9,10 of Titus 2. He was to speak and exhort authoritatively servants to be obedient, to please well their masters and not to gainsay (be a smart aleck in the verbal department) instructions given them (2:9). He was to speak and exhort authoritatively that servants or slaves not purloin (steal from their masters) but to adorn the doctrine of Deity (2:10).

He was to speak and exhort authoritatively regarding God’s grace, its appearance, its universal inclusion of the whole race and its practical instructions (2:11,12). He was to speak

and exhort authoritatively what that grace prohibited – ungodliness and worldly lusts. He was to speak and exhort authoritatively on what God’s grace inculcated – sobriety, righteousness and godliness. This threefold inculcation touches inward living (sobriety), outward living (righteousness) and upward living (godliness). This is living right with self, others and God. How desperately today is our need to speak and exhort with authority relative to God’s grace. We have men en masse today who have climbed aboard the Calvinistic bandwagon and are teaching that *“man is saved by grace only plus nothing.”* Rubel Shelly is on written record that it is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity and that we do not contribute one whit to our salvation. The implication of such is universal salvation for all and damnation for none! Shelly has emptied hell of a single occupant in eternity if his doctrine be true. Were such true, which it is **not**, there would be no need to speak and exhort anything by way of an authoritative message. If there are no works that justify, then there would be no sins that would damn either. Shellyism means there is no need to speak and exhort men not to be ungodly and practitioners of worldly lusts. There would be no need to speak and exhort people to be temperate, righteous and godly. These are human activities and, as such, play no role at all in man’s redemption as Shellyism.

He was to speak and exhort authoritatively relative to hope. This touches the Lord’s second coming (2:13). He was to speak and exhort authoritatively relative to Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary made for our redemption and the purified people filled with good works we are

to do (2:14).

By authoritative speech and exhortation, coupled with excellency of daily decorum in life, he was to eliminate any man's despising him (2:15).

Titus 2 is filled with meaty themes for preaching, teaching, writing and lecturing. It, coupled with I Timothy 2, if heard and heeded by our people, would eliminate singlehandedly the concerted movement to move women into leadership roles – even that of elder and preacher – among churches of Christ. In view of I Timothy 2:12 the woman cannot speak, exhort and rebuke with all authority. Yet, Titus 2:15 demands this to be done. The solution is a simple one. Let men and women both be content in the roles God has provided for them. Whole Submission to God is the issue. Superiority and inferiority are not at issue at all.

Relative to Titus 2 let us speak and exhort frequently and fervently its royal riches of golden gems.

Titus 3 is filled to overflowing with rich topics about which gospel preachers are to speak and exhort with authoritative articulation. This was true with Titus; it is still true for us today.

He was to speak and exhort authoritatively relative to submission to governmental powers (3:1). He was to speak and exhort with authority in regard to their being *"ready to every good work"* (3:1). He was to speak and exhort with authority about their speech and deportment practices one toward another (3:2,3). He touched in these verses both negatives and positives – what they were not to say and be and what they were to say and be. Negative (rebuke) and positive (speak and exhort) are both embedded in Titus 2:15 – stately text of this study.

He was to speak and exhort with authority about God's kindness and love as they have appeared to men (3:4).

He was to speak and exhort with authority about God's plan of pardon (3:5). We did not devise it, i. e., works of our own righteous inventions; God devised it.

Titus was to speak and exhort with authority *"the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;..."* (3:5). Paul had in mind what Jesus did in John 3:3,5 – a new birth or birth of water and of the Spirit. They have to be the same. Paul told of what saves us; Jesus spoke of what ushers us into the kingdom of God. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. There was a time when preachers among us stressed in every sermon the plan of pardon and what people had to do to come under its redeeming auspices. But no more! Many of our preachers never or seldom ever give the gospel plan of salvation. I have known of preachers who grew indignant when told by an eldership to tell people what to do to be saved somewhere in their sermons. Some, entirely too many, shy away from mentioning baptism at all! It has become their hush-hush term. It is the silent spot in their man-pleasing theology. They refer to us who still preach pardon's plan and its five conditions of hearing, faith, repentance, confession and immersion as *"five steppers,"* *"Bible thumpers"* or as possessors of a *"book, chapter and verse"* mentality or mindset. They may cross out hearing but I shall not be of the noxious number. They may cross out faith but I shall not be of the noxious number. They may cross out repentance but I shall not be of the noxious number. They may cross out the good confession but I shall not be of the noxious

number. They may cross out beautiful baptism but I shall not be of the noxious number. It would be interesting to hear one of these daring dissenters tell us which condition of conversion they think should be reduced from the number five! How desperate is our need to speak and exhort with authority the new birth of John 3:3-7 and Paul's precious parallel to it in Titus 3:5.

He was to speak and exhort with authority relative to God's mercy and God's grace (3:5-7). We appropriate that mercy and grace by gospel obedience to it, and such are

...made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (3:7).

He was to speak, exhort and

...affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men (3:8).

He was to speak and exhort with authority in avoiding things minus any spiritual value (3:9).

He was to speak and exhort authoritatively relative to heretics or factious persons and what quick action they were to make of such egregious errorists (3:10-11).

He was to speak and exhort authoritatively in regard to various persons active in the Cause and what should and could be done to extend them aid (3:12-13).

He was to speak and exhort authoritatively in encouraging good works among brethren. Titus 3:14 states,

And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

He was to speak greetings to "*them that love us in the faith*" (3:15). Paul closed with an

extension of grace, *"Grace be with you all. Amen"* (3:15). What an appropriate and fitting conclusion.

Consequences Of Disobeying This Mandate

(1) One stands in outright rebellion to an intense injunction of Holy Writ. Heaven's door does not stand ajar to daring rebels.

(2) People who could be and would be profited by such speaking and exhorting efforts will be deprived of such.

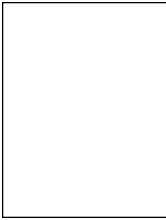
(3) One fails to do what he has the talent to do. The one talent man in Matthew 25 was lost because of such flagrant failure.

(4) We have failed to declare the whole counsel of God. Paul was free from the blood of all men because he shrank not from declaring the fullness of truth (Acts 20:26,27).

Chapter 15

SPEAK AND REBUKE: WITH ALL AUTHORITY

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Introduction

Every generation has a different outlook on how things ought to be and how things ought to be done. Our generation is no different. We do things differently than our parents did. Our children do things foreign to the way we do. There is nothing inherently wrong in change as long as the change does not harm purpose or morals.

Change does come in ways that are not welcome. Those changes may be in the form of physical, overt exercises that are repulsive, immoral and otherwise socially unacceptable. They may also come in more covert form of mind-altering and principle-changing influences. These are the types of changes that come first from hints, suggestions, inuendos and subtlety. They are surreptitious in nature; knowing the need for secrecy and deceit. These are also the types of influences that take souls right out of the fold of safety into the dross of sin.

He who participates in the practice of (mis)leading others into a false doctrine will suffer the consequences of his heinous works (Matt. 5:19), but the so-called innocent victim will also suffer the same condemnation (Matt. 15:14). There are many passages in the word of God indicating the reality of false teachers. Jesus warned,

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves (Matt. 7:15).

The apostle Paul warned against preachers of "*another gospel*," in Galatians 1:7-9:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Peter also warned of false teachers,

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction (II Peter 2:1).

As did the apostle John,

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (I John 4:1).

These passages are given to show the presence of brethren who are among us; who profess to be with us in doctrine; who claim to follow the Master, but are false teachers. Influences such as these are dangerous to the integrity of the Bible and the purity of the church.

The Bible is plain in its teaching that such false teachers are to be exposed and opposed.

The Object Of Our Affections

What is it that merits opposition to false teaching? If a matter is worth nothing, we should not waste our time defending it. If a controversy is a type of issue which is interesting but not vital to our spiritual inheritance, valuable time should not be expended debating it (1 Tim. 6:20). If what we are concerned about is of vital importance, every effort that is open to us should be made to keep it pure and untainted by compromise.

It is our contention that the word of God is completely worthy of every defense that we can offer to protect it. A corollary to that truth is, the authority of the Word of God is completely worthy of defense. A corollary also to that principle is, that which the Word of God authorizes is completely worthy of defense. Carrying this logic a bit further would impose upon us the necessity of defending the teaching of the Word of God. It is necessary therefore that we "*contend earnestly for the faith*" (Jude 3).

The object of our affections, God's Word, should warrant our avid defense as well as our humble submission. To obey the Word involves our submission to it; to defend the Word involves our use of its authority.

Current Attitudes Toward God's Word

Jude 3 admonishes us to "*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*" Romans 6:17 declares,

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

II Timothy 3:16,17 states unequivocally,

All scripture (is) given by inspiration of God, and (is) profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Finally, Jesus promised in John 16:13,

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, (that) shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

These are only a few of the scriptures which attest to the sufficiency of the Bible. There is no need for any other book or philosophy by which men should be led. Neither is there latitude for ignoring the writings of the Bible.

As long as denominationalism has existed, men have gone beyond the authority of the Bible. The concept of denominationalism is not found in the pages of God's word. The church has long opposed the right for denominationalism to exist. Therefore, the fact of denominational error is nothing new. To speak against denominationalism as false doctrine has been an accepted and expected practice in the past.

Since the beginning of the restoration movement, certain men have espoused doctrines foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. In many cases points of doctrine were debated in public forum. Truth prevailed by using the Bible as the sole authority in the matter. Now, certain men are arising within the church claiming the Bible does not have the authority to declare right from wrong.

What And How We Speak With Authority

The only source of authority from which one

can declare the glory of God and the gospel of Christ is the Bible. To do otherwise is to abandon the word in favor of the thoughts of men. Any intelligent person would not find that premise to be difficult to understand. If one is to build a house it would be folly to follow the plans for building a car. If one would desire to write a book on gardening it would be senseless to research recipes for cooking. Yet many of our brethren are quoting poetry instead of Paul, philosophy instead of Peter and junk instead of James.

The Bible has become something to supplement the wise and discerning intellect who holds advanced degrees in Theology. The common man is incapable of reading and learning for himself. This is the same logic some have used for over a thousand years to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people. Strong-willed scholars have successfully sought to intimidate the masses. The farmer, the baker or the candlestick maker is no match, intellectually, with the secular-university-trained expert in exegesis and hermeneutics. The long hours of diligent study, prayer and experience is no match for the scholars credentials. He is to be unquestioned, only obeyed. This smacks of the methodology of the Boston cult which destroyed the faith of hundreds. Anyone having the audacity to question scholarship is automatically ignored as unqualified to speak or is branded as a *"legalist,"* or *"troublemaker,"* or some other derogatory term. Judgments must be made and those judgments are not the product of secular scholarship. The judgments we make must be based upon a ***"Thus saith the Lord"*** (Col. 3:17).

In spite of the efforts to negate, obviate, circumvent and otherwise destroy the validity of the Bible as our rule of faith and practice, we

still must speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). God's word is truth (John 17:17) and the truth is what makes men free (John 8:32). We have the obligation to preach the word of God (II Tim. 4:2) in order to produce faith in the heart of the hearer (Rom. 10:17). Paul said he did not come to follow the lead of the intellectual snob who uses twelve-cylinder words to convey to the world his scholarship. He said he,

...came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God (I Cor. 2:1).

He continued saying,

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (v.2).

What legalism!

Those who hold to the practice of preaching the truth without giving lip service to compromise are often regaled as "*right wingers*" or "*legalists*" or "*Bible thumpers*," etc. Words can hurt one's feelings, his reputation and even his influence, but the insulting nomenclature of "*loving, caring*" liberal brethren cannot hurt the truth. The truth is that which will emerge the victor in the day of judgment. Those who opt to follow the teachings of men would do well to reconsider the source of authority for what they are doing.

Jesus is "*the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him*" (Heb. 5:9). It is by His authority that we

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

The gospel, according to I Corinthians 15:1-4, is the death of Christ (according to the scriptures), His burial and His resurrection (according to the

scriptures). Since facts cannot be obeyed, we must have some means by which we can obey Him. The apostle Paul gives us the means in Romans 6:3-4,

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

The beautiful harmony of the inspired, incontrovertible, inerrant word provides for us Divine authority for speaking where the Bible speaks and cautions us to remain silent, i.e., respect the silence of the Bible, where the Bible is silent. John, by inspiration, warns,

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (II John 9).

We have no choice but to speak from the authority of Almighty God which we have through His Word.

What And How We Rebuke With All Authority

Another miscarriage of logic is the teaching that to rebuke an erroneous action, or practice, is "*unloving*." Followers of truth are often accused on being "*unloving*," or "*uncaring*." To make such rash and harsh statements is to indict God Himself. No "*caring*" and "*loving*" parent ever let his child wander into danger without first cautioning the child regarding the danger. If this did not accomplish the desired result for the safety of the child, stronger measures were taken: a more direct

and emphatic course of action was taken to make sure the child did not fall victim to harm. Then, if the child persisted in his perilous venture, corrective action was taken. Why? Just for the love of showing authority? Certainly not! Whatever corrective measures were taken were done to protect the child; for the child's benefit. The motivation for such action flowed from a heart of immeasurable love! Parents have given their very lives for their children, their mates, their loved ones. To express concern for the welfare of those we love is not "unloving" at all. To the contrary, it is the loving thing to do!

The Bible teaches unmistakably on this matter. The Hebrew writer very explicitly announces chastening is a demonstration of love:

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (Heb. 12:5-7).

Paul did not limit rebuke to fathers. In I Timothy 5:20 he speaks in regard to a sinning elder. Elders are not above reproach. They are human and subject to human temptations. On occasion an elder may be detected involving himself in sinful activities. Paul says if even an elder is so tempted as to sin, if he will not repent, he is to be rebuked. Again, we ask, "Why?" Is it to ridicule and berate him? Of course not! It is to try to help him repent so his soul can be saved. This is love! Paul rebuked a fellow apostle. In Galatians 2:11ff, Peter plays the part of a

hypocrite. Paul, along with others, saw his hypocrisy and the influence this hypocrisy had on others. Paul rebuked Peter to his face before them all. Was it to show Peter and the others Paul's harsh, mean, unloving, legalistic spirit? No, it was for the purpose to correct and remind Peter of his departure from Christian conduct. It was an act of love to which Peter responded favorably, for we read in II Peter 3:15 his reference to "*our beloved brother Paul...*"

Paul gives instruction to Timothy with reference to preaching to his hearers:

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, **rebuke**, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (II Tim. 4:2).

Paul gives the reason for reproof and rebuking: to keep Christians from following after some smooth-talking, ear-tickling, politician who claims to be preaching a "*loving, forgiving, tolerant, people-pleasing*" brand of pablum which Paul called "fables."

To recap what we have said thus far, Paul teaches that no one is above rebuke. He rebuked an apostle; he (if he be the penman of Hebrews) teaches that elders may be rebuked if they refuse to repent of sin; he instructed Timothy to rebuke those who wander from the truth and covet the praise of men more than the praise of God. That is ample authority for us to employ the same measure in order to snatch the soul of our beloved from the fires of a devil's hell.

To add a little icing to the cake: Jesus stated in Revelation 3:19,

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten:
be zealous therefore, and repent.

What greater example of love can there be,

and to what greater source of authority can we appeal than the Lord, Himself! Yes, we can, and must, rebuke with all authority those who would pervert the gospel of Christ and lead others astray with their false doctrine.

Current Needs For Speaking And Rebuking With All Authority

To identify each point of departure from the true doctrine would be laborious and still would not be exhaustive. Many tentacles of sympathy radiate from each major philosophy. Each one represents a rejection of Bible authority. In doing so, those who espouse the error need to be confronted and rebuked. The church originated in the mind of God, not man (Eph. 3:10). It is like no other institution on the face of the earth. Its purpose is not the same as any other man-made organization. It has not the characteristic of a human organization. It is based upon precepts far removed from any thought process man could devise. It has a different charter than any club, civic, social or otherwise. It is eternal in its nature; it has a supreme power as its head (Eph. 1:22-23). Its terms of entrance have been set in concrete for almost two thousand years. Its purchase price is the blood of Jesus Christ. Its reward for faithfulness is boundless and endless. It is rather beyond comprehension why so-called wise men would desire to throw all of that over to follow some fleeting, philosophical mish-mash that will change with the flowing of the tide.

Faithful Christians all over the world are clamoring for a return to the sound preaching of the gospel. The gospel of Christ (not of Shelly or Phillips or Cope or Walling or Mayeaux or Olbricht or any other "new hermeneuticer") is the

only pattern for the salvation of man there is. Acceptance by denominationalists is not important enough to lose one's soul over. Popularity on the part of society cannot effect our salvation. Meeting the "*physical, emotional, recreational, biological, social needs*" of the membership is not the criteria for going to heaven.

Sound, faithful gospel preaching is going to ruffle some feathers. Those who do sound preaching are going to be attacked viciously by those who claim to be so "*irenic.*" This circumstance is not new. All of the apostles except John (that we know about) met a violent death because they insulted the intelligence of the philosophers, kings and crowds. How many faithful Christians died on the "*light posts*" of Nero's garden? How many wild beasts had their appetites sated with the bodies of men and women who were so faithful they chose this horrible physical end in order to spend eternity in the presence of Jesus? How many were burned at the stake of ignorance and rebellion because of their commitment to their Lord and Saviour? How many died for the cause of Christ? We will not know this side of heaven, but we may be assured that those who did remain faithful received God's blessing of everlasting life in the bosom of the Father.

The nature of compromise of truth is such that one departure from the doctrine of God leads to another. We are continually amazed at the "*new*" ways of tainting and contaminating the truth that men can design. Instruments of music are now being initiated into the church; women are now taking leading roles in the worship; special choruses are being used in the worship services; "*unknown tongues,*" in the Pentecostal

sense of "*unknown*," is now being espoused and promoted by at least one professor in our graduate schools. Denominationalism is being courted and promoted by some congregations with full support of many of our universities and periodicals. The denominationalism of Max Lucado is rewarded by Abilene Christian University who honored him in the 1992 Abilene Christian Lectures as the outstanding young alumnus of the year. The sanctity of the home is a farce with divorce and remarriage for any cause being fully accepted without rebuke. Perhaps the worst of all departures is the rejection of the Bible as God's pattern for salvation. Rubel Shelly makes the statement that to consider baptism as a part of the plan of salvation is a "*monstrosity*." How sad in view of his once faithful stand for truth.

Conclusion

Speaking and rebuking with all authority is Biblical (II Tim. 2:15). Our authority in speaking can only come from the pages of God's Holy Word. Anything else we speak with reference to religion is nothing more than human wisdom and philosophy. We must be careful of what we speak to know that it is in harmony with the Bible. The Bible is not like other books: it never changes. It does not have to change. It is as fresh every day as if it had just been produced. It holds fathomless riches of encouragement, promise, comfort, assurance and confidence. It is beyond the scope of human comprehension in beauty and simplicity. It is profound beyond the wisest of the ages. It encompasses every culture without favor. It holds the world spellbound in its depth and meaning. It is the book of Books; it is the Word of God! This is the authority from which we speak. It

is *“all authority”* (Matt. 28:18; Titus 2:15).

With the authority of the Bible as a foundation, faithful preachers of the gospel should be taking an active stand against all of the forces of evil that are gripping the spiritual throat of the church. No father would stand by and see his home desecrated by vandals without taking action against them. Elders are faced with the responsibility of keeping error out of God’s church. Preachers who preach *“another gospel which is not another”* should be sent packing. Every member of the church should be such good Bible students that error may be detected and rejected before it becomes ingrained in the minds of the unsuspecting. In **every** case, those who would change, alter, adulterate or in any other way take away or add to the word once-for-all-delivered to the saints should be rebuked with all authority – the authority of God’s Word!

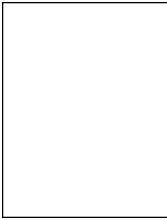
Section IV

**THE PEOPLE
OF GOD**

Chapter 16

PEOPLE OF GOD: REDEEMED AND PECULIAR

GARLAND ELKINS



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Introduction

It is our purpose in this lecture to show from the Scriptures that God's people are redeemed, peculiar, unique, righteous, distinct, and separate from the world.

We live in a wicked world. The beloved John wrote,

And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness (1 John 5:19).

We shall discuss this subject under two headings.

"People of God-Redeemed"

The word *"redeemed"* is a most interesting word. It means *"to buy" – "to buy back something formerly possessed."* God made man but he became unfaithful to God, and even though,

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. (Psm. 24:1).

As amazing as it is, Adam and Eve sinned (Rom. 5:12; II Cor. 11:3), and thus God in His mercy, and Christ in His love were willing that the supreme gift of Christ on the cross be provided in order that man could be redeemed. Paul wrote,

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich (II Cor. 8:9).

Peter wrote,

Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers (I Peter 1:18-19).

Under the Law of Moses many things were redeemed, among the people of God the first born sons were redeemed (Exod. 13:15). The Law of Moses could not bring permanent remission of sin. However, even though,

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins (Heb. 10:4).

The blood of Christ does have that efficacy. The New Testament affirms of Christ, and His blood,

... Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood (Rev. 1:5).

Christ came to redeem,

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made (born) under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 4:4-5).

Since the Lord has provided redemption for us, it is altogether fitting and proper that we should study in some detail *"The great salvation."*

"The Great Salvation"

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? (Heb. 2:3).

In this text the writer is calling the Hebrews to task for having neglected the "*great salvation.*" The superiority of the gospel over the law had not been thoroughly understood by the Jewish people. The Hebrew writer assures the Jewish Christians, and all others who would ever read what he wrote, that God who at different times, and in various ways spoke to the fathers in the past by the prophets, now speaks through His Son,

... whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Heb. 1:2).

Christ is introduced as being,

... the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person (Heb. 1:3),

and that today He sits at the right hand of the "*Majesty on high*" (Heb. 1:3).

Christ is exalted as the Son of God and all the angels were commanded to worship Him. Christ is far above the angels who are ministering spirits (Heb. 1:4-14). Christ is the only begotten Son of God, the One concerning whom all the prophets spoke (Acts 3:22-26).

The salvation which Christ offers is known as "*the great salvation.*" It overshadows the law and the Old Covenant. The Hebrew writer admonished the Hebrews to give earnest heed to the things that they had heard, lest at any time they should let them slip. Then comes the question,

For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and

disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation... (Heb. 2:2,3a).

We reject something that is offered to us, and we neglect that, which having been offered, we receive. A man may reject a gift that is offered. He neglects that which he has received. The Jews to whom the Hebrew writer was writing had accepted Christ, they had become identified with His body, the church. Now they were rapidly falling away, neglecting that which they had received.

Paul comes with the question, *"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"*

We have been redeemed, yea with *"a great salvation."* Let us consider that *"great salvation."*

1. It is a "great salvation" because it is an eternal salvation. not a temporal one. It is the salvation presented in the gospel. The *"great salvation"* did not originate with man but with God (I Cor. 2:9-13). It is that *"faith once for all delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3). The *"great salvation"* was presented by the Son of God. He is its author and the apostles were the individuals to whom the gospel message came through the agency of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13). In the forty days of the sojourn of Jesus with the disciples, between the resurrection and His ascension, we are told He talked with them concerning many things pertaining to the kingdom (Acts 1:1-8).

2. It was "the great salvation" because it is universal (Mark 16:15,16). From Pentecost those men went forth telling the world of the *"great salvation."*

3. It is "the great salvation" for it is the only salvation offered to man. The law was

nailed to the cross with Christ, it ended there (Col. 2:14). The gospel is now in force. In the long ago Moses said to the people,

... A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you (Acts 3:22).

God said to the disciples at the time Christ was transfigured, at the time that Moses and Elias appeared,

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him (Matt. 17:5).

The "*great salvation*" is simple and plain (II Cor. 11:3). There are many mysteries connected with godliness (I Tim. 3:16). There is no mystery associated with what man is to do in fulfilling the conditions of the "*great salvation.*" It is so simple that he who runs may read. The terms have been presented by inspired men who spoke in a language that people can understand (II Pet. 1:21; I Cor. 2:13; Eph. 5:17).

4. The salvation was "great" because it was confirmed by miraculous power. The apostles had credentials which convinced the hearing world that the message was genuine, not man-made, not uncertain, but was a sincere word from God. They wrought miracles that proved that God was with them, and therefore they were reliable. The words they spoke conveyed to the hearers the mind and plan of God. When an ambassador comes from the British Isles, representing his country to the United States, he goes to Washington and presents his credentials. So, likewise, the apostolic preachers had credentials when they wrought miracles. Jesus came with credentials from heaven.

Nicodemus said to Him,

... Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him (John 3:2).

Many of our day are confused as they listen to the discordant voices claiming to present the truth of the "*great salvation*." The messages are not alike. They differ much in the steps to be taken by which forgiveness of sins is promised. They "*do err, not knowing the scriptures*." The conflicting voices disturb, and confuse many people. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one in their preaching in order that the world might believe that God had sent him (John 17:20,21).

5. The "great salvation" is free for those who meet the Lord's conditions. "*By grace are ye saved through faith*." (Eph. 2:8,9). This simply means that God offers salvation to all who obey His Son (Heb. 5:8,9). "*The great salvation*" cannot be bought with money, power, connections et al. It is offered to people in all stations and walks of life. God is no respecter of persons, but all who obey Him are accepted (Acts 10:34,35).

6. The "great salvation" gives one the more abundant life. Jesus said,

I am come that they might have life and –
have it more abundantly, (John 10:10).

The "*great salvation*" should not be considered only as a fire escape. It is intended for the life now, and in its acceptance we are prepared for the life that continues beyond the death of the body (I Tim. 4:8). The peace for which the world yearns can be obtained only when "*the great salvation*" has been accepted by the people of the world. Jesus said as He looked

over sad Jerusalem,

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. 11:28-30).

7. The “great salvation” makes the world a better place in which to dwell. I read the following story and found it to be most interesting and instructive.

Years ago there was an island in the sea, not far from Holland, where the pirates resorted. They were disturbers of the peace, robbers of life. The government sent a young man by the name of Bok to that island. He transformed it. The pirates were driven out. Birds of the finest song and plumage were introduced to the island. Good people moved in and in time the island became like unto a paradise of God. The man married. Little boys were born into his home. When death rapped at his door, he told the children of the work he had done, the purpose of his having come, and said to them that he came that the island might be made a beautiful place in which men might dwell. And he instructed them that wherever they went that should be their purpose in life. One of those boys was Edward Bok, who, with his mother, came to the United States. For twenty-six years he was editor of the **Ladies Home Journal**, and he took as his purpose the making of the land in which he dwelt a fit place in which men could dwell.

It was the purpose of Christ to provide for the good, the salvation of all people (II Peter 3:9; I Tim. 2:4).

8. The “great salvation” never fails when given the opportunity to accomplish what it

is designed to do. One goes to the patent office in Washington, D.C., and finds there patents that have been granted on many implements of service which are never found in the field, factory, or home. One asks the question, Why are these not seen when they have been patented? The reply is they worked fairly well in the model, but they did not function in the practical affairs of everyday life. In the realm of religion there are many theories, opinions, philosophies, false doctrines, that are advocated for the benefit of mankind. However, in the final analysis they are merely words – words – words! They do not work. Not so with *“the great salvation”* – it works! We see it working all about us, and it will be seen to work in the judgment!

9. This is the only salvation that gives the promise of immortality. Christ said that He was going to prepare a place for His disciples, and that He would return and receive them unto Himself (John 14:1-4). He said, *“Because I live, ye shall live also.”* After a faithful service and a most eventful life, as the shadows of the day were gathering, Paul, the great soldier of the cross wrote from his prison cell to Timothy,

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (II Tim. 4:6-8).

This promise is to all of the faithful. Only by accepting *“the great salvation”* do we have any promise and any hope of entering into that rest

that is promised to God's faithful children.

10. Therefore the great question is, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" It is offered to us, but some reject it. Others accept and then neglect it. One neglects "*the great salvation*" who is unconcerned, pursues the life that now is, simply lives for the present day and, like the rich man of Luke 16:19-31, wears fine linen and is clothed in purple, and fares sumptuously every day, but has no concern about his own soul and offers no helping hand to those who daily pass his gate (Mark 8:36,37).

One neglects "*the great salvation*" when he ceases to be a worshiper in the church of the living God; when he ceases to study and to profit by the written Word; when he takes no interest in the affairs of the kingdom of God; when he ceases to feed the hungry, visit the sick, care for the despondent, and to make himself a friend of man.

To enter the kingdom of God one must do the will of the Father who is in heaven (Matt. 7:21). This is a lifetime job-it permits no vacation. There is no time for retirement. We should never forget the words of Paul, "Be instant in season, out of season" (II Tim. 4:2). What is your answer to the question "*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation:*" (Heb. 2:3).

The People of God are "Peculiar"

The word "*peculiar*" is defined as "*That which belongs to a person in exclusion of others, as a privilege.*" The Christian belongs to the Lord as His special possession. The American Standard Version of 1901 renders Titus 2:14 as follows,

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.

The King James Version renders Titus 2:14 as follows,

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14).

Unfortunately, hobbyists appear to think that the word "*peculiar*" means to be unreasonable, extreme, and divisive.

Christians are, "*a people for his own possession.*" There are many Biblical reasons which prove this affirmation.

1. The Church of Christ was built by Christ. Christ promised to build His church when he said,

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

Paul tells us that Christ died for but one church:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it (Eph. 5:25).

The words "*the church*" mean but one. The pronoun "*it*" can refer to but one. So Christ loved one church; he died for one church; he built one church. Therefore, he is the owner of but one church. The plural form "*churches*" is never used in the New Testament except in reference to a number of local congregations in a certain section of the country as: "*The churches of Judea*" (Gal. 1:22); "*The churches of Christ salute you*"

(Rom. 16:16).

2. The Church of Christ was founded in Jerusalem. Christ founded the church in Jerusalem, on Pentecost, the first one after His resurrection. This is shown by a number of things. A short time before our Lord died He put the origin of the church in the future when he said: *"Upon this rock I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18). Students of language know that **"will build"** is future tense of the verb and shows that the church had not been built when Jesus made this statement. However, beginning with this Pentecost the church was always referred to as present. It was on that day that about *"three thousand"* were saved (Acts 2:41). Also we read,

... and the Lord added to the church daily
such as should be saved (Acts 2:47).

Never after Pentecost of Acts 2 was it referred to as something to be built. This proves that the church of Christ was established on Pentecost day of the second chapter of Acts. In fact, Peter declares that this was the beginning (Acts 11:15).

3. Christ is the head of the Church of Christ. Christ is the head of it – the sole head. Paul wrote,

And hath put all things under his feet, and
gave him to be the head over all things to
the church, which is his body, the fulness of
him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:22,23).

And he is the head of the body, the church
(Col. 1:18).

These passages make it clear that when the New Testament speaks of the body of Christ, reference is not made to His physical, but His spiritual body, the church. Observe please: (1) Christ is the head of his church (Col. 1:18; Eph.

1:22,23). (2) All who are in Christ are in His body (Gal. 3:27; Col. 3:15). (3) All Christians are in Christ (Rom. 6:3; II Cor. 5:17). (4) Therefore, all Christians are in Christ's church. Jesus came into the world to establish one, and only one institution through which to save mankind (Eph. 3:10,11,21).

4. The Church of Christ has no guide book but the Bible. The Church of Christ refuses to accept any human creed in religion. We definitely refuse any uninspired man's statement, or system of statements, as our rule in religion. Articles of Religion, Confessions of Faith, Disciplines, Church Manuals and creeds formulated by men are rejected. The Word of God – and the Word of God alone – we accept as our standard. The following scriptures show this to be the only safe course:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Then Peter wrote,

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us to glory and virtue (II Peter 1:3).

The same apostle said:

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (I Peter 4:11).

Therefore, we implore all to go back to the Bible.

Remember the Bible is right!

The Church of Christ has no creed but the Christ, the Son of God. We plead for the unity of all believers in Christ on the simple plan of speaking where the Bible speaks, and by remaining silent where it is silent; by wearing Bible names, and by doing Bible things in Bible ways. The church of our Lord seeks to obey the divine injunction given by Paul,

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (I Cor. 1:10).

Our aim is to fulfill the Lord's prayer for unity as stated in John 17:21. We seek to plant New Testament churches throughout the world.

5. To be added to the Church of Christ one must comply with gospel requirements.

These requirements are: Belief in Christ (Acts 16:31). Repentance of sins (Acts 17:30). Confession that Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:36-37). Baptism is essential in order to be saved (Acts 2:38,41,47; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16). Peter declared that, "*Baptism doth also now save us*" (I Peter 3:21). We are saved by the blood of Christ which was shed in His death. However, no accountable person ever contacts that blood until he is baptized into His death (Rom. 6:3). Salvation is in Christ (II Tim. 2:10), but one cannot get into Christ except by baptism (Gal. 3:27).

6. The worship of the Church of Christ is scriptural. The items of worship are: Teaching (Acts 2:42; II Tim. 2:2); praying (Acts 2:42), and giving (I Cor. 16:1,2). Giving is an act of worship that must be done on a certain day of the week.

As the original language clearly teaches it was done on the first day of the week. Raffling contests, and other such methods of raising money for the church were not practiced by the congregations under the direction of inspired men of the first century, and those who do such things today are not identical with the congregations of the first century. Partaking of the Lord's supper is another act of worship (I Cor. 11:23-29). Does the New Testament specify a certain day for the observance of the Lord's supper? Yes! The day is clearly pointed out in Acts 20:7. The only day anyone can partake of the Lord's supper with the Lord's approval is the first day of the week! A certain day of a certain month is never mentioned in connection with it. So it cannot be a yearly service. Neither is a certain day of the month mentioned. It cannot, therefore, be a monthly service.

Singing is another act of worship (Eph. 5:19; Heb. 2:12). We are not just commanded to have music, but rather we are commanded to have a certain kind of music, that is, singing. In Hebrews 2:12 we read, "*In the midst of the church will I **sing** praise unto thee*" (Heb. 2:12 Emp. mine G.E.). To add mechanical music to the singing is to go beyond Christ's doctrine (II John 9-11). Any church that employs mechanical instruments in its worship is not identical with the New Testament church. Friends, the true church of Christ limits its music to singing just as did the church of the first century. The five acts of worship discussed above were the **only** acts of worship practiced by the first century church. We search in vain for any other act of worship enjoined upon Christians today.

The people of God are to be...

“Unique, Righteous, Distinct, And Separate From The World”

In this, the Second Annual **Truth In Love** lectureship, a number of lessons were presented, and are contained in the book, which deal with the fact that God’s people are to be, “unique, righteous, distinct, and separate from the world.” Some of the topics are: *“Ungodliness-Adultery, Homosexuality, etc.” “Ungodliness-Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco” “Ungodliness-TV, Videos, and Pornography” “Sin-Captivates, and the Resulting Consequences” “New Testament Perilous Times Compared To Problems Today” “Ungodliness in Our World-General Overview”* et al.

Since these subjects are discussed in much specific detail, so many of the *“besetting sins”* with which we must face as God’s children, I shall merely briefly discuss the works of the flesh. Paul wrote,

Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

Sin can be hidden for a season but eventually it becomes known (II Cor. 3:2; I Tim. 5:24). We reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7,8). Sin may be committed at first in secret but it cannot be kept secret (Eccl. 12:13,14). Let us look at the catalog of the sins of the flesh.

First, there are sins of impurity. *“Fornication”* is a sin of immorality which sins

against God, the other person, and one's self (Gen. 39:9; I Cor. 6:18-20). "*Uncleanness*" includes whatever is evil in thought, word, look, gesture, dress, etc. "*Lasciviousness*" involves the last word in sensuality.

Second, there are sins against true religion. "*Idolatry*" means that man forgets God and makes gods "*in the likeness of an image of corruptible man*" (Rom. 1:23; Col. 3:5). "*Sorcery*" entails the employment of evil spirits in the service of man. We should trust God, not a witch or a fortune teller for the present or the future (Prov. 3:5,6; Rom. 10:17; II Cor. 5:7).

Third, a number of these sins are sins against love. "*Strife*" is enmity at work. "*Jealousies*" is a feeling of resentment toward a rival for the sake of one's own advantage. "*Wrath*" involves rages or passionate outbursts which are involved in strife (James 3:16). "*Factions*" includes partisanship – brother arrayed against brother. "*Divisions, parties*" involve first the lighter, the second encompasses the more aggravated form of division-divisions organized into parties. "*Envyings*" involves the grudging to another some advantage, favor, honor etc.

The fourth category of sins in this catalog of sins involves sins of intemperance. "*Drunkenness*" is a remnant of heathenism. The practice of seeking pleasure through intoxicants. "*Revelling*" which is also rendered "*carousing*." It is associated with drunkenness (I Peter 4:3). It is defined as "*joyful festivity with music and dancing*." "*And such like*" this includes that which is excessive use of that which is good such as gluttony.

What will result if one practices "*the works of the flesh*?" The answer is, "*They that practice*

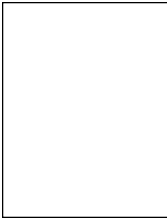
such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." This warning is often repeated in the New Testament (I Cor. 5:11; 6:9,10; Eph. 5:5).

Sin persisted in bringing eternal ruin (Rom. 6:23). If man does not inherit heaven it is his own fault. (John 5:39,40; Matt. 11:28-30; I Tim. 2:4; II Peter 3:9; Rev. 22:17).

Chapter 17

PEOPLE OF GOD: ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS

CURTIS A. CATES



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Introduction

In any field of endeavor, zeal is an absolutely necessary ingredient to attain success. Enthusiasm is the mainstream of human accomplishments. No goal is attained without zeal either in our relationship with man or in our relationship to God. Often, though, many of the world have much more zeal in seeking to accomplish the mundane tasks and objectives in life than many Christians have in seeking to fulfil their mission as the people of God.

... for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light (Luke 16:8).

Elijah, in pouring out his heart to the Lord said,

I have been very jealous (zealous) for Jehovah, the God of hosts (I Kings 19:10).

He had been very dedicated in the Lord's service.

The Lord commands us to be zealous. Paul wrote that we are,

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:13-14).

Unfortunately, as King Belshazzar was weighed in the balances and found wanting (that is, his deeds were compared to God's absolute moral law and came up short, Daniel 5:22-28), it is very possible that the scales might indicate many of us fall short in the area of enthusiasm for the Lord's cause and kingdom.

On the other hand, the possibility exists that one may have zeal, but lack adequate knowledge. Especially is that possible in one's youth, wherein one can be overzealous. The young hot-headed fools urged Rehoboam to make the burdens of the people heavier, instead of lighter than Solomon had made them. Rehoboam rejected the sage, level-headed advice of the older men, who urged him to lighten the burdens. Of course, this was all that the ambitious Jeroboam needed to take the lead in the northern kingdom's division from Judah (II Chron. 10). God's people should seek that blend and balance between the inspiring, optimistic, exciting, and tireless energy of youth and the seasoned, deliberate, steady, and studied wisdom of age and experience.

Zeal Defined

The word "zeal," from **zelos**, comes from a root meaning to boil; it indicates warmth of attitude of heart, or feeling. Appearing some seventeen times in the New Testament, **zelos** can indicate warmth that is good or bad, depending upon the nature of the warmth. That attitude Christians must have is enthusiasm, fervor, ardor,

eagerness. From the Greek **en** and **theos**, enthusiasm means "*God within you*," indicating the source of one's zeal. Walter Chrysler pinpointed enthusiasm, or zeal, as that characteristic his salesmen could least afford to be without. Could the need be any less critical in the life of the Christian, who is to,

... Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields;
for they are white already to harvest (John
4:35).

One can begin to get an idea of the warmth of fervor indicated in the word by examining its use in Hebrews 10:26-27,

... there remaineth no more sacrifice for
sins, But a certain fearful looking for of
judgment and fiery indignation (fierceness
of fire, **zelos**), which shall devour the
adversaries.

Unlike the flamboyant grandiosity of the ostentatious showman, this motivation and excitement springs from true devotion to the Lord and genuine sympathy for the needs of humanity. Christ is seen within the Christian (Matt. 5:16; I Tim. 4:12), "*God within*." For Paul to live was Christ (Phil. 1:21); he wrote,

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to
the Lord, and not unto men (Col. 3:23).

Spiritual, scriptural zeal must, therefore, be personal. Every Christian must feel personally the responsibility to bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:4). Teaching our neighbors demands that **we** teach them. Relieving the fatherless and widows depends upon each of us. Many in local congregations like to talk about what "*we*" are doing, but they are often not carrying their shares of the responsibility. Could the one talent man in

the judgment reason thus: "*Lord, thou hast given us five, two and one talents and have gotten in return fifteen instead of the eight you gave us?*" No, for what had **he** done to contribute to the increase? He was a wicked and slothful servant (Matt. 25:26-30).

One must not confuse zeal for the Lord's cause and devotion to the old paths with zeal for a party, or sect, or human being. Very often, children of God in certain congregations have been more enthusiastic about some evangelist, some radical position, or some pet cause than they have been about genuine Christianity. Many in Corinth were condemned because of their zeal for partyism, following men instead of Christ. Paul issued a scathing, severe condemnation (I Cor. 1:10-17); it was not possible for them even to partake scripturally of the Lord's supper (I Cor. 11:19-20, ASV). "... *there should be no schism in the body ...*" (I Cor. 12:25). If they would not repent, he would later come and "*use sharpness*" with them by the Lord's authority (II Cor. 13:10). Some zeal is selfish, worldly, divisive, and damning; it brings embarrassment and destruction to the beautiful bride of Christ and to one's eternal soul. Such partisans will march with the other goats from Christ's left hand into the lake of fire, sadly, come judgment day (Matt. 25:31-33, 41, 46; Rom. 16:17-18; II Thess. 3:6, 14).

The devil is an enemy of the cause of Christ and, thus, of genuine zeal. He sets about to destroy every good work and every motivation behind it. When the Lord's cause in any given area gets underway, it seems but a short time before infantile jealousies, selfish, personal ambition, and grabbing for power in little people

raise their ugly, vicious heads.

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work (James 3:13-16).

The Christian must not walk "*in strife and jealousy*" (Rom. 13:13; cf. I Cor. 3:3; II Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Acts 13:45). One must be very careful not to slip from genuine zeal for God's cause to jealousy and partyism. The devil also seeks to destroy enthusiasm through works of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-21), against which every child of God must do battle (I Cor. 9:27; Rom. 8:12-13).

Things Of Which Zeal Is Characterized

When God's people are "*zealous of good works,*" they can be described as possessing certain great and necessary qualities. These could be identified as synonyms of zeal.

A first quality which characterizes zeal is FERVOR. This great attitude of heart destroys laziness and leads to service and work.

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord (Rom. 12:11).

The child of God must have a heart that is afire with zeal; this attitude is seen when Titus told Paul of the Corinthians' warmth of heart toward him.

... when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more (II Cor. 7:7).

This is the type of fire of love that we are to have

for our brethren.

... love one another with a pure heart fervently (I Peter 1:22).

And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins (I Peter 4:8).

Fervor must describe the true light, or influence, we display to the world. As the light of the world and a city upon a hill, God's people are to,

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

We are,

... in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world (Phil. 2:15).

We must,

... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Eph. 5:11).

This requires those who are spiritually asleep to,

... Awake ... and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light (Eph. 5:14).

We must don the armor of light and put off wickedness; otherwise, our lights cannot shine (Rom. 13:11-14).

Fervor involves the heart (Matt. 5:8). We must be,

... servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men (Eph. 6:6-7).

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Know that of

the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ (Col. 3:23-24).

One who loves the Lord fervently (Luke 10:27) and trusts in Him with all his heart (Prov. 3:5) will serve Him heartily.

A second quality which characterizes zeal is URGENT ACTION. Notice the urgency in Abraham's reaction to Jehovah's appearance;

... he ran to meet them ... Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly ... Abraham ran unto the herd ... (Gen. 18:1-7).

God's people have urgency of action because they imbibe the living, active, powerful, and sharp Word of God (Heb. 4:12); no wonder they are living stones (I Peter 2:5), since they live by the "*living oracles*" (Acts 7:38) and have the motivation of that "*living hope*" (I Peter 1:3).

Realizing the urgency of carrying the message of the gospel (the invitation of the great spiritual feast in God's house) to the lost (Luke 14:15-24), Philip the evangelist "*ran*" to the Ethiopian (Acts 8:30). And, being very much aware of the urgency of obeying the message, the Philippian jailor, with his house, was baptized immediately (as were all other penitent believers in the book of Acts) (Acts 16:30-34). We must work, as did Christ, while there is opportunity (John 9:4). The angels realized that Lot's wife was in immediate peril, yet he delayed to leave wicked Sodom; therefore, they "*hastened Lot*" (Gen. 19:15).

Preach the word, be instant (urgent) in season, out of season ... (II Tim. 4:2).

A third quality which characterizes zeal is INDUSTRY and HARD WORK.

Study to shew thyself (Give diligence, ASV) approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (handling aright) the word of truth (II Tim. 2:15).

The Christian must handle the Word of God with accuracy (Gal. 1:6-9), speaking only God's oracles (I Peter 4:11). A perversion is **not** the doctrine of Christ (Rom. 1:16). One has no right to expect that a knowledge of the truth comes easy; a comic book type approach to the Scriptures will not produce mature children of God.

Timothy was commanded by Paul to,

... give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine (teaching, ASV) ... continue in them (I Tim. 4:13, 16).

Elders likewise are commanded to be diligent and industrious.

... he that ruleth, with diligence ... (Rom. 12:8).

The command of Paul to Titus is,

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works ... (Titus 3:8).

This attitude must be constantly maintained,

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life (Prov. 4:23).

God's commands are to be studiously carried out, which requires labor.

Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently (Psm. 119:4).

Just as many of the Israelites fell in the wilderness because of lack of obedience, we can fail in our faithfulness (Heb. 4:11). Thus, Peter commands that we,

... give diligence to make your calling and election sure ... (II Peter 1:5-11; II Peter 3:12-14).

God's people are ever watchful for opportunities to do good, to labor, and to serve, being much aware that we are to fight a very bold, diligent, and threatening adversary.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8).

It calls for soberness and industry (I Thess. 5:5-6).

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong (I Cor. 16:13).

Christ is our great, sinless example in work,
... who went about doing good (Acts 10:38).

Just as God gave Christ works to accomplish (John 5:36), so likewise does He demand that we work. Think of the dedication and labors of the Jerusalem church. Continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), they (in singleness of heart (2:46) and rejoicing (2:46)) persevered in persecution (4:31), helped the needy (4:32), maintained separation from the world (5:1-11), and "*ceased not to teach and preach Jesus as the Christ*" (5:42). The result was that,

... the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly (Acts 6:7).

And, when these brethren were scattered abroad by persecution, they went everywhere "*preaching the Word*" (Acts 8:4).

A fourth quality which characterizes zeal is STEADFASTNESS. God's soldiers are obstinate in fighting for good and right, against the forces of evil. It is a dead serious matter with them; there is no place for cowardice, reluctance, and weakness. When most retreat, the faithful are unyielding; when duty calls, no obstacle or opposition can

shake or undermine their resolve. "*Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin.*"

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle (II Thess. 2:15).

But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing (II Thess. 3:13).

... war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck (I Tim. 1:18-19).

Paul charged,

... endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth (on service) entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him (enrolled him) to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive (contend) lawfully (II Tim. 2:3-5).

To win the battle, one must persevere unto the end, continuing in the faith.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58).

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast (firm) unto the end (Heb. 3:14).

... Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord ... (Rev. 14:13).

... Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev. 2:10b).

Being steadfast unto the end, though, requires that one be "*rooted and grounded in love*" (Eph. 3:17); Christ can,

... present you holy and unblameable (without

blemish) and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled (steadfast), and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard ... (Col. 1:22-23).

The Tragedy Of Misguided Zeal

Since zeal has to do with man's immortal soul, it is imperative that one's zeal not be misdirected. A wonderful thing can lead to the greatest of disasters. Very often, zeal has outdistanced knowledge. Paul wrote,

For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2).

That can happen to anyone, including you and me, dear reader. Let us do nothing to dampen one's enthusiasm and action, but let us accompany it with good judgment, genuine knowledge, and reasoned expectations. The Word is replete with examples of those whose zeal was blind and misguided, outstretching their understanding and judgment.

The **devil** goes about his work with an immeasurable amount of zeal, seeking every opportunity to destroy man (I Peter 5:8). His works are diabolical and ruthless. One has but to examine the rabid, evil and vicious work of Satan in destroying Job to see that he is archenemy of both God and man (Job 1-2). His zeal, though, is evil and misguided.

King Saul showed great zeal, but it was misdirected.

And there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David sought the face of Jehovah. And Jehovah said, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he put to death (slaughtered) the Gibeonites (II Sam. 21:1).

Why?

Saul sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.

Saul's sons were all slain by the Gibeonites and hung up in the mountain (except for Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, because of David's oath with Jonathan) (II Sam. 21:1-9).

His misguided zeal had caused God earlier to inform Saul that He would wrest the kingdom from him and his family, giving it to "*a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou*" (I Sam. 15:28-29). Why such punishment? It was not because of a lack of zeal in destroying the Amalekites, but rather because of his failure to "*perform my commandments.*" Though Saul had claimed, "*I have performed the commandment of Jehovah,*" he had actually not performed them, for he had failed to perform them all – he had,

spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them (as Jehovah commanded): but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly (I Sam. 15:11, 13-19, 8, 9).

He did not obey God because he did not obey Him fully; further, he was presumptuous (15:17-23).

The **Jews**, God's chosen people to whom God entrusted the Law of Moses, had a misguided zeal. They made void the Word of God by their traditions (Matt. 15:6), worshipping God in vain,

... teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matt. 15:9).

This constituted one of those plants which God has not planted and which shall be uprooted (destroyed) come judgment day (Matt. 15:13). Some

of the most scathing rebukes of the Lord were directed toward the zealous Pharisees.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, (note that enthusiasm!); and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves (Matt. 23:15).

He also termed them "*blind guides*," "*fools*," "*blind*," "*like unto whited sepulchres*," "*sons of them that slew the prophets*," "*serpents*," "*offsprings of vipers*," murderers, et al. (Matt. 23:16-36). Is it any wonder, then, that they crucified the Saviour of the world?

The Jews had zeal for the Law of Moses, but they sought it not by faith (works minus faith in Christ was/is dead works (legalism)), but as it were by works (alone). They stumbled at the stone of stumbling (Christ); even as it is written,

Behold I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence: And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame (Rom. 9:30-33).

Works minus faith in the cross could no more save under the Mosaic covenant than works minus faith in the cross can save today. But, the antithesis is also true; faith without works of obedience to God's law could not save under the Mosaic covenant, nor can it save today. Faith without works is as dead as a corpse (James 2:24-26); it always has been dead! The Jews, therefore,

... being ignorant of God's righteousness (through the cross), and seeking to establish their own (separate from the cross and, consequently, separate from the Law of Christ), they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the

end (or purpose) of the law unto righteousness
to everyone that believeth (Rom. 10:1-4).

One can see why they did not all obey the gospel (Rom. 10:16); they rejected the prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ in Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 7:14, as well as the prophecies about His being God's suffering servant, God's chief corner stone, and God's risen, ascended, and crowned King of the exalted kingdom. In fact, they fulfilled prophecy (Psm. 2) in uniting with the heathen to devise a plot against the Messiah and to execute it. Yes, their misguided zeal nailed the only begotten Son of God to the cruel cross of Calvary. But, God raised Him, and He now reigns on God's right hand (Acts 2:22-36).

Saul of Tarsus, himself later grievously persecuted by his own zealous, misguided, wilfully ignorant kinsmen, the Jews, was guilty of having zeal without knowledge. Always a believer in God, Saul confessed,

I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things (note his zeal) contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth (note his ignorance) (Acts 26:9).

Thinking "*with himself*" and being without knowledge of God's will was tragic. He killed the best people on earth – Christians, thinking he did God a service. Yes, Saul was so zealous that he,

... profited (advanced) in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers (Gal. 1:14).

... I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women (Acts 22:3-4).

Zeal alone could not / cannot save, nor could holding on to the manmade traditions of the

fathers (Col. 2:20-23).

When Saul learned he was wrong and was led into a knowledge of the truth, he readily repented and obeyed the law of Christ (Acts 22:16). He became a ready servant of the Lord, preaching and defending the Way which he once persecuted – still zealous (only increasingly so), now with knowledge (Rom. 1:13-17; Acts 24:14; et al.).

The **Corinthians church** were enthusiastic in their lives, claiming to follow such noble Christians as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas; however, Paul rebuked them strongly, for their zeal was misguided. Failing to be of the same mind, judgment, speech, and doctrine (that for which Christ prayed in John 17:20-23 and requires in His Word (Gal. 1:6-9; I Peter 4:11; II John 9-11)),

Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul (I Cor. 1:12-13).

Children of God today can have zeal without knowledge, thus misguided. Letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom,

... whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name (by the authority of) of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:17).

This requires a knowledge of His Word (II Tim. 2:15). Zealous but ignorant men often become fanatical and overbearing, sometimes binding where God has loosed. On the other hand, ignorance of the Word can lead one to be so zealous for lost souls that he uses gimmickery, entertainment, emotionalism, and/or a watered-down message to attract and "*reach*" them. Christ's zeal for the lost

never led Him to compromise, soften, or "*redefine*" the truth to fit the hardened, rebellious, prejudiced, self-centered, prideful sinner. What it takes to "*get*" the sinner it takes to "*keep*" him. If you have to joke a person into the church, you will have to chase him until judgment day. Some today are doing **great harm** to the church with their misguided zeal!

Some Biblical Examples Of Zeal

The Old Testament records many examples of zeal. One sees great enthusiasm coupled with knowledge in the lives of **Moses**, who boldly confronted Pharaoh and led his people out of Egyptian bondage through the wilderness; **Joshua**, who courageously led the triumph over the Canaanites and the possessing of the promised land of Canaan; the **judges**, who faithfully delivered God's people from their attackers, when Israel would turn back to God; **David**, who successfully defended the cause of God against Goliath and against the Philistines and others; **Solomon**, who zealously built God's house and dedicated it to His service; **Nehemiah**, who boldly returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the city walls; and countless others.

The New Testament records many other such examples of zeal, such as that of **Christ**, who bore our sins on the cruel cross. His enthusiasm is seen when He confronted errors and perversions of His Father's house. When the Lord overthrew the money changers.

And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up (John 2:17).

Stephen's "*wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake*" could not be withstood (Acts 6:10), and

Paul's enthusiasm for lost souls led him to unimaginable persecution and eventual martyrdom (II Tim. 4:6-8). One sees the same burning fire in **Peter** and the other **apostles** from Pentecost until their deaths, all being murdered for "*the faith*," with the evident exception of John. See also the zeal of the **Jerusalem church** (Acts 2:42-8:4), the **churches in Macedonia** (II Cor. 8, 9), et al.

What Zeal Will Do

Enthusiasm, rightly directed, will turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). The first century church carried the gospel to "*every creature*" under heaven (Col. 1:23). They had singleness of heart, singleness of purpose, and singleness of message (Acts 2:42-47). They were willing to give and to sacrifice their all for the Lord (Phil. 3:7-8).

We are redeemed to be a "*people zealous of good works*" (Titus 2:14), "*ready unto every good work*" (Titus 3:1), practicing pure and undefiled religion (James 1:27), and doing good unto all men (Gal. 6:10).

Zeal is contagious, causing others around us to burn with fervor (II Cor. 9:2). Every Christian must be self-motivated and on fire with zeal; let it not be said that any of us diminished enthusiasm in others!

Biblical enthusiasm will cause us as individuals, as elders, as evangelists, as teachers – the whole church of Christ – to continue to abide in the truth (John 8:32; Psm. 119:105; John 15:10; II Peter 3:18). We will not thus be led away after worldly philosophy and manmade doctrines (Col. 2:8).

Zeal for God's house, the church (I Tim. 3:15), will be characterized by being "*set for the defence of the gospel*," as was Paul (Phil. 1:17) and by

stopping the mouths of false witnesses (Titus 1:9-11). "... *contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints*" (Jude 3).

The child of God possessing zeal coupled with knowledge will in meekness seek to restore the erring (James 5:19-20). He always is mindful of the straying sheep, as was/is the Great Shepherd. The elder brother possessed zeal, but it was misdirected and left him on the outside; the prodigal was alive again and on the inside (Luke 15:11-32).

Conclusion

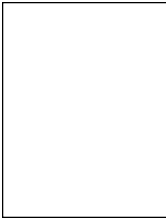
The rewards of Biblical zeal are immeasurable. It makes our labors "*not in vain*" (I Cor. 15:58). Let us lead others into these great blessings.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
He that goeth forth and weepeth, being
precious seed, shall doubtless come again
with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with
him (Psm. 126:5-6).

Chapter 18

PEOPLE OF GOD: OBEDIENT, HUMBLE, COMMITTED

JAMES WATKINS



Began preaching in 1949 • Holds the B.S. and M.A. degrees from the Alabama School Of Religion • Served churches in Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama • Married Foye Dooly in 1948 and they have four children, two daughters and two sons • Speaks in a number of gospel meetings each year • Presently the pulpit minister with Church Street in Lewisburg, TN.

Introduction

Let us notice first the definition of "**People Of God.**" Our Lord said:

... If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples (John 8:31).

The "*people of God*" therefore are those who abide in the Word (teaching) of Christ.

"Obedient" – Not weakness but strength of character that trusts.

"Humble" – Self abasement, condescension for a noble, worthy cause.

"Committed" – To deliver a person or thing into the charge or keeping of another.

Our Text Informs Us:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed

hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:11-14).

Note the expression, "*hath appeared*." Thus in visible form, shining forth in the face of Jesus Christ, we see the indescribable, unmerited, Divine favor that brings (has brought) salvation to all men. In light of this, to the uninitiated ear, our Lord's teaching in Matthew 7:13-14 would sound strange indeed. Jesus here explains that most men are lost. How can it be that the "*grace of God hath appeared bringing salvation to 'all' men*" and yet most men are lost? This brings us to our theme, "*The Children of God*."

Obedience is the only manifestation of faith (James 2:18). For this reason "*obedience*" and "*faith*" are sometimes used synonymously or interchangeably. In Hebrews 3:19,

... Were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

In Hebrews 4:6,

... Failed to enter in because of disobedience.

Faith, being an intangible, must be made manifest in overt action. There can be no "*children of God*" without obedience to the gospel. Not obedience to some religious system, but obedience to the gospel. John said,

And we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments (I John 2:3).

It is imperative, therefore, that the Word of God remain unchanged or unaltered in any particular way. The Scripture is replete with warnings against change, additions or deletions. Note: Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation

22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-9; II John 9-11; I Peter 4:11.

Today we are being regaled with several "isms" that are really "*wasums*." For instance, the "*new hermeneutic*" is neither new nor is it true hermeneutics. Satan has been leading men to misinterpret Scripture from the dawn of recorded truth. I am thankful that truth is readily distinguishable. It identifies itself by its singularity. It stands alone. It neither mixes or mingles with anything but truth. All truth is in perfect harmony with itself. Truth runs in parallel lines and never contradicts itself. It is therefore imperative that we have "*all*" God has said on any subject lest, being only partially informed, we think we have discovered a new principle of truth.

Today, more and more people are suggesting that we "*Just preach the gospel and leave doctrinal issues alone.*" We are told to "*Avoid controversial issues. They disturb families and alienate neighbors.*" Our Lord, however made it clear that doctrine is of primary importance. He said,

... This people honoreth me with their lips;
but their heart is far from me. But in vain
they do worship me, teaching for doctrines
the commandments of men (Matt. 15:8-9).

The apostle Paul is very clear in his denunciation of even the slightest change in the doctrine of Christ (Gal. 1:6-9; I Cor. 1:10-13).

John, by inspiration, leaves no doubt as to the imperative nature of doctrine:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in
the doctrine (teaching, ASV) of Christ, hath
not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of
Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

Someone argues, "*Well, that just means that*

all must believe in the fact of Christ, i.e., His Sonship, death, burial and resurrection." Isn't it amazing how far off balance we can become trying to dodge the truth? Jesus teaches:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21a).

May I ask then, who will enter? Listen to Him carefully,

... but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21b).

The rest of this text (vs. 22-27) will show that the people who called Him "*Lord*" were not heathen. They had worked, served, and labored in His cause. He did not deny that they were deeply religious. He did not deny that they were honest, sincere and committed, yet He said to them,

... I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. 7:23).

Why? How could He possibly say that to people who not only believed in Him as God's Son, but had also committed their lives to Him? Verses 24 through 26 tell us very clearly:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings (doctrine) of mine, and **doeth them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ... And every one that heareth these sayings (doctrine) of mine, and **doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand (Matt. 7:24-26).

Obviously then, the **doctrine of Christ** involves more than mental assent to the fact of His life, death and resurrection. It involves obedience (Heb. 5:8-9).

Good people, if ever there was a time in the history of the Lord's church when the gospel needs

to be preached in all of its beauty and saving power, it is today. May God help us to speak as His oracles direct, giving book, chapter and verse for the truth that makes men free.

God's people are not only to be obedient to His will, but, in so doing, are to exhibit the humility that characterized Christ. Brethren, I am persuaded that what some are calling "*legalism*" is in actuality a lack of humility on the part of those who teach truth without respect of persons and uncompromisingly. While such teaching must be done, we must exhibit the Spirit of Christ while doing it. Love is the only motive God will accept for our actions (I Cor. 13). Love manifests itself in tender compassion; an understanding of the background and weaknesses of others. One evidence of our Lord's humility is found in the fact that, though He taught the truth positively, He never sought to force it upon anyone. He stated the truth clearly and left man's reaction to the leadings of His own heart (John 12:47-48).

Humility makes itself known in the patient endurance of trials, sustained by our faith in God. Any effort to alter the truth in order to justify a given situation is a clear indication of the absence of humility. Presumption is, and has always been, an indication of the loss, or absence of humility. Saul, the son of Kish, is an excellent example of this very thing. Consider his humility at the time of his anointing at Mizpah (I Sam. 10:17-24). He hid himself among the baggage. Observe, sometime later, his action as he "*forced*" himself and prematurely offered the burnt offering in Samuel's stead (I Sam. 13:10). One might also note how and why he failed to carry out God's commandment relative to the destruction of the Amalekites (I Sam. 15). For his lack of humility,

he was rejected as the King of Israel.

To this day, the lack of humility is in evidence. Men assume the prerogatives of God and many are misled due to their lack of humble submission to God's authority. For instance, today many are telling us that God's law relative to divorce and remarriage has been misunderstood for centuries. It is being taught that one without the bases set forth by our Lord in Matthew 19:9, and elsewhere, may put away his wife and contract a second marriage. It is my understanding of this passage that Jesus (the Lawgiver) is saying that one must have put away a spouse for sexual infidelity before a second marriage could be consummated. Further, it would appear from His teaching elsewhere (Col. 3:12-14), that the guilty party should be put away only when he/she obstinately refuses to repent. I know of no scriptural teaching which permits the fornicator, who has destroyed his home by means of his own ungodliness, to contract a second marriage. Such would render the teaching of Christ null and void. It has been argued that I Corinthians 7 gives such authority, but if it does, such has escaped my notice for more than 40 years. It is true that Paul, in I Corinthians 7:10-11, reaffirms what Jesus taught in Matthew 19:9, but nowhere does it deny what is thus affirmed.

A hypocritically pious humility is portrayed today when men, bereft of true humility, tell us that the use of instruments of music in the worship of God is a matter of personal choice. If indeed I am motivated and directed by what God has authorized in His Word, then the Christian life is relatively simple, regulated and defined. If I am at liberty to do that which the Lord has not specifically condemned, even one thing, then the term "*Christianity*" means anything, everything

or nothing depending upon the individual choice. One man prays to Mary, another counts beads while yet others play bingo for fund raising purposes. Many deem brewing alcoholic beverage a worthy enterprise for the church, at least it has been done for many years, tax free. What is wrong with this? If the argument of the instrument sympathizers is correct, nothing. These things are simply matters of choice. You and I, if we respect God's authority, know that these things are wrong. Why? For the same reason the instrument in the worship of God in the Christian age is wrong, Christ has not authorized it. Were Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1) destroyed because one fire was hotter than another? Were they destroyed because certain types of fire will not burn incense? Friends, Nadab and Abihu, priests of God, sons of Aaron, the High Priest were destroyed because they made no distinction between the "common" and the "holy." They had no regard for God's authority. That which was dedicated by blood of animals, as per God's instructions, was holy, set apart from things common or profane. The fire should have been taken from the brazen altar at the door of the tent of meeting. Why would they have taken it from some other source? For the exact same reason men use mechanical instruments of music in worship to God in the Christian age; they pay no attention to God and His Word.

Conclusion

Errors, false doctrines, human opinion could be multiplied ad infinitum. The faithful child of God, however, orders his life by "**Thus Saith The Lord.**" Not passive but, according to Ephesians 5:11, reproveth all error, fully conscious of his own imperfections (Gal. 6:1-2).

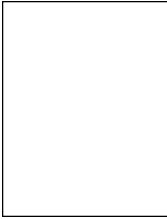
Section V

BLESSED HOPE
AND
GLORIOUS APPEARING

Chapter 19

PRECIOUS BLESSED HOPE

RAYMOND HAGOOD



Born in Pulaski, TN • Graduated from Tullahoma High School • Preaching for 20 years • Attended David Lipscomb College, B.A. degree in speech • Currently preaches for the Lovers Lane church in Steubenville, Ohio • Editor of **Unity In Truth** • Director of the Upper Ohio Valley Lectureship • Raymond and his wife Lucy have two children, Taylor and Libby.

Introduction

Some years ago I went to visit a man who was dying. He had just learned that he had a type of cancer that was incurable and fast-acting. The intractable nature of his disease encapsulated his life into a microcosm that could be measured in terms of minutes and days. When I went into the bedroom to try and offer comfort to him, I was struck by the fact that he was just lying there, staring into space. I spoke to him, and he responded, but his mind was far away. His eyes were pensive and fixed on considerations that transcended the affairs of this life.

I realized then that I had just looked into the eyes of a man with no hope, and the desperation of the image I saw was something that I could never forget.

Hopelessness is a horrifying phenomenon that paralyzes everything around it. It is a drastic deterrent to progress, curbing and repressing desire

and motivation. It disheartens the strongest souls and turns resolve and courage into cowardice and lethargy. It produces an environment of gloom, pessimism and desperation. Hopelessness is a terrible thing, and all who come face to face with it are changed irrevocably.

In contrast then, hope produces confidence, assurance, trust, expectancy, encouragement and aspiration. Hope fuels the human soul and propels it to heights that are sublime and majestic. The hopeful heart is sanguine and anticipatory. Hope is the ultimate motivator, which is progressive, forward-looking and enterprising.

Hope forges ahead, calm, confident, and unafraid, while hopelessness retreats into a slough of despondency and melancholy. Hopeful and hopeless represent two ways of living that are diametrically opposed to each other; which one we follow is directly linked to our relationship with God. Hope is inextricably tied to godliness, while hopelessness is the inevitable result of ungodliness. **Denying ungodliness and living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world** allows us to look to that **blessed hope** that Paul speaks of in Titus 2:13. This blessed hope is central to Christianity, and it is vital that Christians understand what hope is – its nature, its motivational qualities and its vigorous spiritual efficacy.

Defining Hope

The word "*hope*" is from the Greek word "*elpis*." Thayer defines it this way:

... trust; that in which one confides or to which he flees for refuge, expectation.¹

Kittel engages in a detailed discussion of this word. He emphasizes the expectant quality of hope

and gives a historical analysis of the word. Under the heading, "*The Early Christian Concept of Hope*," Kittell says,

If hope is fixed on God, it embraces at once the three elements of expectation of the future, trust, and the patience of waiting.²

Vine says that *elpis* denotes,

... favourable and confident expectation. It has to do with the unseen and the future. Hope describes (a) the happy anticipation of good (b) the ground upon which hope is based (c) the object upon which the hope is fixed.³

Leslie G. Thomas gave this excellent analysis of the elements of hope:

The principle ingredients which go to make up hope are (1) expectancy – the outlook of the soul as opposed to the inlooking, the looking away from one's self to some person or god; (2) desire – one may expect something and dread it; but when expectation is coupled with desire, then he wants it; (3) anticipation – the bringing of the distant and the future near; living in the future, as it were, before it comes; seeing things as they will be, and not merely as they are.⁴

It is important to understand that hope looks to the future and not to the past or present. Paul gives us a proper understanding of hope in Romans 8:24,25:

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Paul affirms that hope which is now seen and realized is not hope at all. Hope is prospective. While hope does not ignore the past nor relegate the present, it does look to the future with eager anticipation.

Often we misuse the word hope. We say, "*I hope I made the right decision,*" or "*I hope I am doing this right.*" Both of these expressions are improper, because they view hope in the past or present instead of viewing hope as a future matter.

Robert Taylor gives another example of a misemployment of the word hope:

Hope is misapplied and misunderstood when men use it unrealistically. Hope is within the realm of realism. Hope would be a misused term when a man says, "I hope to live 500 years on this earth and never know a day of sickness or sadness." That is wishful thinking, touching both the longevity of his life and its perfect quality while here. We are not going to live that long, and no life is immune to sickness and sadness.⁵

Additionally, hope is expectation. Hope is not wishful thinking, but an expectation of receiving that which has been promised. Hope, therefore, is a knowing process that has no doubts and is assured of the certainty of the things hoped for. The Hebrew writer speaks of this,

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who had fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil (Heb. 6:17-19).

God, who cannot lie, has promised salvation to all those that obey Him. A faithful Christian totally trusts God and God's promises and hopes (expects, knows) that God will do that which He has promised. Hope, like faith, is never doubtful

or unbelieving and thus never vacillates in its resolve to conform completely to Jehovah's will.

The Source Of Hope

When the Saviour was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, subjected to those mock trials, condemned by Pilate and crucified on the cross, Peter lost his faith and hope. Faith is fundamental to hope, and once faith leaves, hope will soon follow. The resurrection of Jesus from the grave restored Peter's faith and revived his torpid hope. Peter speaks of this in I Peter 1:3,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Faith is the product of hearing and understanding God's Word (Rom. 10:17). Since faith and hope are inextricably linked and since faith is derived from the Bible, it logically follows that the source of hope is God's Word. We have hope, because we believe God's promises and trust that He will fulfill all that He has said.

Hope is not a blind leap in the dark, but neither is faith. Both are the product of knowledge.

Hope is also based in an unwavering trust in the being who makes the promises. The Hebrew writer therefore forcefully affirms that the integrity and veracity of God are absolute and unquestionable.

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (Heb. 6:18).

Paul clearly teaches that Christ is also the center of our hope.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope (I Tim. 1:1).

Paul speaks of the assurance of this hope in Titus 2:13:

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Why do we have this hope? This question is answered by Paul in verse 14:

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

We have hope because Jesus has reconciled us to God by His death, burial and resurrection.

We have hope because of the grandeur of the promises themselves. Jesus, in speaking to the eleven in the upper room, addressed the deep sorrow and fear that permeated those men's hearts. He gave them this glorious promise:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

God makes promises, and He always keeps them. Sometimes they are conditional and contingent upon individual's fulfilling their part in the promise. While humans may fail to keep vows or to uphold their part in a covenant, God never fails in His part.

God has assured heaven to those who faithfully serve Him, and this hope is sure and certain. Peter describes the plenary and absolute

nature of the heavenly promises in I Peter 1:4:

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

John spoke of these eternal promises in I John 3:1-3:

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

The Temporal And The Eternal

Hope is based on the promise of a future life with God forever in heaven. Contrasted with our current existence on earth is the magnificence and grandeur of heaven. This is the very thing that Paul discusses in II Corinthians 4:16-18 and II Corinthians 5:1-10.

Paul says this in II Corinthians 4:16-18:

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Notice the powerful contrast in this text between the outward man and the inward man, between "*light*" and "*heavy*," and between that which is seen and that which is not seen.

The outer man refers to our physical existence on earth. This physical life dies a little bit every day. Disease, the aging process, the wear and tear of daily living, the trials and worries of life take quite a toll on the outer man. The body begins to wear down, facing the prospect of eventual dilapidation and weakness. The aging of the external part of man can be a disturbing and depressing matter. To see strong backs bend, eyes dim, hair turn grey and legs grow feeble under the pressure of time brings sadness. In spite of all that humans can do, the armies of decay march on, producing the winter of life that will inevitably come, if death does not call first.

To a faithful Christian, however, the daily grind of rapidly passing time is of little consequence because, as Paul said,

... though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

While the physical properties diminish with the passing of time, the inner spirit grows stronger and develops more fully every day. Outwardly, there is decay, but inwardly, there is continual regeneration. To those possessed of hope, this daily decline of the external man means little, because the constant rejuvenation of the inner man more than compensates for it.

Additionally, Paul discusses the afflictions that we face in life. These afflictions include a variety of heartaches and problems, namely, disease, death, grief, persecutions, temptations, fears, economic burdens, financial problems and an array of difficulties.

While we would be quick to style these problems as great and heavy burdens, Paul positively asserts that these are momentary, light

afflictions compared to the weighty glory in store for us. We are often prone to view the troubles of life as being overwhelming and crushing, but Paul clearly shows that such a view is improper for the faithful child of God. The glories of heaven, the unending blessing that we shall receive are so great that we will look back in amazement and affirm that all we faced in life was light and small compared to heaven.

Sadly in life, humans are carried away with those things which are visible and subject to our external senses. Often our love affair with these earthly things is so great that we lose sight of the fact that the visible things are transient and ephemeral. Only the invisible things are permanent. Therefore, to serve that which is physically perceptible is utter folly because all of these things will be lost. Whether it be beauty, property, intellect, power, money, political status or whatever – it is all temporal, mundane and impermanent.

Christian hope allows the child of God to transcend the ordinary affairs of life and face every difficulty with calmness and assurance. A Christian is able to enjoy his stay on earth to its fullest, because he knows that this life is not all there is. While he takes pleasures in this life, he does not make the mistake of living for this existence alone. The hope that is in Him lifts him to untold heights of expectation and anticipation for the life to come. That which is fleeting and evanescent holds little appeal to him, because his eyes are fixed on the permanent abode of the New Jerusalem.

In II Corinthians 5:1 the contrast continues, as Paul compares the two human dwelling places. This earthly abode is described as a tabernacle or tent house. This house is not permanent and

can be easily taken down by loosing the ropes and removing the pegs from the ground.

The building of God is very different in that it is not made with hands and is eternal, not subject to be taken down, rolled up and carried away. Lenski has well said in regard to this verse,

It's opposite is 'a building from God, a house or home not made with (human) hands, eternal, in the heavens' with God and Christ: a permanent, pious, infinitely blessed existence in heaven. Let the one form of existence or life come to an end, be folded up and put away like a tent; we have the other awaiting us, an existence and a life like an everlasting, great building, which was created for us by God himself in heaven.⁶

Faith, Hope And Love

Often in the Bible, faith, hope and love are linked together in close federation. Paul joins them in I Corinthians 13:13,

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

They are allied in Colossians 1:4-5:

Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.

Paul unites them again in Galatians 5:5-6:

For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

The triumvirate is again seen in I Thessalonians 1:3:

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of

hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.

Faith is the substratum of Christianity and forms the bedrock of godliness. Love provides the fervor, intensity, devotion and consecration which are so essential to serving God. Hope supplies the motivation that energizes and produces zeal and unquenchable vitality.

Access To Hope

In Hebrews 11:1 faith is described as being "*the substance of things hoped for.*" Those things in which we believe create the object of our hope; therefore, in order to have hope, we first must have faith in God and in His Word.

Colossians 1:27-28 says,

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Here the hope of glory is shown to be "*Christ in you.*" In the following verse, then, we see that men must be warned and taught, so they may be presented "*perfect in Christ Jesus.*" This clearly demonstrates the realm in which hope is to be found. Galatians 3:27 explains how one may be in Christ.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Romans 5:1-2 shows that it is through Christ that men have access by faith into God's grace and then may "*rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*"

In Ephesians 2:12 "*having no hope*" is equated

to being "*without Christ*" and "*without God.*" This condition contrasts with the remedy described in the next verse as "*in Christ.*"

But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13).

That this is the only sphere of hope is stated in Ephesians 4:4-6.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

To maintain hope, one must stay faithful to God, as taught in Colossians 1:21-23.

And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.

He may then live "*in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*" (Titus 1:2).

Hope is the song in our hearts, the light that lifts our eyes above the mud and the squalor and the decadence to the joy and the radiance and the beauty of God. May we all come within the realm of the hope of glory and do all we can to take this hope to a lost world!

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope ... (Rom. 15:13).

Endnotes

1 J. H. Thayer, **Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament** (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 205.

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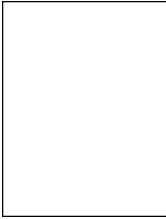
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Chapter 20

THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR SAVIOUR

FLAVIL NICHOLS



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Introduction

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:11-14).

Jesus is coming! And His appearing will be "GLORIOUS!"

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon defines the Greek word (DOXIA) which is translated "*glory*" as: Splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace, a glorious condition, a most exalted state, and uses the word "*majesty*" with reference to our Lord's coming (page 156).

His glorious coming is the blessed hope of

every faithful child of God! More than 300 verses – one out of every 25 verses – in the New Testament refer to our Lord’s majestic return. Despite this, the apostle Peter predicted that some scoffingly will ask: “Where is the promise of his coming?” (II Peter 3:3-4). Let us see:

Jesus Himself promised: *“I will come again”* (John 14:1-3).

At His ascension, **two angels** (*“men in white apparel”*) **announced** to the eleven apostles:

This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come** ... (Acts 1:9-11).

The Holy Spirit affirmed: *“Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time...”* (Heb. 9:28).

Jesus taught His disciples to watch for His return (Mark 13:34-35). Christians should with patience *“look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Phil. 3:20), and a crown of life awaits those who *“love his appearing”* (II Tim. 4:8). Saints should indeed be *“looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God...”* (II Peter 3:12), for the apostle Paul wrote: *“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven...”* (I Thess. 4:13-18).

When Will He Come

There are many false doctrines regarding the time of our Lord’s return. In 1973 my father (the late Gus Nichols) debated Max King, who affirmed – and yet teaches – that the only ‘*second coming of Christ*’ there ever will be took place in A.D. 70! More than fifty years ago, Dad pointed to a roadside sign in the shape, which declared;

“JESUS IS COMING SOON.”

He remarked: *“The very people who made and erected that sign, do not believe it! – If they did,*

they would have put up a cardboard sign instead of one in concrete!" Christians believe three-fourths of that sign: We believe "JESUS IS COMING!" But no man knows when.

When William Miller set October, 1843, as the time Jesus would return, thousands disposed of their property, bought "Ascension Robes," climbed to the roof-tops and nearby hills – only to be disappointed! That false prophet rechecked his calculations, and announced that he had made a one-year mistake: Jesus would come in 1844! But he was wrong again! "Judge" Rutherford (who was never a Judge!) of Jehovah's Witness fame, predicted Jesus would come in 1914, and I have a copy of their book: *"Millions Now Living Will Never Die."* When that year passed without his return, they invented the false doctrine that he indeed did come in 1914, and has been here on earth ever since –but that he is invisible!

The Holy Spirit guided the beloved apostle John to write:

Behold, he cometh with clouds, and **every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him . . .**" (Rev. 1:7).

Jesus asserted that his coming will be visible to all:

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matt. 24:27).

Not Coming Alone

Enoch prophesied: *"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints"* (Jude 14). Our blessed Redeemer will be accompanied by a vast host, for *"all the holy angels"* will come with him (Matt. 25:31). Paul wrote that *"them also which*

sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (I Thess. 4:13), and refers to the *“coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints”* (I Thess. 3:13). What a *“glorious”* coming that will be!

Last Trumpet Will Sound

We learn from the apostle Paul that,

The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the **trump of God** ... (I Thess. 4:15-16).

The noisy instant of His coming will be,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: **for the trumpet shall sound**, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (I Cor. 15:52).

Note that this will be the “last trump.”

All The Dead Will Be Raised

There is not going to be another blast on that trumpet a thousand years later to raise the wicked dead, as Premillennialists claim. Rather, *“all that are in their graves”* will be raised the same *“hour.”* Jesus himself declared that,

The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).

Billy Graham, Herbert W. Armstrong, and all other premillennialists are wrong when they teach that the wicked dead will be raised a thousand years after the righteous dead are raised. Jesus Christ said both groups—the saved and the lost – *“all”* will be raised the same *“hour!”* How else

could those who crucified Jesus – *“they also which pierced him”* – **see** Jesus at His second coming, as He promised in Revelation 1:7?

Christ repeatedly affirmed that the **righteous** will be raised the **“last day”** (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24). There will not later be another **“day”** – much less a thousand years! – in which the wicked dead will be raised! Glorious will be the sounding of that **“last trump!”**

At death our bodies are *“sown in corruption,” “dishonor,”* and in *“weakness;”* but they will be *“raised in incorruption,” “glory,”* and *“in power”* (I Cor. 15:42-44). When Jesus comes in glory, – **“then”** – death shall be *“swallowed up in VICTORY.”* – The risen saints may look down into their own empty graves and victoriously jeer, saying:

O death, where is thy sting? O grave,
where is thy victory? (I Cor. 15:51-58).

We can not say that now! But **“then,”** on that glorious resurrection day, we can!

Thanks be to God, which giveth us the
victory through our Lord Jesus Christ
(I Cor. 15:57).

Glorious will be the resurrection of all the dead that day!

Living Saints Will Be Changed

The changing of the righteous who are then still alive on earth will also be **“glorious!”** They will not have to go through the procedure of dying and being raised. But no man can go to heaven in these flesh-and-blood bodies: for **“flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God”** (I Cor. 15:50).

Paul tells us that **“first”** the dead will be raised;

...then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord (I Thess. 4:16-17).

Who can read this without sensing the superlative glory of that day?

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (I Cor.15:51-53).

Then, housed in immortal bodies, we shall be "*clothed upon with our house which is from heaven,*" our "*building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*" (II Cor. 5:1-2). Jesus promised,

I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:3).

It will be wonderful when we "*meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord!*" (I Thess. 4:17). Based on this glorious hope, inspiration adds: "*Wherefore comfort one another with these words*" (v. 18). Indeed there is "*comfort*" in knowing about "*the glorious appearing*" of our Lord (Titus 2:13)!

Judgment Will Be At His Coming

Having raised the dead, and changed the living, our Lord Jesus Christ "*shall judge the quick* (ASV: "living"), *and the dead*" (II Tim. 4:1). We already have seen that all the dead will be raised "*the last day*" (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24), and that the righteous and the wicked will be raised

the same "hour" (John 5:28-29). However, "the last day" is also when the judgment will be held; for Jesus declared: "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Jesus affirmed,

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works (Matt. 16:27).

He further described the judgment in these words:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory... (Matt. 25:31).

Note: the Bible nowhere says that He then shall "begin" to sit on His throne – for God raised up Christ "to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:30). Jesus is the "nobleman" who went into the "far country" (heaven) "to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke 19:12). At His ascension, He was given "a kingdom" (Dan. 7:14-15). In heaven He now is a "priest upon his throne" (Zech. 6:13). But "If he were on earth, he should not be a priest" (Heb. 8:4). Therefore if He were on earth He could not be on His throne!

Thus he already is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (I Tim. 6:15). And He still will be on His throne when He comes again, and the judgment is held.

Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left (Matt. 25:31-33).

The apostle John said,

I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works (Rev. 20:12).

Our glorious Lord Himself will be our judge; for,

God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge **the world** in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

For we must all appear before the judgment that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (II Cor. 5:10).

The secrets of men (and women) will be brought to light that day, for *"God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ"* (Rom. 2:16). Jesus is described as *"the righteous judge"* (II Tim. 4:8). He cannot be bribed!

Jehovah God,

... shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Eccl. 12:14).

All nations will be in that judgment. The standard by which each will be judged will be the Word of God.

The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

There then will be the final separation of the righteous and the wicked:

He shall separate them one from the other (Matt. 25:32).

To those on His right hand, Jesus will say:

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (verse 34).

But those on his left will hear:

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (verse 41).

He said that the duration of the punishment in that fire will be *“everlasting”* punishment (II Thess. 1:7-9).

Although Christ died for all (I Tim. 2:6), and the gospel, including our glorious Savior’s invitation (Matt. 11:28-30) is for all (Mark 16:15-16), yet *“many”* (Matt. 7:14) will be eternally lost! Why? All accountable people *“have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). Each one’s own sins separated him from God (Isa. 59:2).

Christ is our only hope for salvation (I Tim. 1:15). But some are lost because the glorious gospel of Christ has been hid from them (II Cor. 4:3-4). Some are lost because they refuse to believe the gospel (Mark 16:16; Rom. 10:16). Some, because they will not repent of their sins (Luke 13:3,5; Rom. 2:4-5). Those who are *“ashamed of”* Christ, and refuse to confess Him before men (Mark 8:38; Rom. 10:9-10), will be denied by Christ in judgment day:

For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s glory, and of the holy angels (Luke 9:26).

Those who *“rejected the counsel of God against themselves; being not baptized”* (Luke 7:30) cannot claim the promise of the Savior who said:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16).

Many will be turned away from the beautiful gates of heaven for not serving Christ (Matt. 15:31-46).

Every unsaved soul shall be *“turned into hell, with all nations that forget God”* (Psm. 9:17), *“when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe”* (II Thess. 1:10).

Second Dominion Of The Kingdom

Old Testament prophets foretold the establishment of the kingdom (Isa. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4). Daniel saw a vision of Christ’s ascension to God the Father, and *“there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom ...”* (Dan. 7:13-14). John the Immerser, Jesus Christ Himself, the twelve apostles, and another seventy disciples – 84 inspired preachers – proclaimed that the kingdom was then *“at hand”* or had *“come nigh unto you”* (Matt. 3:1-2; 4:17; Matt. 10:7; Luke 10:1, 9, 11).

Jesus promised some in His lifetime would live to *“see the kingdom of God come with power”* (Mark 9:1), and the apostles anticipated its coming (Acts 1:6). The kingdom came *“with power”* (Acts 1:8) when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on Pentecost Day (Acts 2). That day Peter preached that Christ had been raised up from the dead *“to sit on David’s throne”* (Acts 2:30). The church is the *“first dominion”* of the kingdom foretold in Micah 4:8.

All who now are saved are *“delivered out of the power of darkness”* and are *“translated into the kingdom”* (Col. 1:13-14). John wrote that he was their companion *“in the kingdom . . . of Jesus*

Christ" (Rev. 1:9). Thus the Lord's kingdom had been "*received*" in the first century (Heb. 12:28).

However, the very mention of "*the first dominion*" (Micah 4:8) implies that there will be a second dominion. All the saved are added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47). The apostle Paul could therefore write that God

...hath delivered us out of the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Col. 1:13-14).

However such disciples were taught that "*we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*" (Acts 14:22). They already were in the "*first dominion*" of it, but not that aspect of the kingdom contemplated in I Corinthians 15:23-28, where Christ delivers "*the kingdom*" up to God the Father. Those who add the Christian graces, are promised:

...an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly **into** the everlasting kingdom ... (II Peter 1:5-11).

Christ is now ruling and reigning; and He,

...must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (I Cor. 15:25-26).

When the King of kings shall triumph over all His enemies, and when the "*last enemy*" – death – is banished forever, and all who ever have died are raised, then King Jesus shall "*deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father*" (I Cor. 15:24).

Jesus Christ will say to the righteous:

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34).

Thenceforth all the redeemed will forever be "*with the Lord*" (John 14:1-3)₂₈₂

World Will Be Destroyed

God never intended that this earth should last forever. To Noah He avered: "*While the earth remaineth . . .*" – which implies that this earth shall not always remain (Gen. 8:22).

Hear the apostle Peter on this subject:

The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (II Peter 3:10).

Jesus said:

Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Matt. 5:18).

Again He said:

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 32:21-33).

Our Savior spoke distinctly of "*the end of this world*" (Matt. 13:40, 49). The apostle Paul wrote of a (conditional) resolve or purpose ". . . *while the world standeth*" (I Cor. 8:13), which implies this world shall not stand forever. The apostle John wrote: "*The fashion of the world passeth away*" (I John 2:17).

Read God's description of the awesome destruction of this world:

The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned

up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Peter 3:9-13).

Those who *"have been baptized into Jesus Christ"* (Rom. 6:3) are partakers of *"the righteousness of God in him"* (II Cor. 5:21), and can thus dwell in that *"new heavens and a new earth."*

Heaven: Glorious Home Of The Soul

We look for the *"glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* (Titus 2:11-14). But we do not know when He is coming.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matt. 24:35-39).

Mark 13:32 quotes Him as saying,

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Jesus cautioned:

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

Conclusion

"The glory of the Lord shone round about" the shepherds to whom the birth of Jesus was announced (Luke 2:9). While Peter, John and James were with Jesus,

... as he prayed, ... the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening (Matt. 17; Mark 9).

Moses and Elijah,

...appeared **in glory**, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish in Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they **saw his glory**, and the two men that stood with him (Luke 9:28-32).

After His resurrection, Jesus walked toward Emmaus with two disciples, rehearsing unto them His sufferings. He asked them:

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to **enter into his glory**? (Luke 24:13-26).

We sometimes sing: "How beautiful heaven must be!" God's description of it (Rev. 21:1-27) staggers one's imagination! At the glorious return of Christ, the righteous will realize the assurance:

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

Truly,

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them (Rev. 14:13).

Not all WILL be saved — but all CAN be!

The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men . . . (Titus 2:11; cf. Eph. 2:8-9).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

John wrote:

We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the savior of the world (I John 4:14).

Jesus Christ . . . gave himself a ransom for all (I Tim. 2:5-6). He not only died for all, but He also invites *“all”* to come to Him for spiritual blessings (Matt. 11:28-30). He wants YOU to have a part in the *“rejoicing ... in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming”* (I Thess. 2:19).

However, if you spurn the Savior’s dying love, and refuse redemption by His precious blood, you will be turned away from the beautiful gates of that glorious heavenly home! Yes, turned away – with all the degraded souls who will inhabit regions of darkness and despair, forever! Christ does not will that any should perish (II Peter 3:9), but invites YOU, to come to Him now (Matt. 11:28-30). *“Today is day of salvation”* (II Cor. 6:2). Please do not reject His lovely invitation, but obey Christ!

Section VI

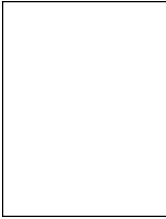
**A LESSON
FOR WOMEN**

Women's Lesson:

Chapter 21

**CHASTE, GODLY, PURE,
CHRISTIAN WOMEN**

SARAH RICHEY



Elder's wife • Mother of four daughters • Seven grandchildren • From a family of faithful elders, workers and gospel preachers • Faithful Bible teacher for over twenty years • Teacher of teachers, conducting visual aid workshops in many states • Speaker for ladies days and special occasions • Author of **Creative Bible Teaching, Vol. 1** and **Vol. 2**.

Titus 2:1-5

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Titus 2:11-15

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto

himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Introduction

There are many evil influences in the world today. The devil is busy and will use any means he can to destroy us (I Peter 5:8). You can be sure he will use whoever and whatever he can in the battle to gain control of your heart and your mind!

In a most subtle way, the devil draws us into sin. He confuses our minds. He takes the life of innocent babies and calls it pro-choice. He ridicules pure religion and persuades many to worship him instead of God Almighty. He destroys marriages and homes with many forms of sexual perversion. Sometimes we help the devil in his work with our actions and our thoughts. We need to be careful not to give him any help at all!

What can we do to stop the devil or slow down his advances? We must take a firm stand against evil. We must submit ourselves totally to God, resist the devil and he will flee from us (James 4:7). It is helpful to remember that as powerful as the devil is, there is One who is more powerful! Jesus said *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18). In Ephesians 6:10-11, Paul tells us how we can be strong.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

We are powerful as Christians because we have been given,

...all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3).

We have the power to make this world a better place in which to live.

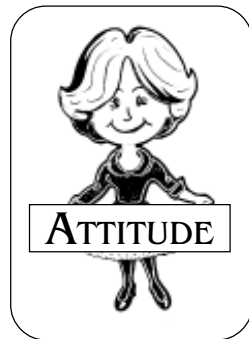
The degraded state of our world today should cause each of us to carefully consider our own heart and life in the light of God's word. We must determine not to let anyone or anything entice us into impurity! We should realize too, how great an influence we have as Christian women. Andrew Dickson White once said,

If the time should ever come when women are not Christians and houses are not homes, then we shall have lost the chief cornerstone on which Christianity rests.

The home is the foundation of all society, and the woman is the heart of the home.

It has been well said, it is a tragedy when a woman thinks more of paint than purity. It is a tragedy when a woman thinks more of vulgarity than virtue. It is a tragedy when a woman thinks more of pearls than principles of righteousness. It is a tragedy when a woman thinks more of hats and hose than holiness. It is a tragedy when a woman thinks more of dress than duty. It is a tragedy when a woman thinks more of mirrors than manners. It is a tragedy when a woman thinks more of business than beatitudes. It is a tragedy when a woman thinks more of being rich in material goods than being rich toward God. It is a tragedy when a woman thinks more of self than service.

Ladies, how do you feel when someone whispers to you: "*Psst, your slip is showing.*"? Don't you feel embarrassed? Immediately you begin to do whatever is necessary to correct



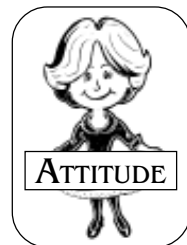
the problem. No one wants their slip to show! It's a definite "no-no." We want to look as nice as we can so we work hard to keep our slip from showing, but there's one thing we can not keep from showing! We can not hide our attitude! Our attitude always shows. Whether we have a good attitude, a bad attitude or a complacent attitude, it will show! Everyone sees our attitude. We can not hide it.

Attitudes are formed from thoughts. The quality of our thinking determines the quality of our lives. Our actions and our behavior are a result of our attitudes. If we are to be chaste, godly, pure Christian women, we must start with our attitude. Purity begins in the heart. In Mark 7, Christ makes it clear that moral impurity comes from evil hearts.

Sometimes our perception of moral and spiritual values seems to be dulled. We are Christians, loving and serving God with all our hearts and yet we still live and work in the world, where non-Christian values are prevalent. In Romans 12:1-2 we are told to "*be not conformed to the world.*" John pleads with us to "*love not the world, neither the things which are in the world*" (I John 2:15). Christians can *live in the world* without *surrendering to the world* or forsaking Christ. Let's examine our attitudes and determine whether or not we are chaste, godly and pure Christian women.

What Is Your Attitude Toward Immodesty?

Paul instructs us in I Timothy 2:9-10 to adorn ourselves in "*modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety.*" If we do this, there will be no doubt that we belong to God, not to the world. Christian ladies must never



dress in a way to trigger lustful thoughts in a man. This might be done if we wear that which is too tight, too thin, too low at the neck or too high at the hem.

Sometimes our children's pleas may be *"Well, everyone else is wearing it!"* We must not let the influence of the world dictate the way we dress. Let's remind ourselves often that our children learn most from *our* attitude and our example. What is *your* attitude toward immodesty? Do you recognize it as ungodly or are you likely to compromise and dress as the world dresses? Do you allow your daughter to dress *"like everyone else does"*? As Christian women, we can have an influence on society by the way we dress. We can be modest!

What Is Your Attitude Toward Sexual Impurity?



Without a doubt, sexual impurity is condemned in God's word. However, sexual impurity is a terrible problem in our society today. Lines have blurred between sin and righteousness.

We hear so much in the media about the pros and cons of abortion. Let me be quick to say that I believe aborting babies is murder! If the baby is not alive, as some would argue, then why do they want to kill it? Why abort it? The simple facts are the baby is alive and it is murder! However, more to the point at hand, I believe abortion is a symptom of a deeper problem, that of immorality. It has been estimated that approximately 70% of all who have abortions are unwed mothers! God's laws have been broken!

Sexual impurity is greatly encouraged by the

vast amount of pornography in the world today. Pornography is detrimental and degrading to society. Rape, child abuse and other sex-related, violent crimes have multiplied in recent years. It is believed that the illegal hard-core pornography network in this country nets more than \$9 billion a year! Some dial-a-porn telephone message centers report profits in excess of \$20,000 per day! These are often used by teenagers or adolescents. Pornography is a crime and a sin!

Satan will try to entice us with pre-marital or extra-marital sex. Or he may try convincing us that homosexuality is just an alternative lifestyle, when in fact it is sin! It is a perversion of God's plan! (Romans 1, I Corinthians 6)

What is *your* attitude toward sexual impurity? Do you believe that fornication destroys homes? Do you believe that sexual impurity violates the very purpose for which God created the human body? (I Corinthians 6:18-20) We must take a firm stand against sexual impurity of any kind. Remember, we are to "*denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*" and "*live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*" (Titus 2:12).

What Is Your Attitude Toward Corrupt Entertainment?

With the flip of a switch, we can be entertained *in our homes* by the most vulgar and filthy entertainers in the world! What is your attitude toward this? Are you quite tolerant of it or are you at times outraged? Do you often turn away from the television in disgust because there is nothing decent to watch?



Movies, television and video cassettes are perhaps the most influential means today in molding the moral values of our society. These forms of so called "entertainment" promote situation ethics, unwed couples living together, marital infidelity, divorce, teenage pregnancy, pornography, alcoholic lifestyles and many forms of violence!

The average American child will have watched television an estimated 21,000 hours by the time he has graduated from high school, compared to about 13,000 hours in school. As Christian parents, we are to train our children,

... in the way they should go (Prov. 22:6),

and

... bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

This responsibility does not belong to the world or even the most capable youth minister. It is *our* responsibility to be the dominating force in shaping our children's values. You assume a big responsibility when you give birth to a child. *YOU* are the best person for that job. There is no substitute for a mother. Take time to care about and teach your children! Television consumes precious time. If we allow our children to watch television excessively and do not monitor what they watch, we are inviting the world to teach and train our children.

When a heart-broken mother or father says "*Where did I go wrong?*," it may be they failed to give their child the priceless gift of time. We should know where our children are at all times. We should know their friends. We should spend time with our children, listen to them and pray with them. Our children need to know the perils of corrupt entertainment!

What Is Your Attitude Toward Gossip, Profanity And Verbal Abuse?



We are all well aware of the foul language to which we and our children are exposed. There is so much cursing and profanity in the world. God's name is taken in vain as an every day occurrence, sometimes even by Christians. There are words that are derivatives of profanity which are equally wrong, such as "*Gosh, golly, good gracious, gee, gee whiz,*" etc. The background of these words prove they are substitutions for profane expressions. Profanity in any form is wrong.

Matthew 12:34 tells us,

...out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.

Our speech indicates what kind of person we are on the inside. Ladies, let's strive to be pure in our speech. If our speech is pure, we will not talk evil of, gossip about, slander or verbally abuse one another (James 4:11). Words have incredible power to build us up or tear us down! Verbal abuse leaves such invisible scars! Do you remember the old saying,

Sticks and stones may break my bones
but words will never hurt me.

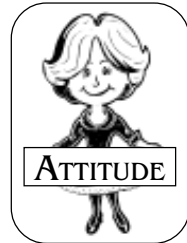
This is not true. Words *do* hurt! They can hurt deeply. They can destroy friendships. They can rip apart a home or a marriage.

Some people delight in telling one malicious tale after another, all the time pretending it *hurts* them to do so. Usually, they tell others "*not to tell anyone.*" Few things are more contemptible or more destructive! Such is condemned in Romans, chapter 1. Paul admonishes us in Ephesians 4:29

not to let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only that which is helpful in building others up. *This* should be our attitude toward gossip, profanity and such like!

What Is Your Attitude Toward Unkindness?

In God's family, we talk about grace, mercy and forgiveness. We call ourselves Christians and yet, sometimes we're the most un-Christian people on earth. We claim to be righteous and yet we omit the weightier matters of the law; that of judgment, mercy and faith. We strain at a gnat and swallow a camel (Matt. 23:23-24). To be godly and pure is to be like Christ. He was full of mercy, love and kindness. When we imitate Christ, we will show love, mercy and kindness to others.



How do you react to unkindness? When someone is unkind to you, how do you feel? Isn't it extremely hard to be kind toward someone who has treated you wrong? Yes, it is. However, Romans 12:17 teaches us *not* to return evil for evil. Consider for a moment how Jesus was falsely accused, he was made fun of, he was spat upon, scourged, betrayed by one of his own apostles and then hung on a cross to die the death of a criminal. Yet, never once did He try to get even! While on the cross, He actually had compassion for those who had wronged Him and prayed, "*Father, forgive them*" (Luke 23:34).

What is your attitude toward unkindness? Do you show mercy to those who have wronged you or do you hold a grudge with no intention of

forgiving them? Let's remember the powerful words of Ephesians 4:32,

Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted,
forgiving one another, even as God for
Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

As Christians, perhaps we need to love more and judge less! Often times those who deserve our love the very least need our love the very most. God wants us to show love, even to the person who is sometimes unlovable! *This* should be our attitude toward unkindness!

What Is Your Attitude Toward Your Husband?



The first time we read of a woman in the Bible, she occupies the place of a wife. We were created to be our husband's helpmate (Genesis 2:18). A virtuous woman is an honor to her husband. Her *"price is far above rubies"* for she is a woman who is chaste, pure and godly. A wife is to respect her husband and be in submission to him (Eph. 5:22, Col. 3:18). A wife should not try to dominate the marriage. She knows God planned for her husband to be the head of the house. She shows love and respect for him in this role. She is not quarrelsome or nagging. Do you remember Solomon's words?

It is better to dwell in the corner of the
housetop than with a brawling woman and in
a wide house (Proverbs 25:24).

A married man once said his concept of heaven was a place where there would be no nagging women. Do *you* nag your husband?

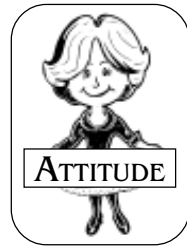
Your husband is a gift from God. Be thankful

for him and treat him special. Be sure to express your love to him. **Tell** him you love him. **Show** him you love him. Love and tenderness is never out of style. A man needs to be loved no less at age fifty then he did when he was first married. *LOVE* is really the bottom line.

What is *your* attitude toward your husband? Do you love and respect him, honor and appreciate him? Or do you take him for granted, nag and belittle him? Remember, Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord (I Peter 3:6). *This* should be *our* attitude toward our husbands.

What Is Your Attitude Toward Your Children?

The woman's rights movement tempts us to view motherhood as a burden. Christ wants us to look upon it as a privilege. Being a mother is an *honor* bestowed upon us by God. Humbled by the beauty, purity and innocence of a newborn baby, a mother should be deeply impressed with the magnitude of her responsibility in guiding, training and watching over this soul that God has given into her keeping.



Christian mothers have a *great* responsibility to set the tone for the spiritual well-being of their children. We must make their knowledge of the Bible a *priority* of ours. It won't happen by accident. It takes dedication and effort. One of the great examples of this in the Bible is found in the home of young Timothy. His mother and grandmother taught Timothy at an early age. As a result of these teachings, Timothy became a sound, gospel preacher. It is God's plan that

spiritual instruction and growth should begin in the home. We need to start at an early age to teach right values regarding life, habits and language to our children. *Take time* to be with your children and influence them for good. *Nothing* substitutes for time; not expensive gifts, nothing!

We mothers can give our children the strength and knowledge to make right choices, to resist temptations and to grow into a mature and responsible adult. As we strive to do this, we must remember that our children are like *mirrors*. They reflect *our* attitudes and examples. Don't allow *anything* in your life that you don't want reproduced in your children's lives.

What is your attitude toward your children? Let's count it a privilege and a blessing to be a mother and accept the responsibility of raising our children in the Lord.

What Is Your Attitude Toward Christian Service?



Phoebe was "a servant of the church" (Rom. 16:1-2). Dorcas was "full of good works and almsdeeds" (Acts 9:36). Lydia generously shared her house and goods with other Christians (Acts 16:15,40). The Shunammite woman was a woman of kindness and benevolence (II Kings 4:8). *What about YOU?*

A *great* Christian woman is one who serves others. Jesus taught this principle when He washed the feet of His disciples (John 13). In doing so, He showed us that *no one* is too high or too holy to give service to others.

Service means sacrifice, of time and

possessions. Paul admonishes us to be a *living sacrifice* (Rom. 12:1). A life of service is our sacrifice to God. By serving others, we show our love for God. Service is a quality which should be a part of the Christian's life *every single day*. There are countless ways we can serve those we love, to build them up, to encourage them and to enrich their lives. We can care for someone who is alone or ill, take food to families at the time of a death, show love to someone who is unhappy or feeling down (Gal. 6:2), show hospitality (Heb. 13:1,2), teach a Bible class, tell a friend about Jesus, create a Christ-centered home, teach and train our children (Josh. 24:15). Keep in mind whatever service we do must be done willingly. When our good deeds are done from a heart of love, they enrich our lives as much as the lives of others. While doing the Lord's work, there is a sense of fulfillment in our lives. There is joy and contentment. Are you a servant or do you need to be served? Are you a giver or a taker?

What Is Your Attitude Toward Bible Study And Prayer?

We are told to,

...grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
(II Peter 3:18).

Christians need to grow in knowledge in order to be strong (I Peter 2:2; Eph. 6:10-11). We must not merely read the word of God but *study* and *read*. God declared through the prophet Hosea: "*My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge*" (Hosea 4:6). We cannot overcome the world unless we become genuine



students of God's word.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I
might not sin against thee (Psm.119:11).

Bible study can bring you closer to God, as
can prayer. Prayer is a deep, close communion
with God. In your life, prayer can be very helpful.

(1) Prayer can help you fight temptation.

There is an old saying that,

Satan trembles when He sees the weakest of
saints on his knees.

(2) Prayer helps us make decisions.

A Christian wife/mother has to make decisions
every day that are frightening. No decision should
be made without first talking to God.

(3) Prayer strengthens and comforts us

(Heb. 4:15-16).

God loves us the way we are but He loves us
too much to leave us that way! He wants us to
grow stronger and better! He has promised to
help us and give us strength (Isa. 41:10,13). God
never leaves us alone in our challenges. We are
never forgotten by God. Joshua tells us that we
should not be afraid because God is with us
wherever we go (Josh. 1:9).

Don't just sandwich prayer between other
activities. *Make time for it!* Often we are guilty of
giving God the "*leftovers*"! No matter how busy
you are, the best gift you can give yourself is to sit
alone and talk to God and let Him talk to you
through His word. You may say,

How? How can I possibly do all this? I
already feel like a piece of taffy – pulled this
way by my job, another way by my
responsibilities at home and still another
way by responsibilities at church. Time
seems to evaporate before my very eyes!

It is true, most of us feel like we've been spread so thin, there's not enough of us to go around! We hit the floor running in the morning and we do not slow down all day! *We must be careful not to let our priorities get out of order!*

Whatever you do, do not let anything come between you and God. Let other things go if you must, but do not neglect God!

TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His word;
Make friends of God's children;
 help those who are weak;
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone;
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

I challenge you to be God's woman – chaste, godly and pure! I think the prophet Micah said it best.

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to **do justly**, and to **love mercy**, and to **walk humbly** with thy God? (Micah 6:8).

When we *do justly*, we live according to God's commandments. When we *love mercy*, we show compassion and loving kindness. When we *walk humbly with God*, we keep His commandments, love Him, serve Him and stay close to Him.