

Fifteenth Annual
TRUTH IN LOVE
LECTURESHIP

Theme:

**Surviving The
Stormy Winds
Of Change**



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PAUL SAIN, DIRECTOR

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INTRODUCTION

Life can be difficult at times. Things are not always “smooth sailing” on the sea of life. Dark clouds appear. Storms arise. Our Lord used a familiar illustration to those hearing His sermon from the mount:

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. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it (Matt 7:24-27).

For this fifteenth **Truth In Love Lectureship** we are examining the storms we often face, in our personal lives and in the church, and pursue ways by which we can survive. Let us note a few basic fundamental facts regarding this topic and study.

Satan Is The Force Behind The Raging Storms

The devil is alive and active. He is our adversary (1 Peter 5:8). He aggressively seeks to destroy us (Luke 22:31). While he may be unable to attack us directly

and persuade us to deny God, reject completely the Word of God, cease worshipping God – he may work ever so subtly, chipping away at the foundation of our faith, generating discouragement and possible despair, and seeking ultimately to accomplish what he desires – our destruction.

God Has Adequately Equipped Us

We have not been given an inferior, weak, deficient and fearful spirit – but one of power (2 Tim. 1:7). Confidently we know with God on our side, it matters not who is against us (Matt. 12:32). Our God is able (Eph. 3:20; 2 Cor. 9:8). We can be victorious (1 Cor. 15:57).

We are able to stand fast (Phil. 1:27; 4:1), withstand (Eph. 6:10-18), endure (Matt. 10:22), and remain faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

Obviously, we are required to do our part. We must put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18). We must stand (1 Cor. 16:13; 2 Thess. 2:15), be set for the defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:7, 17) and remain faithful unto the end (Rev. 2:10b; Matt. 10:22).

The Storms Appear In Various Forms

Your life may have suffered a devastating storm of the death of a loved one, disease, betrayal by a spouse or divorce, a tragic fire or tornado, or hundreds of similar tragedies.

The church of our Lord has also sustained numerous types of storms. Attacks have been made from without and within on the precious bride of Christ. Satan has wielded his evil influences upon many of his servants who have sought the destruction

of the blood-bought institution of our Lord. Many seek to restructure, modify and completely change the church. Others have already yielded to followers of Satan and manipulated the worship of our Lord into a man-pleasing, ear-tickling, crowd-getting, make-me-feel-good type of worship. Instead of striving to offer to Almighty God that which He has specified, they are motivated by that which “feels good.”

In the long ago, one of God’s faithful servants was charged with being a troubler of Israel. There was trouble in Israel but this servant of God was NOT the one who was guilty (1 Chron. 2). Today, the climate of our culture requires passive, tolerant behavior of others. If one dares to oppose, speak against, or identify false ways or teachers, then that one (according to many, those who most often are seeking to “change” things) is a trouble-maker. If we firmly stand on the absolute, attainable truths of the Word of God, then we risk being called “legalist” and “narrow.” If we call sin by name, condemn its practice, and oppose it, then tragically, some charge such action as unloving.

If you could overview the brotherhood; if it were possible to back up and take inventory, would we not see drastic, dramatic changes in the last few years. That which was wrong twenty years ago is that which is now embraced. What would not have even been seriously considered a mere few years ago is now a regular practice. Specifically I refer to communion at times of the week other than the Lord’s day, fellowship with denominations, defense and support of false teachers and doctrines, women taking an active leadership role, instrumental music in worship, etc. These are “storms” presently facing the brotherhood.

There Are Preventive Measures That God's People Should Take

Knowledge is powerful. To know that Satan is alive and powerful today enables the Christian to be on guard and ready to meet his attacks. To realize the devil seeks to devour (Luke 22:31) keeps me alert and always watchful (1 Cor. 16:13).

Our Heavenly Father has warned us in so many ways, from many inspired writers, that we are to take heed, watch, be ready, set for the defense, stand, withstand, etc. Our Father has given us the information we need to endure to the end and at the end of this life, receive heaven as our final home. What will we do with that information? Will we heed the warnings regarding the storms of life?

Patiently Waiting Out The Storms

Life on earth is tough. The Lord has never once indicated that living as a disciple of the Lord would be all "peaches and cream." The Saviour has, in fact, cautioned us that we will suffer hardship, toils and troubles (Matt. 5:43-44). The apostle Paul said the righteous will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). The Lord has graciously informed us that heaven will be worth anything and everything that is required to get there. As we sing, "one glimpse of glory will the toils of life repay."

We must patiently wait. God wants His faithful to look forward, press onward, strive for, and one day reach the heavenly goal. ~ Paul Sain

DEDICATION

The dedication of a book provides an opportunity to lovingly recognize and express appreciation for others. Without doubt there are numerous ones within the East Hill congregation who have been faithful for decades, have quietly served in various ways, have been a valued part of the “team” effort of this congregation, and have served without desire of credit.

This year we convey our esteem for a husband and wife team who have been such an example of faithfulness, loyalty, and dependability. In their respective ways, they have consistently shown their care and love for their brothers and sisters in Christ and have, for many decades, proven their love for their Lord.

The 15th Annual **Truth In Love Lectureship** volume is dedicated to *Malcolm and Martha Jones.*

Malcolm has served as a deacon for over thirty years, and as treasurer for most of that time. Records of Bible school, worship attendance, lectureship attendance, etc. have been maintained by his efforts. Whether it is bringing his sweet wife to Wednesday class or assisting her in helping others, his “light” has been evident and “treasures” have been laid up in heaven.

Martha, to all who know her, is the epitome of a virtuous Christian woman. Her knowledge of the Bible is outstanding. She daily continues her diligent study of the



Word of God. For many years treasured visits have been made by Martha (and precious others) to the sick, shut-in, and those who needed encouragement – bringing delicious food, kind words or a tender listening ear. She has especially been a valued supporter of preachers.

Lord willing, next February, Malcolm and Martha will celebrate their **60th Wedding Anniversary** – a wonderful milestone, which further reflects their Christian nature and respect for God’s design and desire for the home.

Malcolm and Martha, we thank you for your righteous example. We shall endeavor to walk in your steps. We love and appreciate you.

Paul Sain
Lectureship Director

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***Surviving The
Stormy Winds
Of
Change***

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Chapter 1

The Storms Of Change

Jimmy Ferguson



Jimmy has been preaching for XX years, and presently works with the Stage Road Church in Memphis, TN (since XXX). He coordinates and directs the Stage Road Forum annually. Jimmy and XXX have XXX children. Their son Scott is a faithful gospel preacher.

I appreciate the invitation to participate in this splendid lectureship program. The East Hill congregation has a fine reputation among faithful brethren of standing for truth and right. I love and appreciate Paul Sain for his good work in advancing the cause of Christ both as a publisher and in his teaching and preaching.

Introduction

The topic assigned me for this lectureship program is, "**The Storms of Change.**" No one can deny that we live in a changing world. Certainly, not all change is bad; in fact, much of it is good. Great advancements in modern technology has brought much improvement to our physical lives. Many of the

luxuries we now enjoy did not exist fifty or one hundred years ago or have been greatly improved. Yes, much has changed, and if the Lord allows time to continue, things will continue to change.

However, change in other areas has not been good. I am speaking primarily of spiritual matters. Any change which deviates from the principles, precepts, and commands found in the Word of God is wrong and cannot go unchallenged. In this treatise, we will examine some of these changes.

Antagonistic Actions Toward Christianity

For decades efforts have been advanced by many seeking to remove God and/or any reference to religion from public life. The following includes some of the more recent of these efforts.

On June 28, 2000, the Supreme Court ruled that Nebraska's statute criminalizing the performance of "partial birth abortions" violates the Federal Constitution. The Nebraska law prohibited any "partial birth abortion" unless that procedure was necessary to save the mother's life.¹ But, abortion at any stage of development in the womb is wrong! It is murder! The Bible is replete with passages which show that that which is in the womb is not just a fetus, or a blob of flesh; it is a child, a human being, even though the body may not be fully developed (cf. Eccl. 11:5; Psm. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:4-5). Yet, more than 4,400 babies are aborted in this country everyday. An interesting sidenote: Scott Peterson was recently convicted and sentenced to death for the murders of his wife, Lacy, and their unborn child. Note that he

was convicted of **two** murders. Yet, had this tragic event not happened, Lacy could have gone to an abortion clinic in order to terminate her pregnancy and there would have been no legal ramifications.

On June 19, 2000, the Supreme Court ruled that student-led, student-initiated pre-game invocations at football games were not protected private speech, but prohibited government speech violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.²

On January of 1999, the Supreme Court refused to review a Nebraska high court decision that overturned a child molester's prison sentence because the trial judge quoted Bible verses when imposing the man's punishment.³

Recently, a trial judge over four North Carolina counties gave official notice to his court clerks that he intended to remove all references to God from his courtrooms. He decided to do this in three ways: (1) Witness oaths would no longer require people to name God; i.e., the phrase, "so help you, God" would be deleted. (2) Witnesses would no longer swear (affirm) on the Bible; and (3) God's name would be removed from the traditional court announcement. For many years in North Carolina in court sessions the proclamation was made, "God save the state and this honorable court." Courtroom bailiffs were informed that they would no longer be permitted to use this traditional proclamation because it invoked the name of God.⁴

In November of 2000, the death sentence of a California state prisoner convicted on several murder

counts was overturned because the prosecutor argued to the jury that the death penalty was sanctioned by God quoting from the thirteenth chapter of Romans.⁵

In August of 2003, Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore was suspended for defying a federal court order to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court building. Moore stated, "The issue is: Can the state acknowledge God? If this state can't acknowledge God, the other states can't...and eventually, the United States of America will not be able to acknowledge the very source of our rights and liberties and the very source of our law."⁶

Terri Shiavo recently died because her husband had doctors remove her feeding tube, thus, starving her to death. Despite efforts by congress, the President, and many others acting on her behalf, the courts refused to allow the feeding tube to be re-inserted. She was not brain dead, her heart was beating, her lungs were functioning normally; she was just unable to recover from brain damage, so they starved her to death.

These are just a few examples of antagonistic actions toward Christianity. God says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). The aforementioned examples could hardly be classified as "righteousness."

Immoral Advancements in Our Society

We are living in a time in which immoral conditions seem to be growing day by day. It seems that fewer and fewer are truly concerned about

morality and righteousness. The lifestyle of many is to indulge in every kind of ungodly behavior and to please their own sensual imaginations. When once people "knew" certain things were wrong but participated in them anyway, now, the number is growing who have no sense of morality and see nothing wrong with their sinful behavior. In many areas, this ungodly behavior has infiltrated the Lord's church. Let us note some of the immoral advancements in our society.

Gambling. There is no doubt that gambling has largely contributed to the moral decay in our society. Where once gambling was looked upon by the majority as the vice that it is, now, to millions of Americans it has become a viable form of amusement and entertainment with a view toward getting rich quick. Even many members of the church find it difficult to see anything wrong with playing the lottery or engaging in other forms of gambling. It is a known fact that gambling destroys families. Many a gambler has neglected the needs of his wife and children in order to support the gambling habit. Homes, automobiles, and other material possessions have been lost because of gambling debts. One woman recently confessed to withdrawing thousands of dollars saved for her teenage girls' college education and gambled away every penny. Gambling is also a leading influence for a life of crime and punishment. A person with a gambling addiction will, in some way, feed his addiction. Like drug addicts, gamblers will sometimes prostitute themselves and/or steal in order to feed

this addiction. Gambling is wrong because it violates the work ethic. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). It is also a form of covetousness, and covetousness is idolatry (Luke 12:15; Col. 3:5).

Fornication. That this is a growing and plaguing problem in our society today is truly an understatement. Young and old alike, in great numbers, become sexually involved in the name of "love." Others are interested only in satisfying a physical need. This is on the level of animals.

"**Newsweek**" magazine, January 20, 1992, stated that teenage pregnancy is rising at a yearly rate of 8.4 percent. "Parents" magazine, March, 1992, stated that statistics indicated that 50% of all teenage girls and 60% of all teenage boys are sexually active. As alarming as these statistics are, please note that they are over thirteen years old.

Fornication is a major problem in the United States and our society thinks little or nothing of it. The indifferent attitude of many is, "What one does with one's own body is no one else's business." However, inasmuch as fornication leads to moral decline in our society, it is the business of others. As a parent, I must raise my children in this society. It is not uncommon to see many who are held up to our youth as role models having "live-in lovers." What is this teaching our youth? Movies, music, sports, and TV celebrities glory in and celebrate the births of their children born "out-of-wedlock."

The Bible condemns fornication. Paul writes, "What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an

harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh...Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:16,18).

Adultery. Another sin which has led to moral decline in the very fabric of our society is adultery. This sin has also greatly undermined the sacred institution of marriage. The sexual appetite is a part of normal human development. But God has also ordained the sphere in which the sexual appetite is to be satisfied and that is in the marriage relationship. After stating that God had made both male and female, Jesus said, "...for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matt. 19:5). The physical relationship in marriage has the approval of God. The Hebrew writer states, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Sexual activity with anyone other than one's mate is sinful.

Homosexuality. Any observer of life in today's world knows how prominent, and how open, this sin is in our lifetime. Those who practice homosexuality are not only open with their actions, but are increasingly vocal in pressing for the removal of all social stigma and that they be given their "rights" including the right of "same-sex" marriage. In fact, efforts have been underway by some groups to have marriage "re-defined" so as to include "same-sex unions." But the Bible clearly shows marriage to be between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:21-25; Matt. 19:4-6). The sin of homosexuality is now being paraded

before the public on the television screen with the clear message that it should be accepted as an “alternate lifestyle.” However, a study of God’s word shows in both the Old and New Testaments that God has always considered homosexuality to be wicked (cf. Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:26-28). According to Paul, among those who will not inherit the kingdom of God are “abusers of themselves with mankind [homosexuals]” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Pornography. A growing plague in our society is the problem of pornography. We are commanded in the Bible to abstain from lustful thoughts which can (and often do) lead to an immoral act. Pornography is certainly a major factor in this process. Jesus taught in Matthew 5:27-29 against looking upon a woman for the purpose of entertaining lustful thoughts of her. Pornography is found in every media of public communication: books, magazines, movies, videos, and the Internet. [Unfortunately, the Internet has made pornographic images easily accessible even for young viewers.] These forms of media can be (and often are) used for that which is good and helpful. They can be informative, educational, and provide good wholesome entertainment for the family. However, many who are ungodly use these forms of media to pass their pornography on to the public. The dangers of this evil are evident to sober thinking people. Pornography attacks the institution of marriage and the home by encouraging promiscuity and infidelity. It seeks to remove sexuality from its normal place in marriage. Pornography defiles the mind by polluting it with impure and unholy thoughts

when the thinking of God's people is to pure, honorable, holy and good (Phil. 4:8). Furthermore, pornography is addictive when the Bible teaches that man is to exercise restraint and self-control (2 Peter 1:6).

Drastic Changes Within The Body of Christ

The storms of change have also swept through the body of Christ. If Satan already has the world in his clutches, it is no surprise that his onslaught would especially be directed toward the Lord's people. As a result, many changes have taken place in the church over the past two decades or so. Let us note some of these changes.

Worship. Much of the change which has taken place among churches of Christ centers on worship. In John 4:24, Jesus instructed His disciples concerning the object, attitude, and the actions of acceptable worship: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him [object] must worship him in spirit [attitude] and in truth [actions]." Since God is the object of our worship, we should seek to please Him; our worship must be from the heart and must consist of only those acts authorized in His word (Col. 3:17). For a number of years there has been a growing tendency in many congregations to please the worshipper rather than the object of our worship—God. Many larger congregations have added a second Sunday morning service emphasizing that one is "traditional" and the other is "contemporary." The latter is designed to give the younger generation a worship environment in

which they can feel more comfortable. This is usually a more “relaxed” and casual service. God-designed worship is not intended to entertain the worshipper or cater to the worshipper’s desires.

Numbers are the name of the game with many. “Let’s do what it takes to attract the masses,” seems to be the prevailing attitude with these. An elder of the congregation where this writer preaches once visited a congregation while on vacation. Upon entering the auditorium he noticed two ladders in the pulpit. One member promptly informed him that he was about to see a different kind of worship service. Soon, the visiting “preacher” entered the pulpit and began to perform his “gymnastics for God.” Without any further hesitation, the elder and his wife exited the building. There is little doubt that there has been a change in attitude. Many no longer have a deep, reverent attitude that would lead the worshipper to approach God with a profound sense of respect.

Some congregations have utilized “praise teams.” These are men and women (usually four in number) who are given microphones and sit at specified places in the assembly and sing the different parts of a song. This is intended to make the singing sound better. Dave Miller writes,

In keeping with the tone and tenor of our entertainment crazed culture, some in the church feel that worship ought to be entertaining—though they may not come out and describe their sentiments in this way. They go to great lengths to stimulate the tastes and desires of the audience—which is a tacit admission that the focus is on the people. Can you imagine first

century Christians going to such lengths to stimulate the crowd? Can you imagine them manipulating the lighting in the catacomb? Or perhaps placing a choir group behind a rock so that their singing could echo through the death chamber in an eerie, chilling fashion? ...In church music, I fear we have spent too much time in the brotherhood trying to sound good to **ourselves** instead of sounding good to **God**, i.e., focusing on Him and His wishes. Sounding good to God has nothing to do with the way we sound since, if the externals are in place, God looks on the heart (I Sam. 16:7).⁷

Preaching. Another change which has taken place over the last couple of decades is a new style of preaching. Years ago our sermons were filled with scripture. Many referred to it as “Book, Chapter, and Verse” preaching. A “thus saith the Lord” was given for all that we believe and practice. We taught and God’s word was our text book. Sadly, such is no longer the case in many areas of our brotherhood. Gospel preaching has given way to philosophic reasoning and story telling. A few years ago a sister came to the church where I work and worship and commented concerning the congregation she formerly attended, “I haven’t heard enough scripture in the past year to fill a thimble.” How sad! How can we call ourselves “gospel preachers” unless we preach the “gospel.” Preachers would do well to remember the words of the apostle Peter, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11).

In many areas the preaching seems to focus more upon the preacher than the message. The criteria for

selecting speakers is no longer, "Is he sound?;" "Is he true to the word of God?," but rather, "Is he dynamic?," and "Can he draw a crowd?".

God's preacher should always address the "needs" of the people rather than catering to their whims and tickling the ears. Paul asked, "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" (Gal. 1:10), and "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).

With this change in the style of preaching has come a tendency to omit the invitation. If non-Christians are in these assemblies, they leave not knowing how to obey the Lord. But even if there are no alien sinners present, members of the church need to be reminded of these first principles. Young people need to be taught and reminded as well.

Music. This is another area which has not escaped change. The type of music authorized for worship is plainly stated by inspired writers. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). Paul also wrote, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

A statement by the elders of the Oak Hills Church [formerly Church of Christ] where Max Lucado preaches reflects the attitude of many, "After many months of study and consideration the elders

unanimously concluded that there is no Biblical prohibition of the use of mechanical instruments in worship."⁸ One wonders what material they "studied." Consequently, an additional instrumental service was added.

Still others who do not wish to worship where instruments are used do not believe that it is a fellowship issue. At a recent forum on instrumental music and fellowship conducted at the 2005 Freed-Hardeman University Lectureship, Philip Morrison, an elder at Woodmont Hills in Nashville stated that he did not come to advocate instrumental music in worship, or to defend the practice, but "to advocate a more inclusive view and practice of fellowship."⁹ However, when men engage in that which is clearly unauthorized by scripture, such is a fellowship issue.

Fellowship. It seems that many have forgotten what the Bible teaches about the distinctive nature of the church of Christ. Many in the church have embraced denominationalism and some congregations have even held joint-services with denominational churches. Paul wrote, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). Man-made churches are in competition with the Lord's church and are clearly "works of darkness."

Many of our congregations no longer "stand in the old paths" (Jer. 6:16). Many no longer "hold fast the form of sound words" (1 Tim. 1:13). Many accept people in as members on their denominational baptism; people are accepted in who are unscripturally divorced and remarried; in some places women are

being used in worship and the list of departures could be multiplied many times over. Can we fellowship these brethren? Reader friend, we cannot fellowship whom the Lord does not fellowship! Those who are no longer true and loyal to the word of God are clearly not in fellowship with God. John writes, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6), and in 2 John 9, he declares, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (2 John 9).

Conclusion

As storms of change continue to sweep through our society and brotherhood, the clarion call of the gospel is to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" to a lost and dying world (Eph. 3:8). The Lord's people must take a firm stand for Truth and Right and let our voice be heard. As Satan and his forces continue their onslaught and many bow the knee to Baal, let us heed the admonition given to God's people of old, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression..." (Isa. 58:1).

Endnotes

1 Internet, Ban on Partial Birth Abortion Struck Down; http://www.christianlaw.org/recent_rulings.html.

2 Internet, Student-Led Prayer at Football Games Found Unconstitutional, http://www.christianlaw.org/recent_rulings.html.

3 Internet, High Court Won't Review Decision, <http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=8407>.

4 Internet, CLA Helps Put God Back in Courtroom, <http://www.christianlaw.org/courtroom.html>.

5 Internet, Death Sentence Overturned Because of Prosecutor's Biblical References, <http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=3553>.

6 Internet, Judge Suspended Over Ten Commandments, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/LAW/08/22/ten.commandments/>

7 Dave Miller, **Piloting the Strait**, (Sain Publications: Pulaski, TN, 1996), pp. 186, 187.

8 Internet, Oak Hills Music Creed, <http://www.piney-2.com/Oak.Hills.Music.html>.

9 **The Christian Chronicle**, Vol. 62, No. 23, p. 29.

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Chapter 2

Belief In God: The Only Way To Survive The Storms

Kyle Butt



Kyle Butt graduated from Freed-Hardeman University, where he earned a B.A. with a double major in Bible and Communications, and an M.A. in New Testament. Currently, he works in the Bible Department at Apologetics Press and is the editor of *Discovery* magazine. He has authored several books on Christian Evidences for children and teens. Kyle and Bethany have one son and a daughter.

PART 1: EVIDENCE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

One of the most basic questions that each human being must answer is, “Does God exist?” Let’s face it—either God exists, or He does not. There is no middle ground. The only way to answer this question is to examine the evidence. Surely it is reasonable to suggest that **if** there is a God, He would make available enough evidence to prove His existence. Does such evidence exist?

CAUSE AND EFFECT

The Universe is here, and is real. Every rational

person acknowledges this point. If the Universe did not exist, we wouldn't be here to talk about it. So the question arises, "How did the Universe get here?" There are only three choices: (1) it is eternal (meaning it always has been and always will be here); (2) it created itself; or (3) it was created. If it isn't eternal, and if it didn't create itself, then obviously it must have had a cause.

Let's consider the Law of Cause and Effect. As far as science knows, natural laws have no exceptions. This definitely is true of the Law of Cause and Effect, which is the most universal and most certain of all laws. Simply put, the Law of Cause and Effect states that every material effect must have an adequate cause that existed before the effect ("material" refers to anything composed of matter or energy).

Material effects without adequate causes do not exist. Also, causes never occur after the effect. In addition, the effect never is greater than the cause, which is why scientists state that every material effect must have an **adequate** cause. The river didn't turn muddy because the frog jumped in; the book didn't fall off the table because the fly landed on it. These are not adequate causes. For whatever effects we see, we must present adequate causes.

Five-year-olds are terrific at using the Law of Cause and Effect. We can picture a small child asking: "Mommy, where do peaches come from?" Her mother would say that they come from peach trees. Then the child might ask where the trees come from, and her mother might say they come from peaches. You can see the cycle. Eventually, the child wants to know how

the first peach tree got here. She can see that it must have had a cause, and she wants to know what that cause was.

One thing is for sure, the Universe did not create itself. We recognize this as a scientific fact, because matter cannot create matter. If we take a rock that weighs one pound and do 50,000 experiments on it, we never will be able to produce any more rock than we already have. So, whatever caused the Universe could not have been material.

From Nothing Comes Nothing

I know that it is insulting to your intelligence to have to include this paragraph, but some people today are saying that the Universe was created from nothing. However, if there ever had been a time when absolutely nothing existed, then there would be nothing now, because it always is true that nothing produces nothing. (If something exists now, then something always has existed.)

Morality And Mankind

As we continue to discuss things in this Universe that require a cause, we must include the fact that all humans have some kind of moral code. Everyone in the world believes that certain things are right, while other things are wrong. At times, people may not agree on the exact way to decide whether something is right or wrong. But it is undeniable that the concepts of right and wrong, good and evil, do exist.

The person who does not believe that God exists

has only one choice when it comes to explaining morality – man must have thought it up by himself. However, since man is seen as little more than the last animal to be produced by evolution, this becomes a problem. A lion does not feel guilty after killing a gazelle for lunch. A dog does not feel remorse after stealing a bone from another dog. And a female pig feels no guilt after eating her newborn piglets. Yet man, who is supposed to have evolved, feels both guilt and remorse when he commits certain acts that violate his moral code. The simple fact that we even discuss morals proves that morality – which is found only in humans – had to have a cause. After all, one ape never sat around and said to another, “Today, I think we should talk about right and wrong.” Even the famous atheist George Gaylord Simpson of Harvard University said that “morals arise only in man.” What – or should we say **Who** – is responsible for man’s morality?

The Bible Speaks About The Cause

The Bible certainly is not silent about what caused the Universe. In the very first verse of the first chapter of the first book, it records: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth.” Acts 17:24 states: “God, who made the world and everything in it...He is Lord of heaven and earth.” Exodus 20:11 notes: “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.” God is undoubtedly an adequate cause, since He is all-powerful. In Genesis 17:1, God told Abraham “I am **Almighty** God.”

God existed long before this material world in which we live, thus fulfilling the criterion that the cause must come before the effect. The psalmist wrote: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Psm. 90:2).

And He definitely would be expected to instill within mankind the important concept of morality, since He is a God of morals. For example, when the apostle Paul wrote to Titus, he spoke of "God, who cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). Only God fits the criteria of an adequate cause that came before the Universe.

Why Does God Not Have A Cause?

Hold on just a minute! If we contend that every material effect must have a cause, and we say that only God could have caused the Universe, then the obvious question is: "What caused God?" Doesn't the Law of Cause and Effect apply to God, too?

There is a single word in the Law of Cause and Effect that helps provide the answer to this question—the word **material**. Every **material** effect must have a cause that existed before it. Scientists formulated the Law of Cause and Effect based upon what they have observed while studying this Universe, which is composed of matter and energy. No science experiment in the world can be performed on God, because He is an eternal spirit—not matter (John 4:24). Science is far from learning everything about this material world, and it is even farther from understanding the eternal nature of God. There had to be a

first Cause, and God was (and is) the only One suitable for the job.

Law of Cause and Effect is a scientifically established law that does not have any known exceptions. It was not conjured up from a magic hat to prove the existence of God, although it does that quite well. The evidence in this chapter is sufficient to show that this material Universe needs a non-material cause. That non-material Cause is God. If natural forces created the Universe, randomly selecting themselves, then morality in humans never could be explained. Why is this Universe here? Because “In the beginning, God...”

DESIGN DEMANDS A DESIGNER

It is no secret that everything designed must have a designer—every poem a poet, every painting a painter. Even an atheist cannot argue with this idea. If you were to walk through the forest and see a shiny, new convertible sitting amidst the trees, you obviously would think that an intelligent designer had created it and put it there. No rational person would believe that natural forces accidentally and randomly formed the car.

Those who believe in God often use this argument to establish the fact that since the Universe shows design, it must have had a designer. While the atheist admits that all design demands a designer, he will not admit that there is design in the Universe. He may agree that there is complexity, orderliness, and precision, but he will not admit that there is design.

Therefore, in order to establish the fact that an intelligent designer exists, we must show that the natural world exhibits more than simple orderliness or complexity. So, for the rest of this chapter we will take a walk through the “Design Hall of Fame.”

It’s Not A Small World After All

Have you ever gone outside on a clear summer evening and looked up into the night sky? What a beautiful sight—with all the shining, twinkling stars. Scientists tell us that we can see about 3,000 stars just by using our eyes. But if we use a simple telescope, we can see over 100,000 stars!

Our Universe, however, has many more stars than that. Astronomers suggest that it has over 25 sextillion stars in it (that’s the number 25, followed by 21 zeros!). They also say it contains over one billion galaxies, each of which has around 100 billion individual stars.

The Universe is so large that scientists determine distances within it by measuring how long it takes light to travel from one place to another. Light moves so fast that it can go about 186,000 miles in one second. That means in a year, light can go almost six trillion miles— a distance known as one light-year.

The diameter of the Milky Way Galaxy (in which our solar system and Earth are located) is 100,000 light-years across. This means that even if you had a spaceship that could travel at the speed of light, it still would take 100,000 years to go across our galaxy (during which time you would travel over 587

quadrillion miles, and you still would have been through only one of the billion galaxies!). If you somehow were able to travel across the entire Universe, astronomers say it would take about 20 billion years—even traveling at the speed of light.

It's no wonder that David said: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psm. 19:1).

Even Though It Is Big, It Is Not Clumsy

While the size of the Universe is impressive, its design is even more spectacular. When we examine the facts, it is obvious that God designed it for us. The Earth is 93 million miles from the Sun—a distance that happens to be just right for life to exist. The Sun is like a giant furnace. It gives off more energy in a single second than mankind has produced since the Creation. It converts 8 million tons of matter into energy every single second, and has an interior temperature of more than 20 million degrees Celsius. If the Earth were even slightly closer to this wonderful star, people could not live because of the horrible heat and radiation. Interestingly, as the Earth moves in its elliptical orbit around the Sun, it departs from a straight line by only one-ninth of an inch every eighteen miles. If it departed by one-eighth of an inch, we would come so close to the Sun that we would burn up; if it departed by one-tenth of an inch, we would freeze to death.

Also, the Earth has exactly the right surface temperature. The mean global temperature on the

Earth is 11.3° Celsius (about 57° Fahrenheit), which is perfectly suitable for human, animal, and plant life. But the average temperature on Pluto is a freezing -230°C, and on Venus it is a scalding 480°C! Nothing can grow in these extremely low or extremely high temperatures.

The Earth is slanted on its axis at precisely 23.5 degrees. If it were not tilted, but instead sat straight up in its orbit around the Sun, there would be no seasons as we know them. The tropics would be hotter, and the deserts would get bigger. If the tilt went all the way over to 90 degrees, much of the Earth would alternate between very cold winters and very hot summers.

The Moon is 240,000 miles from the Earth. This, too, is just right, since the Moon helps control movement of ocean tides. This movement is beneficial to the Earth, because it provides a cleansing of shorelines and helps ocean life prosper. Without such tides, water in the oceans would stagnate, and the animals and plants living in them would die. Our existence on Earth depends on the Moon being just the right distance from the Earth.

Earth's oceans are another good example of perfect design. Water covers approximately 72% of the Earth's surface, which is good because the oceans provide a reservoir of moisture that constantly evaporates and condenses. Eventually, this causes rain to fall on the Earth. It is a well-known fact that water heats and cools at a much slower rate than a solid land mass, which explains why deserts can be blistering hot in the daytime and yet freezing cold at

night. But water holds its temperature longer, and thus provides a natural heating and cooling system for land areas on Earth. The Earth's average temperature is maintained in large part by the heat reserves found within the waters of the oceans.

Another well-known fact is that humans and many animals breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. Plants, on the other hand, take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. Humans and animals depend on the plant world for a constant, fresh supply of oxygen. But approximately 90% of all oxygen comes from tiny, microscopic plants within the Earth's oceans and seas.

The Universe is huge, well designed, and runs more efficiently than clockwork. The Earth is the right distance from the Sun; it is exactly the right distance from the Moon; it has exactly the right tilt on its axis; it has exactly the right amount of oxygen. Countless other conditions are exactly right as well. Could all these things be "just right" by accident?

The Eyes Have It

The human eye is one of the most complicated mechanisms in the world. Even Charles Darwin said that it is hard to believe that this magnificent device could arise accidentally. The eye gathers over 80% of the knowledge that is transmitted to the brain. The brain is connected to each eye by over 600,000 nerves that sends its messages at a speed exceeding 300 miles an hour! Scientists tell us that the eye receives 1.5 million messages at the same time, sorts through them, and sends them to the brain. The retina covers less

than a square inch, and contains 137 million light-sensitive receptor cells, 130 million rods (allowing the eye to see in black and white), and 7 million cones (allowing the eye to see in full color). On any given day, the eye may move about 100,000 times, using muscles that, milligram for milligram, are among the body's strongest. The body would have to walk 50 miles to exercise the leg muscles an equal amount. The eye is self-cleaning. Lacrimal glands produce tears to flush away dust and other foreign materials. Eyelids act as windshield washers. The blinking process (3-6 times a minute) keeps the sensitive cornea moist and clean. And tears contain a potent microbe-killer (lysozyme) that guards the eyes against bacterial infection. During times of stress, one eye will rest while the other does 90% of the work; then the process is reversed, allowing both eyes equal amounts of relaxation.

In fact, the eye works so well that technological companies model cameras after it. Today, we have tiny camcorders that can be held in one hand and be used in both bright and dim light. They have lenses, automatic focus, color monitors, and other well-engineered features that allow them to record images. Yet, even with all the time, effort, and money that went into designing these technological jewels, they are but clumsy replicas of the human eye. If we found a camcorder lying on the ground, who among us would suggest that it "just happened" by chance. Yet the average human being has two eyes that make the camcorder look like a kindergarten toy. If we are looking for design, truly the eyes have it.

Truly, the design found in the Universe, the human body is sufficient to reveal the hand of a designer. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:20: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity, that they may be without excuse." Every watch has a watchmaker; every painting has a painter; every building has a builder; but "He who built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4).

PART 2: THE CHAOS OF A GODLESS WORLD IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Some might think, "What does it matter if I believe in creation or evolution, the Bible, and God?" They might also think that it is "just" a belief, or a bunch of words and arguments that have very little to do with "real life." Those who think that way need to reconsider. What you believe is the main force behind how you behave. If you believe that man is created in the image of God, then you place a very high value on human life. But if you believe that man is just another animal that has climbed its way out of a prehistoric swamp in the distant past, then human life loses its uniqueness and value. After all, if man were just a "glorified" animal, what would be wrong with getting rid of the ones that are nuisances—the unwanted (unborn) children, the retarded, the handicapped, or the elderly? If mankind is just a "naked ape," then "putting him out of his misery"

would be no sin—we shoot horses when they break their legs, don't we?

"No," you may say. "Surely disbelief in God, or belief in the theory of evolution, would not direct anyone into such crimes against humanity."

First, let's look at the principles upon which evolution is based. Take "survival of the fittest," for instance. This principle stands at the foundation of evolution. Basically, it claims that the stronger or "more fit" survive by overpowering or destroying the weak. If we follow this idea to its logical conclusion, it means that stronger humans could destroy weaker humans and be in perfect harmony with the "natural order of things." If you don't believe that anyone would carry the theory of evolution to its logical conclusion, keep reading.

ADOLF HITLER—A MILITANT EVOLUTIONIST

Adolf Hitler claims his rightful place as possibly the most infamous villain of all time. Children of all ages, and the adults who teach them history, shudder at the deeds done by this criminal. His vicious acts of murder and torture claimed the lives of over 6 million Jews and over 4 million other individuals from ethnic groups such as the Poles and gypsies. Gruesome gas chambers, concentration camps, heinous human experiments, heartless starvation, and forced labor are but a few of the images that come to mind upon hearing the name—Adolf Hitler.

One question immediately presents itself to

anyone considering Hitler's actions: **Why?** What would allow a man to think that such acts of injustice could ever be justified? The answer, simply put, is the theory of evolution. Hitler believed that the Aryan race was superior to all other races. He believed that this superior Aryan race had the right to exterminate all inferior races since, according to evolution, the "natural order of things" is for the strong to survive. To use the words of Charles Darwin, Hitler viewed his murderous plans as nothing more than "the preservation of favored races in the struggle for life." One writer said this about Hitler:

A review of the writings of Hitler and contemporary German biologists finds that Darwin's theory and writings had a major influence on Nazi policies.... In the formation of his racial policies, [Hitler] relied heavily upon the Darwinian evolution model, especially the elaborations by Spencer and Haeckel. They culminated in the "final solution," the extermination of approximately six million Jews and four million other people who belonged to what German scientists judged were "inferior races."¹

There can be no doubt, from any serious study of Hitler's life and actions, that the theory of evolution played a major role in his murderous schemes. But, as might be expected, many evolutionists object to this idea. They claim that it was not the theory of evolution that perverted Hitler, but Hitler who perverted the theory of evolution.

The problem with this line of thinking is that Hitler did not pervert, or even alter, the theory of

evolution in order to use it to support his deeds. He followed it to its logical conclusion. According to the theory of evolution, nature has no conscience that distinguishes between what is right and what is wrong. Where would it get such an awareness of morals? Such morals certainly could not evolve from lifeless matter. An amoeba could not evolve into a human who can know the difference between right and wrong. The most evolution could produce would be the idea that "might makes right." When Hitler exterminated approximately 10 million innocent men, women, and children, he acted in complete agreement with the theory of evolution, and in complete **disagreement** with everything humans know to be right and wrong.

Still, many evolutionists will object and say that using Hitler's actions to show the terrible effects of evolution would be like using the Spanish Inquisition, the Crusades, or the Salem witch trials to show the terrible effects of Christianity. The difference, however, lies in the fact that the Crusades, witch trials, and Spanish Inquisition were perversions of Christ's teachings. Christ taught His followers to turn the other cheek, to pray for their enemies, and to love their neighbors as themselves. It is true that throughout history, people have committed terrible crimes "in the name of Christianity." But it is not true that they were following Christ's principles. In fact, they were perverting Christ's teaching, and twisting that teaching to say things Christ did not say. On the other hand, the deeds done by Hitler in the name of evolution were not a perversion of the theory. Instead, he

perfectly understood the principles of evolution, and worked diligently to apply them to their rational end.

ABORTION—A PRODUCT OF EVOLUTION

A huge debate has been occurring since January 22, 1973, when it became legal for a mother to end the life of her child through abortion. Every year in the United States, more than 1 million babies are killed through this process. It is **legal**. But is it **right**? Absolutely not! The Bible repeatedly stresses that it is a sin to “shed innocent blood” (Prov. 6:17). God Himself recognized unborn babies as human beings. He told the prophet Jeremiah: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1:5). God values the lives of unborn babies, but our society, in contrast to God’s commandments, has decided that these precious lives do not deserve to survive.

What could cause a person to look casually upon the deaths of so many innocent children without lifting a finger to stop this modern-day holocaust? The concept of evolution is one reason these murders are seen as justifiable in our society. One evolutionist said it this way: “Among some animal species, then, infant killing appears to be a natural practice. Could it be natural for humans too, a trait inherited from our primate ancestors... (Barbara Burke, 1974, p. 653)?

When the idea of evolution is taken to its ultimate

end, then killing a human baby becomes little more significant than squashing a roach on the kitchen floor. Millions of innocent lives have been sacrificed on the altar of evolution. All who have had a part in these activities will “give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead” (1 Peter 4:5).

Renown evolutionist, William Provine, who was held in such esteem by the evolutionary community that he was asked to speak at Darwin Day on the University of Tennessee’s campus in 1998, succinctly and accurately noted, “modern science directly implies that there are no inherent moral or ethical laws, no absolute guiding principles for human society (Provine, 1988). Of course, Provine was discussing modern evolutionary science, not all science, and was dead-on accurate in his assessment—without God, anything goes.

WHAT HAS THE IDEA OF CREATION GIVEN SOCIETY?

On the opposite side of the coin, we need to look at the consequences of believing in creation. If a person believes that God created this amazing Universe, and that He created humans in His image, then human life becomes very important. If a person believes that humans have been created in the image of God, then that person (if he is true to his belief) will not only value human life, but will also seek to protect it. Those who follow the idea of creation to its logical conclusion do not cling to the idea that “the strong survive” or “might makes right.” Instead, the principles connected

to creation lead people to care for those who are less fortunate and weaker, because of the value of human life. People who strongly believed in creation established most all of the hospitals, orphanages, and civic organizations in the world.

Also, when a person believes in creation, he or she will feel a certain moral responsibility to the Creator. It is because of this “moral responsibility” that many unbelievers have rejected God. A famous atheist named Aldous Huxley once said, “I had motives for not wanting the world to have meaning.... For myself, as no doubt for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation.... We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom.” In a world with no Creator, every person can do what he or she feels like doing—without feeling obligated to any moral sense of “right” or “wrong.” However, once a person recognizes the Creator, then that person recognizes an obligation to obey his Creator. This moral obligation leads people to help their fellow humans, be better citizens, better fathers and mothers, or sons and daughters.

What you believe matters a great deal. Your beliefs are the main force behind your actions. A person who believes that human life evolved through random, chance processes over long periods of time will treat life with much less respect than a person who believes that humans were created in the image of a powerful Creator. If a person believes that he evolved from monkeys, then he will act like a monkey. On the other hand, if people believe that they were

made in the image of the holy God, then we can expect them to be holy as He is holy. What do you believe about the origin of life? Are you willing to carry that belief to its logical conclusion?

LIBERAL, MISSOURI— A CASE IN POINT

In the summer of 1880, George H. Walser founded the town of Liberal in southwest Missouri. Named after the Liberal League in Lamar, Missouri (to which the town's organizer belonged), Walser's objective was "to found a town without a church, [w]here unbelievers could bring up their children without religious training," and where Christians were not allowed (Thompson, 1895; Becker, 1895). "His idea was to build up a town that should exclusively be the home of Infidels...a town that should have neither God, Hell, Church, nor Saloon" (Brand, 1895). Some of the early inhabitants of Liberal even encouraged other infidels to move to their town by publishing an advertisement which boasted that Liberal "is the only town of its size in the United States without a priest, preacher, church, saloon, God, Jesus, hell or devil" (Keller, 1885, p. 5). Excitement was in the air, and atheism was at its core. They believed that their godless town of "sober, trustworthy and industrious" individuals would thrive for years on end. But, as one young resident of that town, Bessie Thompson, wrote about Liberal in 1895, "...like all other unworthy causes, it had its day and passed away." Bessie did not mean that the actual town of Liberal ceased to

exist, but that the idea of having a “good, godless” city is a contradiction in terms. A town built upon “trustworthy” atheistic ideals eventually will reek of the rotten, immoral fruits of infidelity. Such fruits were witnessed and reported firsthand by Clark Braden in 1885.

In an article that appeared in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on May 2, 1885, titled “An Infidel Experiment,” Braden reported the following.

The boast about the sobriety of the town is false. But few of the infidels are total abstainers. Liquor can be obtained at three different places in this town of 300 inhabitants. More drunken infidels can be seen in a year in Liberal than drunken Christians among one hundred times as many church members during the same time. Swearing is the common form of speech in Liberal, and nearly every inhabitant, old and young, swears habitually. Girls and boys swear on the streets, playground, and at home. Fully half of the females will swear, and a large number swear habitually.... Lack of reverence for parents and of obedience to them is the rule. There are more grass widows, grass widowers and people living together, who have former companions living, than in any other town of ten times the population.... A good portion of the few books that are read are of the class that decency keeps under lock and key....

These infidels...can spend for dances and shows ten times as much as they spend on their liberalism. These dances are corrupting the youth of the surrounding country with infidelity and immorality. There is no lack of loose women at these dances.

Since Liberal was started there has not been an average of one birth per year of infidel parents. Feticide is universal. The physicians of the place say that a large portion of their practice has been trying to save females from consequences of feticide. In no town is slander more prevalent, or the charges more vile. If one were to accept what the inhabitants say of each other, he would conclude that there is a hell, including all Liberal, and that its inhabitants are the devils (as quoted in Keller, 1885, p. 5).

Needless to say, Braden's remarks met with serious opposition. In fact, two times Braden was charged with criminal libel and slander. Yet, after investigation, Braden's comments rung true and those who charged him were shamefaced and silent.

It took only a few short years for Liberal's unattractiveness and inconsistency to be exposed: People cannot exclude God from the equation, and expect to remain a "sober, trustworthy" town. Godlessness equals unruliness, which in turn makes a repugnant, immoral people. The town of Liberal was a failure. Only five years after its establishment, Braden indicated that "[n]ine-tenths of those now in town would leave if they could sell their property. More property has been lost by locating in the town than has been made in it... Hundreds have been deceived and injured and ruined financially" (Keller, p. 5). Apparently, "doing business with the devil" did not pay the kind of dividends George Walser (the town's founder) and the early inhabitants of Liberal desired. It appears that even committed atheists found living in Liberal in the early days intolerable. Truly, as has

been observed in the past, “An infidel surrounded by Christians may spout his infidelity and be able to endure it, but a whole town of atheists is too horrible to contemplate.” It is one thing to espouse a desire to live in a place where there is no God, but it is an entirely different thing for such a place actually to exist. For it to become a reality is more than the atheist can handle. Adolf Hitler took atheism to its logical conclusion in Nazi Germany, and created a world that even most atheists detested. Although atheists want no part of living according to the standards set out by Jesus and His apostles in the New Testament, the real fruits of evolutionary atheism also are too horrible for them to contemplate.

Although the town of Liberal still exists today (with a population of about 800 people), it is not the same town it was in 1895. At present, at least seven religious groups associated with Christianity exist within this city that once banned Christianity and all that it represents. Numerous other churches meet in the surrounding areas. According to one of the religious leaders in the town, “a survey of Liberal recently indicated that 50% of the people are actively involved with some church” (Abbott, 2003) – a far cry from where Liberal began.

(Note: Much of the material and writing about Liberal, MO is used by permission from Eric Lyons and is taken from his excellent article on the Web at <http://www.apologeticspress.org/modules.php?name=Read&cat=1&itemid=2629>.)

CONCLUSION

Many millions of souls will be ushered into eternity having embraced some form of godlessness. Being unwilling to accept the idea that humans are mere creatures, subservient to the Divine Creator, such individuals who have shaken their spiritual fists in the face of God will find themselves woefully unprepared to deal with a loving God whose wrath must be meted out to those who have refused His unparalleled scheme for human redemption. As Jesus, Himself, stated near the end of the Sermon on Mount, the majority will take the broad way that exits this life through the wide gate that must necessarily be the path to separation from God.

In contrast to the masses, few are those who have humbly bowed in submission to their Creator. Yet those blessed few have felt and seen the gifts of the Almighty that are bestowed upon the obedient believers. God's instruction for His human creatures in this life have always been for the supreme benefit of those to whom the rules have been given. Truly it can be said that "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God,'" (Psm. 14:1), but the righteous who believe and obey their glorious Creator "will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psm. 23:6).

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Chapter 3

Commitment - The Key To Survival

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.



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There are probably thousands of words to use to encourage those who are facing the “raging storms” of life, but human speech seems totally inadequate when the thunderous announcements of death, cancer, financial collapse, divorce, etcetera come too personally. Paul Sain’s challenge to me to write something on the subject of “strength to survive” comes at a time when cancer is directly my concern although not my disease; it has affected the love of my life, Dorothy, and that in a severe way. I think I was more devastated than she was when the doctor told her she had “multiple Myeloma,” for that bone-marrow cancer is tough to defeat. With further tests it was determined that Dorothy had “Waldenstrom’s macroglobulinemia” and not myeloma. Walden-

strom's is a slower growing bone-marrow cancer and is a disease that can be controlled for more years than can myeloma. (Pray for **us**, because I need her!)

Perhaps those readers who have life-problems will gain more from the **suggestions** here knowing that the author is also hurting. May God bless East Hill, her leaders (who also suffer and have suffered) and the Sains and Brittons for their **love, inspiration, care, encouragement, and friendship** over these many years.

Introduction

When Paul Sain assigned this topic of "Commitment (Strength) to Survive" he wrote: "Only the strong survive the raging storms of life and strength is found only in Christ; (which strength) comes from consecration and devotion to Him. True success is not (found) in things, money, etc., but is (found) in an eternal home in heaven." (The parenthetical words are mine, K.M.). Paul Sain's description of this topic brings to mind the apostle Paul's statement that "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).¹

Another verse from the pen of the apostle Paul is relevant:

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).

In order to complete the Christian's experience in life, one must work and "Do all things without

murmurings and disputings” (Phil. 2:14). Psychological theory holds that anger is the “mother” of self-pity and self-pity is the progenitor of depression. The apostle insists that Christians **can** forego anger and self-pity by never grumbling about life but rather facing life in Christ (Phil. 1:1-30); constructing a self-emptying life (Phil. 2:1-30); achieving a doctrinally sound mind (Phil. 3:1-21); and understanding the source of true serenity (Phil. 4:1-23).²

Life “In” Christ

In order to be a Christian or “follower” of Christ, one must obey the teaching from Him. He said, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins, for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). Jesus required that His followers **believe** that He is Deity and that Deity **died** for their sins (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-4). Jesus also insisted that all men, who did believe, should **repent**. “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47; cf. Acts 17:30). Grief over sins against God **causes** repentance and repentance is a change of mind from the desire to follow sin **to** the commitment to follow Christ and His teaching (cf. Matt. 21:28-32). The penitent, who now desire to be true Christians, are commanded by Christ to **confess** that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 10:32-33; 16:17; cf. Acts 8:37; 1 Tim. 6:12). However, the penitent believer who confesses Christ is still **not** a Christian for that one **must** be immersed in water in order to

receive the remission of his sins. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16; cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16). God places the baptized believer into the church of Christ (Acts 2:47; 5:11) **and** into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-4). **All** spiritual benefits for conquering the hills and valleys of life are in Christ (Phil. 1:1-30; cf. Eph. 1:3).

Paul wrote Philippians to “all the saints **in Christ Jesus** (emphasis added, K.M.)” and those saints (Greek, “set apart ones”) were unique from the other citizens of the world. Those saints walked in “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4) and those ancient Philippians who lived in the midst of a pagan environment and had received a missive from a brother and an apostle who was in prison (Phil. 1:14) were instructed to **rejoice** (Phil. 4:4). People had disappointed Paul (Phil. 1:15-18) but he rejoiced (Phil. 2:19-28); Paul had lost all his possessions, but he rejoiced (Phil. 3:1, 7-16) and he was in a trying circumstance but his joy **increased** (Phil. 4:10-13). Paul and the Philippians were “in Christ.” Affliction for God’s true child is **endured** with grace and those who take the time to reflect on how trials past or present have more firmly rooted them in their walk with Christ fully realize how strong they have become. “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (outward trials, K.M.); knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:2-3).

The joy that Paul or the Philippians or any Christian experiences is **not** a transient feeling for that strength of **inner** gladness derives from the grace and

peace from God (Phil. 1:3-8). Circumstances do not detract from this joy nor does this strength depend on external comforts or safety but it does lean on God. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath began a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Kelly wrote:

Think of Paul in prison for years, chained between two soldiers, debarred from that work he loved, and others taking advantage of his absence to grieve him, preaching the very gospel out of contention and strife, and yet his heart was so running over with joy that he was filling others up with it.³

Paul's prison time was in Christ (Phil. 1:13) wherein Paul was filled with the "fruits of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11). There is a story told about a pilot who came on the loud speaker during a flight and said, "I have some good news and some bad news. The bad news is we have lost all of our instrumentation and do not know where we are. The good news is, we have a strong tailwind and are making great time." The story is humorous but also is an accurate assessment as to how most people live. They have no direction in life and they fly head long into hell not really knowing where they are going. Any ups and downs are terrifying to such unbelievers, but the one in Christ knows where he is and where he is going. His "instrumentation" works very well indeed for to the Christian, "to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Afflictions in life are, to the Christian, just an evident token "of salvation, and that of God" (Phil. 1:28). MacArthur once wrote on

Philippians 1:10 that:

Very few people are able to pursue excellence, because they don't use their minds. Instead, they do whatever impulse, emotion, mood, or environment suggest they do. They don't think; they react. They don't control themselves; their selves control them. They can't pursue what is excellent because they can't discern excellence. They are like balls bouncing off of every wall they hit.⁴

Christians, however, think eternally; therefore they know where they are going and bumps in the road may slow them down but never stop them. A cynic observed that some men occasionally stumble over the truth but are able to pick themselves up and continue on anyway! Christians **know** that truth frees them, even from stumbling (John 8:31-32).

LIFE: SELF-EMPTIED

The self-emptied life is fully Christian and totally serene. What is this life? Suppose that God would grant an audience. Who would go and what would that one hear? Such an opportunity **has** been granted! "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain apart: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him" (Matt. 5:1). What an extraordinary moment. Jesus' disciples were about to hear God speak and that with authority for He was "set." (Jewish Rabbis, by sitting, indicated authority; cf. Matt. 7:28-29).

Now that Jesus was seated, and Deity was about to speak, what would be the very first thing He would

say to His audience, for surely such a statement would seemingly have to be the most important of all. Deity said, "Empty self." Well not in those exact words but in these: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). The apostle of Jesus, Paul, put this self-emptying attitude in the following way: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). What an attitude or "mind" Jesus had in terms of having strength to endure His mission (Luke 19:10).

Jesus willingly divested Himself of a Divine prerogative by not holding to nor grasping the equality He had had with the Father in heaven (Phil. 1:6). Jesus did not feel that He "robbed" Himself by leaving glory,

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
be rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

Christians who divest themselves of themselves and concentrate on serving others can not be defeated by life for anything that happens to them is just another step in being like their Master.

Jesus not only left glory, but He did so willingly for He "made himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:6a). Those who gain "strength to survive" have decided to endure by willingly accepting whatever comes in life as God wills (cf. James 4:14-17). First century Christians sang as they were martyred and sometimes they sang Philippians 2:5-11! Jesus willingly became a servant by becoming like those He served: "and took

upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6b). Again those who serve their fellow-man have no time to worry about their own problems. One often hears that someone went to cheer up brother “so and so” in the hospital but ended up being uplifted himself.

Jesus obeyed God even when such obedience meant death. First, Jesus knew His problem for He was “found in fashion as a man” (Phil. 2:8a). Jesus’ goal of saving men placed Him in a predicament **and** those “that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). The Christian expects to suffer and therefore is not defeated when that predicament occurs. Jesus never quit but “he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8b). Jesus knew there was a joy set before Him and, therefore, He finished His course (Heb. 12:2). The apostle Paul, who penned the Philippian letter being used for this discussion too learned to look to the finish line (2 Tim. 4:8). Christians need to have the mind of Christ and always concentrate, not on the immediate problem but on the joy eternal. Such thinking is strength to survive and is **consecration** of the greatest sort.

Consecration means “to fill the hand.”⁵ Therefore, one who is consecrated to Christ has his “hands full” by being intensely devoted and busily engaged in saving his own soul and in teaching others (1 Tim. 4:16). Such a disciple of Christ has no time to waste on his own selfish interests such as hoarding wealth or in “enjoying” worldly pleasure for such a disciple must have his “hands full” in service to Christ.

This is the mind of Christ enjoined on all Christians by the apostle Paul. Some people think that such a consecrated Christian is fanatical or a little "off center," and for some professed disciples of Christ consecration never matures for the price to pay for the unseen eternal life is too great for them. Much like the rich young ruler, such disciples go away sorrowful for they are "very rich" (Luke 18:23). True values are eternal, however, and in those values is serenity (2 Cor. 4:16-5:7). Evans wrote:

In the busy world of today every steamship that crosses the ocean, every train upon the rails, and every manufacturing plant must be working at its full capacity, or it is operating at a loss to its owners. Every ship must carry a full cargo and every freight train must carry a full load with the least possible overhead expense; every manufacturing plant must turn out its daily quota of products in order to make them paying investments. The church is no exception to this rule. It is the Lord's soul-saving institution. He has invested His own life's blood in it. He promises eternal life to the individual who takes share with Him in this wonderfully benevolent enterprise and the dividends are sure. He is calling loudly and earnestly for shareholders. He wants your heart, your time, your talent, and your money. He wants you to work at your full capacity. He wants to keep this heavenly company turning out its daily quota of saved souls, and every congregation that is not working at its full capacity is operating at a direct loss to its Head. Every member of this company who is not interested...has no promise of sharing the blessings of the Great Head of

this sacred institution when its dividends are declared.⁶

Is it possible that some professed Christians are so little consecrated to His work that, like the world, they also have no Christ-like strength to survive the “raging storms of life?”

Paul mentions two Christians who knew how to survive; Timotheus (Phil. 2:19-23) and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-30). Timothy was of the same mind as Paul (and therefore as Christ) for he “naturally” cared for others (Phil. 2:20). Timothy always “esteemed others” and sought their good (Phil. 2:4, 21-22) and he was a time-tested, true servant who could look past life’s trials (Phil. 2:22).

Epaphroditus had so learned how to survive in times of difficulty through the emptying of himself that he was concerned that others would be overly sorrowful if they even discovered that he had nearly died (Phil. 2:26). (One might consider here what occurs if one who is sick is **not** mentioned in the assembly. Epaphroditus did not want his sickness known!) Not only was Epaphroditus concerned about the feelings of others, but his mission, as the preacher for the Philippians, was to bring that congregation’s support to Paul (Phil. 2:30). Being near death did not stop that self-emptied Christian. “Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death...” (Phil. 2:30). Christians like Epaphroditus can survive anything.

Life That Is Sound

Conquering troubled times requires a sound foundation. Paul warned the Philippians to “Beware

of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" (Phil. 3:2); "

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things) (Phil. 3:18-19).

There are external heresies and internal factions that trouble the church. Christians who are in survival mode make themselves aware of truth through Bible study and make themselves cognizant of error by comparing what Holy Writ teaches to what is being taught (Phil. 2:17; 2 Cor. 4:6). Such Christians know that their lives are really "in heaven" (Phil. 2:20-21). What are the effects from a doctrinally sound life?

There is the **knowledge** that tribulation is a worldly phenomenon and, therefore, temporal. "This know also that in the last times perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. 3:1). The whole world lies in wickedness, but Christians know that they can overcome the world (1 John 5:19, 4-5).

There is the effect of **overcoming fear** for "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). God's child "shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord" (Psm. 112:7). "For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). It should be noted here that there will be more than just one battle with Satan's world and that losing one battle does not mean that the war is lost. If there is a setback, Christians get up and try again. The God of heaven is always ready to

offer a second chance (Luke 15:11-32; e.g. the prodigal who went home to a loving father).

There is the effect that God's child began his Christian life with a **clean slate**. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed way; behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Sometimes past sins can cause even God's children to fear the future from fear of exposure of former deeds. God wipes that slate clean so that His children can function. Those who overcome past sins may have to ask forgiveness for some hurt or wrong done to another; but such times are for healing and growth.

There is the effect of **emotional healing** for the Christian. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). Emotional stress and fear can cause physical sickness and inner emotional and spiritual healing can sometimes be a key in physical well-being. Listen to the psalmist:

He shall call upon me and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation (Psm. 91:15-16).

God **will** hear when His child draws near.

There is the effect of **overcoming sorrow** when one stands firmly on God's Word. "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge; but the mouth of fools (Hebrew, self-confident, K.M.) feedeth on foolishness" (Prov. 15:13-14). God said that one can usually tell from someone's facial expression as to

whether he is happy or sad. (Everyone has, no doubt inquired of another "What is wrong?" and the question is usually inspired by the other's facial expression.) How can one get past such heartbreak which even affects the outward look on the face? The proverb's writer said to seek knowledge—that is of God and that one relying on self is feeding on foolishness. There is no answer (to life's difficulties) that can be found in man (Jer. 10:23). "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). The child of God does not allow the enemy to torment with pain, sickness, grief, and death for that child looks to his Father for new directions. Death is an enemy, but it, too, has lost its sting (1 Cor. 15:55).

The Bible implicitly states that doctrinal error leads to moral perversion (Rom. 1:18ff.). Much of what the world suffers it causes, and all that the world suffers is caused by the world. Christians live here, but they have a serenity the world does not know.

Life That Is Serene

The Christian who overcomes the "raging storms" of life is a joy and crown and stands fast in the Lord (Phil. 4:1). Paul thought so much of the brethren at Philippi who stood fast in Christ that he called them "dearly beloved" twice in one sentence (Phil. 4:1). What a joy it is to be around people who do not let worldly troubles rob them of their Christian joy.

However, sometimes even good Christians forget

their attitudes and bicker about things and have to be reminded to return to the Christ-like attitude. "I beseech Euodias and beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord" (Phil. 4:2). But for the most part faithful Christians just work hard for the Lord and live at peace with themselves. "And I entreat this also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3). The result of working for Christ is that one can "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).

Two Keys to the serene life are work (stated above) and then "moderation" (KJV at Phil. 4:5). This latter term has the sense of forbearance and such an attitude is to be shown to all men for the Lord is taking note or is "at hand." Proper treatment, that is "golden rule" treatment of one's fellow-man always helps one to a better, more serene life (Matt. 7:12).

The **Third Key** to a serene, strength-filled life has to do with prayer.

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6-7).

The overly-anxious person cannot survive the storms of life for he is bearing those burdens **alone**. The Christian gives his burdens to God and a kind of inner peace ensues that human understanding cannot reproduce nor perceive.

The story is told of a hitchhiker who was carrying a

very heavy backpack full of his worldly goods. A kind gentleman driving a pick-up truck stopped and told the hitchhiker that he could find room in the bed of the truck. As the driver proceeded down the highway he noticed that the hitchhiker had found space but was still wearing the backpack. The kindly driver stopped and asked the hitchhiker why he had not removed the backpack and laid it in the bed of the truck. The hitchhiker replied that, "It did not seem to me that there was room for me and the backpack." So many pray to God about their troubles, but they keep wearing them around even though God has "room" for them and their troubles.

The serene Christian gives his requests to God and believes that God cares and that He will handle the problems.⁷

It is also the case that a **Fourth** activity gives one strength to overcome and that is to think correctly.

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).

The nightly newscast will report the number murdered, the financial failures, the deaths on the highway, the rapes, burglaries, and the corruption extant among public officials. One needing to be depressed should just turn on the evening news and listen to the world report on itself. No one on the networks will report homes saved, souls baptized, or

beautiful sunsets, but Christians know to think positively about lovely things. Christians survive because when death comes they imagine that one in paradise. Christians survive because “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39). Christians do not dwell on worldly catastrophes (Col. 3:1-3).⁸

A **Fifth** avenue to serenity is to learn to be content in whatever situation exists. From **prison** Paul wrote:

...for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need (Phil. 4:11b-12).

Her name is not so important as what she was—a great Christian lady. However, sister Bess Womack did live in rather scant surroundings according to the world’s measure of success. Her primitive kitchen did boast of a single light-bulb and two chairs and a table. The author visited her often (and later did her funeral) and on one visit he asked her how she managed while living “alone.” Her answer was a sermon for she said, “Young man” (and the readers will note this was several years go!) “I am not alone! The Lord is with me!” Sister Womack was **content** in whatsoever state, for her Master was always with her. She could do all things through Christ.

Those Christians who trust God always survive life’s

turmoil for our "God shall supply all (our needs) according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19, the paraphrase is mine, K.M.).

Conclusion

The Christian who survives the raging storms of life is living a savior-centered life (Phil. 1:1-30). By serving others in a self-emptying way the Christian is distracted from worry and happy in service (Phil. 2:1-30).

And, by relying on God's Word as a sure foundation, the Christian uses that sound word to effect an over-coming attitude (Phil. 3:1-21). Sorrow, grief, tribulation, and even past sins and strife give way to the power of Holy Writ (cf. Psm. 119:11).

Too, there is such serenity for the working, forbearing, praying, content Christian that such peace is beyond mere human understanding (Phil. 4:1-23). The story is told about an artist who was commissioned to paint a picture of the "peace of God." The artist used a black canvas on which he painted a violent storm as background. In the foreground was a tree pictured as being beaten by the wind. In the crook of one of the branches was a nest and in the nest was a bird singing. When the storms of life rage, Christians can sing because if they fall from that tree, God is able to save them even if it is in eternity. Such peace of mind is too wonderful to reject. May all who read this obey God, enter Christ, and long for that eternal home called heaven.

Endnotes

1 **The Holy Bible, King James Version** (World Bible Publishers). All scriptural references in this essay are to this version unless otherwise stipulated.

2 The author is indebted to a sermon he heard from Wendell Winkler for this outline of Philippians.

3 William Kelly, **Lectures on Philippians and Colossians** (Denver, CO: Wilson Foundation, n.d.), pp. 14-15.

4 John MacArthur, "Joy and Godliness" in **MacArthur's Bible Studies** (Panorama City, CA: Grace to You, 1990), p.77.

5 H. M. Evans, **Consecration** (Cincinnati, OH: Christian Leader Corporation, n.d.), p.1.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

7 The year my grandson died, in fact just one week after his death, I was asked to preach on the first annual Power Lectures in Southaven, Mississippi. My subject was Philippians 4:6-7 and because of the proximity of James' death and the subject, that tape was the most requested that year. Why? Trials help all of Christians get closer to God and Christians want to know how to reach that blessing.

8 The author heard a Christian (?) say to another, "Well, you are getting older." The older one said, "Well, considering the alternative!" The "alternative" for the Christian is paradise. How worldly was that Christian's response?

Chapter 4

Leadership In The Home

Winford Claiborne



Winford has been preaching the gospel for sixty years. Previously he taught in the Bible department at Freed-Hardeman University and directed their annual lectureship. He is the speaker for the **International Gospel Hour**, broadcasting on over 160 radio stations nationwide. He presently preaches for the West Fayetteville, TN congregation. Winford and Molly (deceased) have two sons.

Someone has wisely said, "As goes the home, so goes the nation." I would add: "As goes the home, so goes the church." How can we have a strong nation or a strong church when the majority of homes of America are so deeply troubled? Dr. Joyce Brothers, an American psychologist, says that only one in twelve marriages is what she calls a "total marriage." By the term, "total marriage," Dr. Brothers means marriages that are happy, fulfilling and productive. I have no way of either confirming or denying Dr. Brothers' statistics, but from my reading and experience, I suspect she is right. Under such circumstances, it is certainly appropriate that this lectureship address issues relating to marriage and the family.

Attacks Against The Home

Attacks against the home can be categorized under four headings: Academic, social, religious and political. To examine any of the attacks fully would require more time than I am allotted for this entire lecture. So I shall have to be very brief in providing some insight into these threats to the home. We must be informed about Satan's attempt to destroy the homes. Paul urged the Corinthians not to be ignorant of Satan's devices lest he should get advantage of us (2 Cor. 2:11). Every enemy of the home is an enemy of God Almighty and of mankind since the home is the very foundation of civilization. The home is also God's arrangement for mankind (Gen. 2:18-24). Where the home is in disarray, society suffers.

Academic threats are those that arise within our colleges and universities. These attacks involve promoting moral values that are contrary to the parents' beliefs, undermining the authority of parents (and even making fun of parents), failing to discipline students, endorsing Marxism, denying the sacredness of all human life and ridiculing America as a racist and sexist society. Since sociology is the academic discipline that includes courses on marriage and the family, I shall confine my investigation to sociology. Judson T. Landis and his wife, Mary G. Landis, wrote one of the most, if not the most, popular marriage and family textbooks ever published, **Building A Successful Marriage**.¹ Judson Landis also edited an introductory college textbook on sociology. Snell Putney wrote one chapter in the textbook on sociology. Putney affirms:

The demand that marriage should entail sexual monogamy may have made sense in an era when contraception was largely impossible and questions of lineage were of considerable moment.²

The implication is that times have changed. We no longer need such an outdated institution. Gail Putney Fullerton, a radical feminist, teaches at San Jose State University in California. Her textbook on marriage and the family endorses the agenda of radical feminism. She agrees with Talcott Parsons who calls being a housewife a "pseudo-occupation."³ Putney claims:

It is difficult for intimacy to exist in a relationship marked by dominance and submission.⁴

Social enemies of the home include the Women's Liberation Movement, the Gay Liberation Front, the public media: television, radio, newspapers, magazines and books. The Women's Liberation Movement has probably done more harm to families than any other movement in the past several decades. The movement appears to be composed primarily of women who could not or would not cooperate with their husbands in establishing stable homes. In a little pamphlet published by members of the Women's Liberation Movement, the authors foolishly maintain:

Heterosexual relationships are by their very nature oppressive to women in a male dominated society. In western society sexual roles are defined for the benefit of men. The woman is treated as a sexual object, a thing which exists for the gratification of man to

ensure his physical comfort and his sexual pleasure. In the eyes of men this is woman's place—for Eve was created from Adam's rib—or so the story goes.⁵

The leaders of the Gay Liberation Front have made no attempt to obscure the goals of their perverted movement. They demand that Americans accept homosexuality as just another lifestyle. That includes making same-sex marriages legal in every state in the union. I do not have time to review the literature available on same-sex marriages, but I enthusiastically recommend three books: James Dobson's **Marriage Under Fire: Why We Must Win This Battle**⁶; Erwin W. Lutzer's **The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage**⁷; and Matthew Staver's **Same-Sex Marriage: Putting Every Household At Risk**⁸. Dr. Dobson believes that the legalization of same-sex marriages will pave the way for,

...polygamy and other alternatives to one-man/one-woman unions. In Utah, polygamist Tom Green, who claims five wives, is citing *Lawrence v. Texas* as the legal authority for his appeal.⁹

Erwin Lutzer reports:

In Sweden an evangelical pastor who preached a sermon on Sodom and Gomorrah was convicted of "verbal violence" against homosexuals and sentenced to a four-week prison term.¹⁰

Matt Staver's book contains by far the best information on same-sex marriages I have found. Staver says that

Stanley Kurtz, a Harvard educated anthropologist, has studied the “impact of same-sex marriages in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian Countries (Norway, Denmark and Sweden).”¹¹ Dr. Kurtz reports:

Marriage is slowly dying in Scandinavia. A majority of children in Sweden and Norway are born out of wedlock. Sixty percent of first-born children in Denmark have unmarried parents.¹²

Dr. Kurtz believes,

...by the time we see the effects of gay marriage in America, it will be too late to do anything about it. Yet we needn't wait that long. In effect, Scandinavia has run our experiment for us. The results are in.¹³

Concerned Americans cannot remain silent on this great challenge to our homes, to all churches and to our nation. Do we not realize that silence can be sinful?

The public media – radio, television, newspapers, magazines and books – generally speaking, undermine the moral values that serve as the foundation of the home and of society. Music, including much of country music, promotes barnyard morals. One country song says, “Baby, baby, don't get hooked on me. I'll just use you and set you free.” Is that the message we want to send to impressionable and immature children and young people? Virtual nudity is everyday fare on television. Do the owners of the networks, producers of programs and actors have no concern for the welfare of our boys and girls? It is possible our radio and television programs have led

to the proliferation of sexual violence, to out-of-wedlock pregnancies, to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and to other social, moral and spiritual problems? Anyone who thinks that what one hears and sees has no bearing on his behavior is either ignorant or unscrupulous or both. In the words of the late Dr. Richard Weaver of the University of Chicago: "Ideas have consequences."¹⁴

Religious enemies have contributed to the instability of American homes. Examining all of them would require an entire lectureship such as this one. But a few examples may be helpful. Wesley Baker, a preacher of the Presbyterian Church USA, argues, "There is no such thing as a morally defensible position."¹⁵ Does he believe his immoral position "morally defensible?" He absolutely believes, or says he does: "There are no absolutes, no unbreakable ground rules, no qualifying principles."¹⁶ He affirms: "The Christian ... looks upon marriage as a respectable and possibly honorable institution."¹⁷ How would young people react to these words:

Even the most hard-and-fast moralists of our day have surely come to see that the sex relationship has too many sacred potentialities to be locked up in any human institution.¹⁸

Does that seem to you that Wesley Baker may be trying to justify having a woman (or women) outside his marriage?

Paul Moore, Jr., Episcopal bishop of New York, in 1972, ordained Ellen Marie Barrett as a deacon in

the Episcopal Church and later ordained her as a priest. Barrett was a lesbian and an active member of the Gay Liberation Front. Moore's confusion is understandable. He says, "We can never be sure at the time what His (God's) will is."¹⁹ Moore foolishly affirms:

My own personal thinking at the present time is leaning toward the view that sexual activity between consenting adults outside marriage is not sinful *per se* ... I cannot believe that two lonely people comforting one another with physical love is necessarily wrong, even if they are not married.²⁰

With the preaching of Paul Moore, Jr. and John Shelby Spong, is it any wonder that the Episcopal Church appointed an admitted homosexual as a bishop?

Political enemies are those men and women who support communism and socialism, primarily on our college and university campuses. Most Americans have enough common sense to know that both systems of government have miserably failed. It is almost entirely the academics who still work to establish in the United States a communist or socialist form of government. Jim Nelson Black documents the presence of communists on many of the major campuses in our nation. Dr. Black asked a MIT professor how many conservatives are on the MIT faculty. She replied:

We used to have one. He was upset by the Marxist attitudes on campus. You may have noticed that on the road between here and Harvard Square there's the Center for

Marxist Education; it's right beside the T-shop, beside the Marxist bookstore. People call this place "Moscow on the Charles" and "The People's Republic of Cambridge," it's so leftist.

Every informed student of history knows the great threat communism poses to the home and to all other institutions. We also know that communism has been responsible for more than 100,000,000 deaths in our world.

The local, state and federal governments are enemies of the home when they continue to tax and tax and tax. In many cases, both husbands and wives have to work to pay their living expenses. The wife, if she is also a mother, may wish to stay home until her children go to school, but she may not have a choice because of the tax burden many young families have to carry. Every American must monitor all government agencies to make sure they are family friendly.

The Need For Leadership

Richard Nixon's book, **Leaders: Profiles and Reminiscences of Men Who Have Shaped the Modern World**²², provides very valuable information on the leadership of Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, Douglas MacArthur, Konrad Adenauer, Nikita Khrushchev and Zhou Enlai – all of whom President Nixon knew well. A few brief excerpts from Nixon's book should be helpful in our understanding of leadership.

Great leadership requires a great vision.... All of the really strong leaders I have known have been highly intelligent, highly disciplined, hard workers, supremely self-confident, driven by a dream, driving others.²²

Richard Nixon asks, "What is the most important characteristic a successful leader must have?" He answers,

Certainly high intelligence, courage, hard work, tenacity, judgment, dedication to a great cause, and a certain measure of charm, are all key ingredients.²⁴

Does any of this apply to husbands and fathers?

No organization—either church or public schools or businesses—can function well without capable and dedicated leaders. One of the reasons churches of Christ are facing so many departures from the faith is because of elders who either lack the knowledge to guide the church according to Scripture or they want the church to "fall in with the fleeting fashions of the world" (Rom. 12:2) or they do not have the courage to "stand against the wiles (**methodeias**: methods) of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). Paul warned the elders of the Lord's church at Ephesus:

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Paul predicted that "grievous wolves" would arise from outside the church, such as, secular humanists,

false religious teachers and other unbelievers and also from inside the church, like Max Lucado (Acts 20:29-30). How can elders who want to lead God's people in the right way bring in wolves to feed the sheep?

Husband / Father Leadership

The Women's Liberation Movement and its supporters in liberal churches, in the media and in academia have succeeded in confusing many Americans about who should be leaders in the home and in the church. They deliberately misconstrue passages like Ephesians 5:21 – "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." They argue on the basis of their interpretation of this verse that wives are to submit to husbands and husbands are to submit to wives. They call their view of the husband/wife relationship "mutual submission." In his book, **Male Leadership**, J. David Pawson argues,

Truth must not be based on cultural consensus but on the revealed mind of God.²⁵

Pawson reports on a review of the English edition of his book by Church of England Bishop Richard Holloway. Holloway admits that Pawson has accurately interpreted the biblical evidence for male leadership.

That's what the Bible says, along with a lot of other stuff we have long since discarded. Mr. Pawson's difficulty is tragic....He is absolutely hung up on a fundamentalist method of scriptural interpretation....He believes in doing what he thinks the Bible tells him to do.²⁶

Paul King Jewett, a theology professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, accuses the apostle Paul of making three mistakes when he commanded wives to be in subjection to their own husbands. (a) Paul did not understand the Genesis account of creation. He based his teaching on the second account of creation that scholars normally classify as religious myth or saga. (b) Paul had a defective understanding of Christ's attitude toward women. (c) Paul contradicted himself. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul affirmed: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for we are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). If there is neither male nor female, how could Paul command wives to be in subjection to their husbands?²⁷ But in spite of Paul's prejudice toward women, he "had remarkable insights for a former Jewish rabbi."²⁸ What was the Holy Spirit's role in Ephesians 5, in Colossians 3 and in 1 Peter 3?

Herbert Miles was a Baptist preacher and taught for many years at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee. He and his wife Fern wrote a book on **Husband-Wife Equality**. Herbert and Fern Miles accuse preachers and others who defend the hierarchy concept in marriage of using "isolated texts" and failure to understand the "broad, basic, universal principles and truths" of Scripture.²⁹ They affirm: "A committee of two has no chairman."³⁰ They further argue:

There is nothing in the fifth chapter of Ephesians that would even remotely indicate

that (a) husbands are dominant; (b) that wives should submit to their husbands' decisions; (c) that husbands have final authority over the wives; or (d) that wives are a secondary authority in the family.³¹

Is it possible Jehudi had been using his penknife on the Bible Herbert and Fern Miles were using (Jer. 36:23)?

Biblical Principles Governing Leadership

There are literally hundreds of passages that should govern leadership in the church and in the home. I shall concentrate on what we commonly call "the Christian graces."

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:5-8).

I am aware that these challenging words were not written exclusively or even primarily to leaders, but living by these ideals would make husbands and fathers far more effective leaders.

"Giving all diligence" ("make every effort, ESV) means to make maximum effort to "grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). "Add to your faith virtue." The basic

meaning of the word faith is trust. Is the apostle Peter teaching that faith is the foundation on which we build for time and for eternity? How can a man be a good husband and father without faith in God, in Christ and in the Bible? "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Both the Greek (**hupostasis: hupo**, under, and **stasis**, to stand) and the English word "substance" mean to stand under. The word "is common in the papyri in business documents as the basis or guarantee of transactions."³²

Virtue (arete) means moral power, moral energy or vigor of the soul. Husbands and fathers face many dilemmas in leading their families. For example, shall I permit my child to go to the school prom, to associate with young people whose moral values are like those of barnyard animals and to dress in clothes that are too revealing? Michael Greene, preacher for the Elizabethtown Church of Christ, Elizabethtown, Kentucky, quotes these challenging words from an article: "Parents: It's Time to Step Up" by Rebecca Hagelin, vice president of the Heritage Foundation:

Call me sexist. Call me a prude. Call me what you will. But I absolutely refuse to allow my daughter to dress according to the dictates of the manufacturers of girls' clothing, which has been patterned on the preferences of such role models as Paris Hilton, Britney Spears, et al. The sad fact is that a lot of today's tween and teen girls dress like street walkers....I decided a long time ago that my home is not going to

resemble a strip-club, “honky-tonk” or public school. Ouch! Did I say public school? Sadly I did. The dreadful reality is that many of today’s public schools have simply given up on the idea of meaningful dress codes. How do so many...little girls end up looking like sex objects? Because their parents let them. And because many of the schools have given up—administrators are just too tired, or too lazy, or too liberal to care anymore. Moms and dads, administrators and teachers, it’s our fault if America’s little girls look like tramps.

Rebecca Hagelin asks, “And when did fathers start letting their precious little girls dress like ‘ladies of the night’?” Ms. Hagelin affirms that the dress of many girls is “just plain trashy.” In our age of tolerance, it takes great moral courage for a father (and mother) to lead their children in the right direction.

Who can doubt the absolute need for a father and husband to have **knowledge** of his opportunities and obligations? He must know what the Scriptures teach about being a good father and a good husband. Both the Old Testament and the New stress the duties of fathers. “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother” (Prov. 1:8). If children should listen to and obey the instructions of their parents, would not the parents be responsible before God for providing instructions? Both fathers and mothers have a sacred obligation to teach their children diligently (Deut. 6:3-9). Paul demanded: “And, you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:

but bring them up in the nurture (**paideia**: discipline) and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

The apostle Paul commanded husbands:

Dwell with them (their wives) according to **knowledge**, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

Where does a husband obtain knowledge about his wife? The Word of God is the best source. He can also learn much by simple observation. For example, I did not generally buy Molly flowers, Christmas presents or birthday presents – not because I forgot or preferred not to do so. She always said, "Give me the money." Since I wanted to please her, I gave her the money.

There are some excellent books that will help husbands to better understand their wives. For many years I have recommended that husbands read James Dobson's book, **What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women**.³⁴ I have even suggested that wives buy the book for the husband. If the husband cannot or will not read the book, the wives should read it to them. Unless we know the needs, wishes and dreams of our family members, how can we effectively lead them?

The King James Version renders the Greek **enkrateia** by our English word **temperance**. When the King James Version was translated, that was a good translation. But the word in our day refers primarily to one form of self-control – one's attitude toward beverage alcohol. Most modern versions render the

Greek "self-control." The verb form is used figuratively of the self-control an athlete must exercise in preparing for athletic contests (1 Cor. 9:25). Paul used the opposite (**akrasian**) of those who lack self-control (1 Cor. 7:5).

Every marriage has some rough spots, especially early in the marriage. In Dr. Dobson's book, **What Every Wife Wishes Her Husband Knew About Women**, there is a brief statement that would help young married people: "The ability to fight **properly** may be the most important concept to be learned by newlyweds."³⁵ Molly wrote in the margin of Dr. Dobson's book "important." Good leadership on the part of the husband and father demands that he be in control of his attitudes, his tongue and his actions. Excessive anger may lead to spouse abuse and child abuse. And how can a man be the kind of leader God demands of him when he is addicted to gambling, to foul language, to alcohol and to other drugs?

The King James Version uses the word **patience** to translate two different Greek words. The Greek **makrothumia** literally means of a long mind. The noun form is always translated "longsuffering" in the King James Version. The verb form (**makrothumeo**) is translated "have patience" (Matt. 18:26) and "suffers long" (1 Cor. 13:4). This is what we normally mean by our English word "patience." But the word "patience" in our text is **hupomone** and literally means to remain under. The verb form (**hupomeno**) is almost always rendered "endure." For example, "He who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22).

The difficulties and heartaches that arise in a

relationship as close as the husband–wife relationship or the parent–child relationship may tempt some men to give up and leave. Money problems, disagreements over what one should wear and where one should go can create real tensions in the family. Unless the leader in the family understands that fact, he is in for some rough times. He must prepare himself to lead his family, regardless of the conflicts that arise. Both patience and endurance will likely be required of the husband and father as the leader of his family.

The word **godliness** does not have the word “God” in it. The Greek word **eusebeian** means piety that is characterized by a Godward attitude and does that which is well pleasing to Him.³⁶ Paul does not discourage bodily exercise, but he does teach:

Bodily exercise profits little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come (1 Tim. 4:8).

“But godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). One form of the word (**eusebes**) is translated “devout” and “godly.”

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 (Titus 2:11-12).

If a husband and father wishes for his family to be godly, he would have to be an example for them. He should attend all the services of the church, be a vital part of the work and worship of the church, show

respect for elders of the church and institute activities in his home that lead his family to love God and to love His Word. I heard one marriage counselor say he had never counseled a husband and wife who prayed together. Is the old saying, "The family that prays together stays together," true? I have no way of demonstrating that it is always true, but I believe there is great wisdom in it.

The term, "**brotherly kindness**," comes from the Greek **philadelphian**. The word is always rendered "brotherly love" or "love of the brethren," except in our text. The author of Hebrews exhorted: "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1). We may not think of our Christian wives and children as being our brothers and sisters in the Lord. I do not remember ever calling Molly "sister Claiborne" or calling my sons "brother Doron" or "brother Danny." But Molly was my sister in Christ. Doron and Danny are my brothers in Christ. It was my duty always to show them brotherly love.

All the characteristics of leaders and other Christians can be summed up in the word **love**. Most of us are familiar with the Greek **agape**, even if we are not students of the Greek language. It is the kind of love God has for fallen man.

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).

The apostle of love declares: "God is love" (1 John 4:8,16). In contrast to our God, the god of Islam is not

a god of love, but of judgment. The Koran does not encourage Muslims to love God. It demands that they obey Him. Christians must obey God, but we obey Him because of His love for us and our love for Him.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. (1 John 5:3).

Paul's great chapter on love emphasizes the absolute essentiality of love (1 Cor. 13:1-3). It also tells us how love behaves. I shall read from the English Standard Version.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

Who in his or her right mind would resent being in submission to a leader who manifests the characteristics of love as outlined in this great chapter? I had one woman in Mississippi to tell me: "If our husbands loved us as Christ loved the church, there would be no problem with submission."

Servant Leadership

The mother of James and John approached Jesus Christ with a request. "Grant that my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." Jesus assured her that she did not fully

comprehend what she was asking. Were they able to endure what He would have to experience? James and John told Jesus they were able. The other disciples were angry with James and John. Jesus told them you:

...know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion (**katakurieuousin**: literally, lord it over), and they who are great exercise authority (**katexousiazousin**: play the tyrant) upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (**diakonos**: servant); and whosoever will be chief (**protos**: first) among you, let him be your servant (**doulos**: slave); 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. 20:20-28).

Our Lord's willingness to wash His disciples' feet demonstrates His devotion to serving others. Washing the dusty feet of another person is menial. Some people might even call it "demeaning." Our Lord wanted His immediate disciples to know and He wants us to know the true meaning of leadership. After He had washed their feet, He asked them if they knew what He had done.

...Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord;

neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them (John 13:12-17).

If members of our households see us serving others, will they not likely follow our example?

Conclusion

Every nation on earth needs good homes. No nation and no church can become as effective as it should without dedicated leadership. I have witnessed what happens to schools and colleges when the leadership is defective (Pepperdine, for example). I have known churches that went into apostasy because the leaders were not knowledgeable or were not dedicated to the truth or did not have the courage to stand up for the Lord. Belmont in Nashville is just one notable example. I have observed how homes have fallen apart because the husband and father failed to discharge his duties to his family. In my judgment, more homes would deteriorate and end in disaster were it not for the good women in those homes. When husbands abdicate their responsibilities, wives have no choice but to take care of the home.

May God bless the good leaders in the homes of America! May he awaken all husbands and fathers to their wonderful blessings and grave responsibilities!

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Chapter 5

Leadership In The Church

William Woodson



A thorough and excellent teacher of God's Word. For many years William taught and trained college students at Freed-Hardeman and David Lipscomb. Author of **Change Agents Among Churches Of Christ, Sounding Brass,** and **Standing For The Faith.** Conducts weekend leadership seminars. William and Geanne have three children and four grandchildren and live in Lawrenceburg, TN.

The basic meaning of "leadership" derives from an Anglo Saxon word meaning to cause to go, thus to bring about progress. When we are discussing leadership in the church, therefore, we are considering what will enable or bring about the situation in which the church will go in the way God instructs it is to go. Various dimensions of leadership will be considered in the following material.

Necessity Of Leadership

In any action involving two or more individuals, one or the other will "lead" in making decisions, choosing a course, deciding what to do in times of difficulty or need, etc. There will likely be more or

less involvement by the remaining member(s) of the group, depending on its nature; but in general there will be discussion, consideration, give and take in the process of making and achieving goals, whatever. The leadership may be very good in some instances, less than adequate in others.

A church, much like any group seeking a common goal, will need leadership in making decisions as to common activities, responsibilities, direction, ways and means to be followed in the short or long term. A church without elders can and will function and function properly and successfully if there is leadership provided in the interim before elders are appointed. The earliest mention of elders in the church in Judea is in Acts 11:30. Assistance was needed to supply brethren in a famine in the days of Claudius Caesar; brethren in Antioch sent relief by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. This assistance was sent "to the elders." How much earlier than this date elders were appointed in Jerusalem or Judea the text does not say. The church in Jerusalem was under the leadership of the apostles during this time, and one phase of the work—benevolence—was placed in the hands of the seven men appointed in Acts 6. So, some form of leadership was present before the mention of elders, and on occasion the same is true today.

Leadership In Scripture

We do not have time to discuss various leaders of God's people in the Old Testament; but instances of leadership can be noted from the New Testament.

Jesus exhibited the highest and best leadership in his public ministry. Perhaps the greatest expression of this was His statement "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). His moral and spiritual leadership was one in which He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). In His varied temptations and trials, Peter stated of Him:

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 (1 Peter 2:22-23).

His teaching was such that even those sent to capture Him exclaimed: "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). Peter summarized His life and leadership in saying [He left] "us an example, that we should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Such other leaders may be noted as follows: Andrew, brother of Peter, who said "We have found the Messiah, which being interpreted, is Christ" and brought him to Jesus (John 1:40-41); Peter, was a leader of whom much is said, and whose name appears first in the listing of the twelve apostles, who spoke of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and who preached the first full gospel sermon on Pentecost (Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13; Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 2:24ff). Barnabas was a leader in exhortation and encouragement as shown by the change of his name from "Joses" ["Joseph" ASV] meaning "exalted" to "Barnabas" meaning "son of consolation" or "one gifted in teaching, admonishing, or counseling" (Acts

4:36-37). This name change was shown to be deserved in view of his assistance to Paul (Acts 9:26-28) and his assistance to the church in Antioch (Acts 11:22-26). Phoebe, a servant of the church in Rome, was in the Lord, a saint, who had been a helper with her resources of many, including Paul himself (Rom. 16:1-2). Priscilla and Aquilla, who were the helpers of Paul and had risked their lives on his behalf, earned the thanks of the churches of the Gentiles, and their home was the gathering place for the church (Rom. 16:3-5). Epaphroditus, a brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier of Paul, who came to Paul from Colossae and ministered to Paul, was sent back to Colossae to tell of Paul's situation and was to be held in "reputation" or "honor" (Phil. 2:29); and finally Antipas, faithful martyr of Jesus who held fast the name of Jesus, denied not his faith, was killed in Pergamos (Rev. 2:13).

These men and women, as well as others one could list, reminded their generation and now the present generation that people of true faith and devotion can be found in various places who serve the Lord without much recognition or the plaudits of the crowd. Their efforts encourage and strengthen others. They lead by their faithfulness to the cause, by the strength of their faith, and they leave the church better when their lives have ended. Such leadership is always needed in and enjoyed by churches now; their examples guide and spur us all to be better and do better.

Leadership In The Eldership

The divinely established leadership in the church is the eldership in each congregation. Each church is autonomous and, following the divinely revealed qualifications for elders, selects and appoints the men who serve as elders. Several words indicate dimensions of their leadership.

1. They are “over” the local church (1 Thess. 5:12). The Greek word translated “over” in the KJV means to exercise a position of leadership, rule, direct, be at the head (of). It is used of the father who rules his own house (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12) as well as the elders who rule the church (1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17). The decisions that need to be made in leading, in exercising the oversight of the church, are to be made by those who “rule” it, who are the elders.

2. They have the rule over the church and their faith is to be followed (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24). Those who had served in former days as well as those who were serving in the time of the writing of this book are mentioned. The lives of these men were to be carefully observed, the issue of their life of faith was to be considered, and their influence was to be remembered. They watched for the souls of those under their oversight and would give account to God for their meeting, or perhaps not meeting, God’s expectation of their stewardship in His service.

3. They are to be examples to the flock of God (1 Peter 5:3). The word “examples” is from a term meaning to be shaped into the right form into which a hot metal or liquid that will congeal will be poured

so as to assume the form of the mold or pattern involved. The elders, therefore, become models for the life of the members of the church over whom they serve.

The combined force of these observations shows the leadership is primarily of a spiritual nature. To be sure, there is the requisite authority to achieve the right results, but authority without the kind of benevolent interest and spiritual life entailed will seldom succeed and may well fail.

Leadership Of Elders In Contemporary Times

There is always a need and place for capable leadership by elders in the local church; brethren have been and continue to enjoy such leadership. The present focus, however, considers Bible statements that seem to be especially noteworthy in view of ongoing needs and current difficulties our people are facing.

1. Paul first admonished the elders at Ephesus: "take heed to yourselves" (Acts 20:28). The Greek word rendered "take heed" means to be in a state of alertness, be concerned about, care for, take care". Elders serve the Lord and the church by spending many hours considering ways and means to better the work, to meet opportunities, to visit with and be concerned about members, deal with problems, and all the situations that arise in the life of the church. With most elders also earning a living in their various fields of work, it may well be that burnout or discouragement will occur, along with their wives and

family. There well may need to be special times when elders meet together for Bible study, prayer, evaluation of their work, expressing encouragement to each other, helping each other to serve and mature better. Their spiritual growth individually underlies their serving as examples and overseers of the local work.

2. Paul also admonished the elders to “take heed...to the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers” (Acts 20:28). The dimensions of this responsibility can well occupy elders many hours of the week or month, depending on the regular and unexpected but necessary matters that arise to be cared for. The growth of each member, the progress of the Bible classes, the maturing of the teachers, the spiritual depth and benefit of worship services, the practical matters of church business, the depth and relevance of the preaching, mission and benevolent work, the evangelism in the local area, these and many other aspects of the local work are under their oversight. To be sure, delegation of responsibilities to various talented individuals is legitimate and necessary, but the elders see the work is done and done well. Here leadership is quickly seen as successful or less than satisfactory.

3. Paul alerted elders they must be alert to avoid “perverse things,” some of which might arise from among themselves—a very sobering thought (Acts 20:30). The word so rendered means to cause to depart from an accepted standard of oral or spiritual values, make crooked, pervert ... teach perversions (of the truth). The verb tense shows the twisting and wrenching out of shape refers to what was done

elsewhere and then brought into the church. From personal whims, a warped sense of spiritual responsibility, a failure in careful study, a pet hobby, whatever, there can arise a mentality that twists truth or harbors false notions that can be most divisive in a church. The change agent errors of the present day show the need for awareness of the possibility and firm resistance against such error should it arise.

4. Paul commended elders to God and to His Word (Acts 20:32). The word translated “commend” means to place one along side, to entrust someone to the care or protection of someone or something, hence, to entrust one to God and His word for divine protection. The best assurance of the protection of the church from harm and for its continued zeal and growth is to be had when the present and future of the eldership and the church is anchored steadfastly in the properly understood providence of God and the power of the word of God. Here is the sustaining trust and long term principle of the purity of the faith and worship and service of the local church. To neglect such trust and continuance in God and His word is to imperil the church in every generation.

5. Elders are to exhort and convince the gainsayers and to stop the mouths of such proponents, lest whole houses be subverted by their efforts (Titus 1:10-11). The exhortation is the effort to win the errant member(s) by gentle and insistent calling of the offender(s) back to God and His way. This requires good knowledge of the word of God and the resolve to reclaim the erring if possible. The convincing of the gainsayers is the presentation of

Bible teaching that addresses and shows the error being propounded and shows the wrong being done by those speaking against truth and the well being of the church. The stopping of the mouths of those who would subvert houses is the rendering of their effort futile and ineffective. Elders thus lead by a graduated series of efforts to protect the church individually and collectively: exhortation, convincing, and stopping the mouths of those teaching error. Such requires deep and thorough knowledge of Scripture, familiarity with current errors that would endanger the church, and the determination to resist and guide others to resist what would otherwise infiltrate and harm the church. Leadership in the church is as many faceted as the full counsel of God in instructing and seeing the church is fully instructed in the word of God in the positive and the negative activities in the areas noted above; and in the many other facets of the life and work of godly elders. The church blessed with such leadership in the elders should, and will, esteem such capable leaders very highly in love for their work's sake. May their tribe increase among churches of Christ!

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Chapter 6

The Church - Relationship And Duty To The Home

Stan Stevenson

A native Tennessean (Lincoln County) • Grew up in Huntsville, AL • Received a BA degree from Southern Christian University and is near completion of a MA from Freed-Hardeman University • Began preaching in 1977, full-time in 1983 • Local work in Tennessee and Alabama • Presently working with the Rome congregation in Smith County, TN • Julie and Stan have two boys and a girl.



God established three institutions that, ideally, would make for mankind a life that is rich and rewarding. The home (Gen. 1, 2; Matt. 5:27-32; 19:3-9; 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5:22-6:4); the church (Matt. 16:13-20; Acts 2:40-47; Acts 20:17-35; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-5) and civil government (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17) are those three institutions. The Bible and secular history are rife with examples of how man suffers when departures from God's will for these three institutions occur. Each one helps or hinders the other two. We can certainly see in our own lives how the departures from God's will in civil government affects the home and the church. Many can relate how the departure from God's will in a congregation has

affected the home, and lent to the decay of society. And certainly the home, as the basic unit of society, has contributed to the weakness or strength of a congregation and of the society in which it is found.

The burden of this lesson is to consider some things the church can do to strengthen the home and to help it survive the storms of life. First, the church should **respect** the sanctity of the home. The relationships that exist in a home must be nurtured and cultivated. The relationship between a husband and a wife requires nurturing so that it can be what God intended. When God created woman and gave her to the man, we read,

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:23-24).

Note that the relationship is one of “leaving” a father and a mother and of “cleaving” to one’s wife. One leaves that relationship that he has known all his life, ideally, and begins a new relationship with a mate. The marriage needs time and opportunity for the bond between a husband and a wife to be nurtured. This is the idea behind the honeymoon. Paul wrote,

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 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. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in

every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.... (Eph. 5:22-25).

That relationship is best realized when husbands and wives know each other and are trying to help one another go to heaven. Such needs to be cultivated and nurtured. The same is true in the parent/child relationship. One does not have to abandon the home to be an absentee parent. One may be so busy doing other things that the responsibilities to the children in the home are neglected. Paul wrote,

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4).

And, God said of Abraham, just before revealing His plans for Sodom and Gomorrah,

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him (Gen. 18:19).

The church should take into consideration the importance of families developing and maintaining the bond that God intended by planning a program of work that will allow families to have time together.

Secondly, the church should **reinforce** the work

of the home. The church is the “...pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). As the church proclaims the truth, it will naturally reinforce those truths that have been taught at home. Remember God’s statement to Abraham (Gen. 18:19). Also, remember Paul’s charge to fathers (Eph. 6:4). It is primarily the home’s responsibility to teach the children in that home. But, the work of the church will naturally supplement and support what the home is, or should be, doing. Timothy had a mother and grandmother who taught him the scriptures (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). The church’s work of teaching and preaching would only supplement what the children hear in the home. Regrettably, some homes have become so occupied with the material, secular matters of life that the spiritual matters are left entirely to the church. But, the church cannot do, in the approximately four hours a week that it meets, what the home should do in the approximately 75 hours of the child’s life (35 hours for school and 56 hours for sleep). The church can reinforce the stability of the home by teaching and standing for the truth on the subject of marriage. God declared, and Jesus defended the permanence of marriage:

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:23, 24).

And,

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to

put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 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. 19:3-9).

Sadly, the unscriptural condition of the marriage relationship in society is often reflected by some of the homes of members of the Lord's church. Sadder still, is that some congregations sanction such and thereby encourage it. But, where the church teaches and stands upon the truth of the marriage relationship, such can only help to strengthen that bond.

Thirdly, the church can help the home with **resources** for the home. A church library and Bible school literature that are available for the home to use in its devotionals and study of the Bible will help to strengthen the home. Gospel Meetings, lectureships, or seminars might be planned that focus on the home and current issues of society that are threatening the home. In the current climate, the subject of

homosexuality can be addressed in such a way as to be sensitive in discussing the sin, yet teaching the truth on the subject. The technology that makes it possible for a woman to be impregnated without having sexual activity needs to be addressed in light of the “one flesh” principle concerning marriage. The drug problem is an ever-growing concern for parents and grandparents. The church can be the “pillar and ground of the truth” in providing materials that will address these and many other subjects that directly affect the home. In addition, the relationships within the church, between the members can provide a resource to help our homes. Paul wrote:

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. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded (Titus 2:1-6).

Note the natural resource that exists in the church for young people, such as husbands, wives, and parents to help give guidance along the way. Even if one did not grow up in a “Christian home,” there are brethren who can give guidance and counsel, in addition to the principle of truth to guide one as a husband and father, or as a wife and mother.

The church is not the home, and the home is not the church. There are some things that can be done in the home, in the way of entertainment, that the church cannot do. But the church can plan a program of work that meets its responsibilities to the Great Commission and provide for the strengthening and the stabilizing of the home units that collectively make up the church. In so doing, it strengthens itself and provides an environment for the overcoming the efforts of Satan and the world to destroy the local congregation.

*Note: All quotations are from the King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

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Chapter 7

The Home - Relationship And Duty To The Church

Stan Stevenson

A native Tennessean (Lincoln County) • Grew up in Huntsville, AL • Received a BA degree from Southern Christian University and is near completion of a MA from Freed-Hardeman University • Began preaching in 1977, full-time in 1983 • Local work in Tennessee and Alabama • Presently working with the Rome congregation in Smith County, TN • Julie and Stan have two boys and a girl.



Having looked at some things the church can do for the home, let us now turn our attention to some things the home can do to strengthen the church and help it survive in the local setting. First, the home must **appreciate** the unique relationship of the church and the home. The home can exist apart from the church, though it may not be living in harmony with God's will. But, the church is dependent on the home for its continued existence in a community. Our landscape is dotted with buildings that once housed faithful congregations that are now abandoned and dilapidating. Some are in communities that were once thriving hubs of activity that are now sparsely populated. The reason for both is that the homes that

make them up have diminished in number, some to the point of vanishing. Every person has a vested interest in the life of the church. The church then should be a priority in the minds of those in the home.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matt. 6:24-44).

In a day when so many things demand our time, it is easy to see how the church can be pushed down on

our list of priorities. The prophet Haggai addressed this attitude.

Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? (Haggai 1:2-4).

Jesus said,

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed (John 6:27).

Man has always faced the danger of allowing his physical needs to superced his interest in spiritual verities. When Satan tempted Eve, two of the three reasons stated for Eve's attraction to the forbidden fruit were related to the physical ("pleasant to the eyes" and "good for food;" Gen. 3:6). God warned Israel concerning life in Canaan:

Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he

hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth (Deut. 8:6-17).

Sadly, Israel did not heed this warning, and some do not learn from it even today. Some may have forgotten the warning of Jesus:

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Luke 12:15).

As a result the church is weaker, and in some places the church is dying. For the church to survive in any community, the inhabitants of a home must appreciate that the life of that home and of the congregation are intertwined.

Two other important things the home can do for

the church is to give it one's **allegiance** and to **apply** one's abilities to the work of the church. Not to the church in general, but to the church of which we are a part. The church is more than a group of people that assemble together to worship God. Though this is an important aspect of the church's life, it is only a part of what the church is to be about. There is the "work" of the church that includes worshiping God, but is not limited to that. We might summarize the work of the church with Paul's inspired statement:

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end (Eph. 3:20-21).

God is glorified as the church evangelizes the lost (Acts 11:18; 13:48; 21:18-20). He receives glory as saints are edified to live righteous and holy lives (Matt. 5:16; 1 Peter 2:11, 12; 4:14-16; Isa. 61:1-3; John 15:8). And, God receives glory and honor as His children reflect His love for mankind in their benevolent spirit and deeds (2 Cor. 9:12, 13; 1 John 3:17). But, it takes the help of every member for the work to be carried out. That is why there must be an allegiance to the congregation of which we are members. To the Ephesian saints, Paul wrote:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the

faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph. 4:11-16).

While the first century context would include the use of spiritual gifts, which we do not possess today, the application of the principle is the same for today. Note how Paul relates the growth of the church (vs. 13-14) to each part of the “body” supplying its part (v. 16). In some parts of the country, one could visit a different congregation every service of the week for almost an entire year. One would be faithful in his attendance. But, what would that person be supplying to the growth and work of the church. Aside from raising its average attendance and contribution, one would make little if any other contribution to the work of any of those congregations one attended. Consider this same principle as expressed to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. Again, the first century context includes the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, but the principle applies equally to us today. When a person is baptized, he is added to the church (Acts 2:47). But, whatever role he may perform, or ability

he may use in the life of the church is realized in the local congregation. Therefore, my faithfulness to the Lord and to the church can be measured by my faithfulness to the work and in the work of the congregation of which I claim to be a part. It is imperative that our homes give their allegiance and actively participate in the life and labors of the church if the church and that home are both to be spiritually strong. We live in a mobile society. That has given us the opportunity to go where we can best provide for ourselves and our families. It has also afforded us the ability to travel for leisure and pleasure. But, some have a nomadic attitude toward the church. When one travels or works to excess, they rob the church of that which only he can provide (Eph. 4:16). The church is weakened, and so is that member and his home.

Some congregations have died out because the community, and the homes that made it up have withered. Young people grow up and go off to school, then to wherever their professions take them. The church in such a community is naturally affected. But, let us each resolve that the church will not weaken and die because of the failure of our homes to give the church what we alone can give; our appreciation for the nature of the church, and our allegiance and faithful activity to the needs and the work of the church. The home, the church, and the community in which each resides will reap the fruit of such a disposition of heart and mind. May the Lord bless us to live so that we are a help and not a hindrance to the strength and stability of the church.

*Note: All scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

Chapter 8

Spiritual Leaders In The Home Today

Kyle Butt



Kyle Butt graduated from Freed-Hardeman University, where he earned a B.A. with a double major in Bible and Communications, and an M.A. in New Testament. Currently, he works in the Bible Department at Apologetics Press and is the editor of *Discovery* magazine. He has authored several books on Christian Evidences for children and teens. Kyle and Bethany have one son and a daughter.

Without question, the home that God designed, composed of one man and one woman for life, accompanied by obedient children reared in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, is under a vicious attack. Knowing that this social structure is the backbone of a society that has the capability to prepare itself to seek God, Satan and his minions have launched their most effective darts at the destruction of the God-given institution of marriage and the home. In one of the most popularly known studies sponsored by Rutgers University, David Popenoe and Barbara Defoe Whitehead state emphatically and anxiously that the home in America is under attack.

Homosexuality

That attack is coming from all sides. In the most recent years, the homosexual community has clamored for equal rights, demanding that same-sex couples be allowed to marry and enjoy all the rights and privileges of the man-woman marriage unions. Certain states and counties have granted marriage licenses to homosexual couples, forcing the state governments to press for constitutional amendments stating that marriage is between a man (male) and woman (female). In fact, the self-professed homosexual agenda is for the abolition of all legislation that pertains to sex and marriage. The 1972 Gay Rights Platform, created at the National Coalition of Gay Organizations Convention in Chicago called for the "repeal of all legislative provisions that restrict the sex or number of persons entering into a marriage unit; and the extension of legal benefits to all persons who cohabit regardless of sex or numbers."

As evidence that this agenda is making headway, on June 10, 2003, the Canadian government declared unconstitutional the exclusivity of one man and one woman in the marriage union. Two weeks after that decision, on June 26, the highest court in the United States struck down long standing laws against sodomy in their Lawrence v. Texas decision. Currently, in Canada and Sweden it is a criminal act to speak out against homosexuality. On July 29, 2003, the New York Board of Education voted to open a gay-oriented high school. The mayor, Michael Bloomberg, was on record as saying that he thought "everybody feels like it is a good idea."

Books pushing the homosexual lifestyle flood the market. Children's literature like the popular titles *Daddies Roommate* and *Heather Has Two Mommies* are a constant reminder that the homosexual community's agenda has been and will continue to be a plague that attempts to undermine and eat away at the man-woman union designed by God for marriage and the home.

God's Word on the issue of homosexuality is clear, to the point, and intolerant when it comes to its condemnation of the practice. Paul, through inspiration, explained to the brethren in Corinth those who practice unrighteousness, such as homosexuals and sodomites, would not inherit the kingdom of God barring repentance (1 Cor. 6:9-10). In Romans 1, He listed those men and women who left the natural use of the opposite sex and burned in their lust for those of their own sex, "committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due" (Rom. 1:26-27). And while homosexuality has been a threat to the home many years before the first-century, it remains one of the most effective weapons in Satan's arsenal for thwarting God's design for the home.

Divorce

With approximately one out of every two marriages ending in divorce in the United States, a person does not have to look far to come in contact with men, women, and children who have been affected by this social malady. With the same 50 percent rate prevailing in religious circles, most

members of the Lord's church have close friends or family members grappling with the effects of divorce.

The Bible leaves no room for doubt when it relates God's feelings toward the severing of the marriage bond: "For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce..." (Mal. 2:16, NKJV). Jesus Christ further defined God's position on divorce when He stated, "Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19:9). God's design from the beginning of Creation has always been for one man and one woman to be married until death should part them. His will for the marriage relationship has not changed.

Any brief reading of the literature describing the destructive effects of divorce quickly reveals some of the most obvious reasons for God's abhorrence of the practice. Emotional trauma sustained by the innocent children of broken homes ranks high among the negative effects of divorce. Studies have shown that children may carry emotional scars for years, often blaming themselves for their parents' break-up. The adults involved do not get off much easier. Many have reported severe depression, thoughts of suicide, extreme loneliness, and a host of other heart-rending emotional problems (Olsen, 1999, pp. 519,523). Harmful consequences compound when tumultuous fights occur about who gets the kids, who gets the house, how much alimony will be paid, etc. Some divorcees insist that divorce is worse than a spouse's death, leaving many more emotional problems with which to struggle.

The teaching of Matthew 19:1-10 and Mark 10:1-12 is straightforward and clear. "Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Matt. 19:9). Little commentary is needed on such concise teaching. If any person divorces his or her spouse for some reason other than adultery committed by that spouse, then he or she can not get married to another person. Unfortunately, the biblical teaching on this subject has been twisted to the destruction of many (2 Peter 3:16), because erring teachers and preachers have not had the courage or true agape love to inform people who are in adulterous situations that they are lost.

Sadly, especially in the United States, it has become unpopular, and has even been considered offensive, to inform any person that he or she is engaged in a sinful practice. On countless occasions, Christians, and even preachers of the Gospel, have informed adulterers that "they might be alright" or that "God would want them to be happy." On other occasions, those living in adultery have been urged to continue in their adulterous union because children have been born into this union (see Ezra 10:44). None of these excuses, however well-intentioned, comprehends the magnitude of adultery. Just because a couple may be acceptably married in the sight of the majority of Americans, does not mean that God accepts their relationship. The New Testament insists that adulterers will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19; Heb. 13:4).

Think about the heinous neglect of which a preacher would be guilty if he refused to inform a couple of their sinful, adulterous situation. Leviticus 19:17 states: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him." In this passage, God equates hatred of one's neighbor with a refusal to inform that neighbor of his or her sinful lifestyle.

The mistaken notion that to love a person means to overlook sinful behavior is absolutely foreign to biblical teachings. The Hebrew writer said, "Whom the Lord loves, He chastens" (Heb. 12:6). Jesus, who publicly denounced the sinful behavior of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and lawyers (to name a few), showed His love for these people on numerous occasions (Matt. 23:37-39)—a love that was clearly manifested in His sacrificial death on the cross.

The Corinthian brethren were guilty of this very thing—overlooking their brother's sin—with the intention of showing how loving they were. The Corinthians not only accepted into their fellowship a man who was living in an immoral relationship with his father's wife, but they also boasted about his acceptance (1 Cor. 5:1-2). How many times have we seen congregations today in the same mental state as the Corinthian church, boasting that they will accept anyone into their loving fellowship without asking them to change sinful behavior such as adultery? Yet, the apostle Paul quickly put an end to the boasting of the Corinthian brethren by informing them that they should be mourning and weeping, separating themselves from the sinful brother for his own

spiritual good. These very instructions should be heeded today. We must stop laboring under the false notion that it is unjust or unloving to inform a person of his or her sin. In a loving, compassionate way, just as Jesus did with the Samaritan women, we must make people aware of their sinful situations so that they will know the truth which can set them free (John 8:32).

Let us be reminded of God's instructions to Ezekiel:

Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand. So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die!" and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at you hand.

Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul (Ezek. 33:2-9).

A Man To Stand In The Gap

Of course, homosexuality and wide-spread divorce are only a small sampling of the many weapons that Satan uses to attack the family structure as God would have it, patterned after His design at the beginning of Creation. Yet, this small sampling provides enough evidence to show that something drastic must be done in order to bolster the family and home. What is one of the answers to the eroding family structure? Simply put, strong, male spiritual leaders who will be men of faith in a world of faithlessness. Men who will stand as islands of righteousness while being beaten with the waves from the ocean of unrighteousness. Spiritual men who will shine as bright lights of goodness in the shadows and gloom of spiritual darkness.

During the life of the prophet Ezekiel, the same type of spiritual leaders were needed to ebb the tide of Israel's increasing national sinfulness. In assessing the pitiful spiritual condition in which God found His people, God explained what could help right the situation. In Ezekiel 22:30, God commented to Ezekiel, "So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it...." God was searching for the proverbial man who would cease doing evil and build a spiritual wall around himself

and Israel to defend her against evil and sinful practices that would separate her from God. Such a man would act as a balm for spiritual healing, a cast for the broken spiritual arms of Israel, a salve for their blinded eyes, and a refreshing fountain for their spiritual thirst. But alas, God finished His statement to Ezekiel with the sad words, "But I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads..." (Ezek. 22:30-31). The spiritual leaders in Israel had abandoned their posts, left the nation unguarded, and failed to save their land; resulting in the spiritual destruction of the nation.

In the same way, God is seeking those men who will take seriously their duties as the spiritual leaders of their homes. Men who will build a wall around those homes and stand in the gap so that there is no place for sin to break the barrier. As we search for and try to become these type of spiritual leaders in our homes, it is essential to understand necessary characteristics of such leaders. The remainder of this lecture, then, will deal primarily with qualities that such leaders will possess.

(Before we go further, let me stop and take the opportunity to say that there are countless godly women who have, in quite, God-ordained ways led their families by example and through virtuous living. Woman such as those mentioned in 1 Peter 3:1 who have won not only their own husbands, but also their entire families, to the Lord by their conduct. Such women are equally an answer to the problems facing

the home, and a lecture dealing with their attributes and qualities would be of equal import and significance. However, due to certain limitation and constrains, the role of women in the home and their significant spiritual impact will need to be taken up at another time, while we will deal in this lecture with the male role in the home.) On, then, to qualifications of the male spiritual leader in the home.

A True Spiritual Leader Realizes That He Is the Head Of His Home

In marriage seminars and enrichment programs it quickly becomes evident that a topic of considerable conflict between married couples often revolves around who is the head of the home. Much well-meaning but often truthful joking centers on the fact that many women “wear the pants” in the family, in essence being the final authority on what does and does not happen in the home. Modern media has not helped this situation, often portraying fathers as beer-drinking know-nothings whose primary concerns revolve around sex and the college football game on TV. These emotionally lazy TV characters often only step into their families important decisions at the spurring of their much more intelligent, compassionate, in-command wives. In fact, were a person foreign to the United States to sit and view several hours of popular American television, that person would easily come to the conclusion that women in the country are the heads of their homes. Unfortunately, it is the sad truth that many are.

But the fact that many women are the heads of their homes does not change the fact that such a situation flies in the face of God's design. In Ephesians 5:22-24, the inspired text reads,

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Just as surely as Christ is the head of the church, husbands are to be the heads of their families.

First, he understands that responsibility for his home rests on his shoulders. What does it mean to be the head of the home? First, it means that the husband understands that in the final analysis, the responsibility for his home rests on his shoulders—not his wife's or those of his children. When, on that great and final day, God judges every man according to his works, God will call into account every husband and father and question them as to how they led their homes. Sadly, many will join the one-talent man of Matthew 25 and confess to the Lord that they were afraid they would make the wrong decisions so they left the decision making up to their wives. Others will face the judgment, seeing the desperate, sinful state of their own homes, having failed to take responsibility, pointing the proverbial finger of Adam back at their wives, demanding that the women that God gave them were responsible for usurping their authority. And, while it may very well be the case that many wives step out of their God-given role as

the helper suitable for man, and sinfully assume the headship of their homes, it will not be the case that such men who allow this to happen will be exonerated. Instead, they, like Adam, will be punished for not doing what God commanded them to do.

He must be willing to be at enmity with those of his own home. Second, being the head of the home means that a man must be willing to be at enmity with those of his own home. While this may sound odd, it is absolutely vital for a spiritual leader to be willing to stand on the side of Christ, even if his family refuses to do the same. Jesus Christ commented along these lines, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." Even though God designed the home and placed it the near the pinnacle of importance in earthly relationships, He made it clear that a relationship with Him is of much more importance than a cozy relationship with family at the expense of standing for the truth.

Jesus further verified this concept in Matthew 12:46-48. In that text, Jesus had been preaching and His mother and brothers were seeking Him. One of the multitude informed Jesus that His biological family was present. In response to this announcement, Jesus

stated, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" The text then notes that "He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

In addition to Jesus' statements, several Old Testament comments and examples do much to show that a man must put his relationship to God over and above any earthly relationship, including that of his biological family. In Leviticus 10, after God killed Nadab and Abihu for their disobedience and irreverence, He commanded Moses and Aaron to refrain from mourning for their relatives because of their disobedience. The clearest reference, I believe, to this fact is found in Deuteronomy 13:6-9, which reads:

If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, of the gods of the people which are all around you, near to you or far off from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him; but you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. And you shall stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

The spiritual head of the house must be willing to put his relationship with God above every other earthly relationship, even if that means his own family may turn against him, or he may have to correct or rebuke his own family, knowing that such action will cause hurt feelings, silent meals, emotional separation, etc. And, while such a leader should make sure that his speech is with grace always seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6), he should also be prepared to bear the hardships that come from standing for the truth, even when those hardships come from within his own family.

He Must Put Their Needs Above His Wants

Third, being the head of the home means loving your family enough to put their needs before your wants. Paul's comments in Ephesians 5 did not end with the responsibilities of the wives and their required obedience to their husbands. A lengthier segment is given to the responsibility that the husband has to love his wife to such a degree that he would give everything in this world, including his own life, for her protection.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh,

but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

The Biblical text could produce no example more powerful of sacrificial love than that which Christ exhibited on the cross. Such love is the epitome of what the husband should have for his own wife. In many instances, a man who is not thinking spiritually will put his wants above his families needs.

One very prevalent example of such is the use of TV in the home. Often, the husband will spend more time watching ballgames, golf, fishing tournaments, and the news or weather than he will spend in quality conversation nurturing his family. According to the A.C. Nielsen Co. the average American watches 3 hours and 46 minutes of TV each day (that's more than 52 days of nonstop TV watching per year). By the age of 65 the average American will have spent nearly nine years glued to the tube. Yet, parents spend 38.5 minutes per week in meaningful conversation with their children. Many times, husbands are the guiltier parent in this situation. At a marriage seminar recently, the man conducting the seminar asked all the wives to say one thing they wanted their husbands to do better. Several said the same thing: "We want quality family time AWAY from the TV.

Other activities that often take a husband and father away from his home include working long hours for more financial prosperity at the expense of the family and fishing, golfing, or other activities with friends at the expense of family time. And, while none of these things is sinful by itself, the head of the home must be sure to put his wants aside and provide for

the needs of his family.

In this category of providing for the families needs would certainly fall the responsibility of the head of the home to be a strong spiritual teacher who ensures that family knows the Word of God. The directives in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 provide one of the paramount texts for such teaching and instruction:

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The Christian religion is a taught religion, meaning that it does not spread from one generation to the next by osmosis or genetic inheritance. It must be taught repeatedly, thoroughly, and continually throughout a family's time together in order for the children of that home to be the productive Christian workers that God has planned.

Conclusion

The home as God designed it is under attack in America and all over the world. Satan constantly pelts the home with such weapons as homosexuality and rampant divorce. A crisis for the preservation of the home is real and prevalent. What can be done to ebb the tide of the collapse of the home? Strong spiritual leaders who will stand in the gap to protect

what God has entrusted to them. These leaders must be loving, willing to stand for truth regardless of consequences, and dedicated to directing their homes toward the goal of heaven by the constant teaching of God's Word. Rare but essential is the man, who, like Joshua of old, can stand before the great masses of people and tell them to choose who they will serve, but then state unequivocally, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15).

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Chapter 9

A Plea For Godliness In An Ungodly World

Robert Hatfield



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With his sins, man has separated himself from the presence of Almighty God (Isa. 59:2). Since the beginning of time, God has set forth His will to be used as a Divine standard for the lives of men. It is seen throughout history (as well as today) that “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19)¹. The battle between ungodliness and godliness is one that has been fought throughout the ages. What are the differences between godliness and ungodliness? Is it possible to live faithful in an ungodly world? What can the Christian do to survive the storms of ungodliness? These and other questions will be examined in this study as the Bible is examined concerning the need for “A Plea For Godliness In An Ungodly World.”

Godliness Defined

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 (Titus 2:11-12).

One of the most well-known verses concerning godliness and godly living is found in Titus 2. At the beginning of what man has divided into Titus chapter two, the inspired apostle Paul begins to discuss the responsibilities of each person in service to God. Paul discusses the role of the older men, the younger men, the older women, servants and masters in the church. Brother Robert R. Taylor, Jr. comments, "That which is sound and doctrinal touches people in every age and with reference to their daily decorum."² In Titus 2:11-12, Paul then describes God's grace that has appeared to all men. Verse twelve explains that this grace (or unmerited favor) teaches us to reject wickedness (KJV says, "deny ungodliness") and corrupt desires ("worldly lusts"). God's grace also teaches that we should live soberly, righteously, and **godly** in this world.

The word "soberly" is translated from the Greek, SOPHRONOS, meaning "moderately, with sound mind."³ Those who enjoy and benefit from the grace of God will be self-controlled. Elders are charged to be sober (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). All are to live soberly, from the aged men (Titus 2:2) to the aged women (Titus 2:3), even to the young women and men (Titus 2:4-6). No one is excluded from this charge.

The Greek word DIKAIOS (translated

“righteously”) means “equitably, justly.” Paul exhorted the church at Corinth to “awake to righteousness, and sin not” (1 Cor. 15:34). Jesus taught that those that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled (Matt. 5:6). The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, “but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. 25:46).

The word EUSEBOS is translated “godly” in the English language and means, “piously, godly.” Pious living is that which is “marked by reverence for deity: devout: showing loyal reverence for a person or thing: dutiful”.⁴ To be godly is to be “God-like.” Jesus Christ, often described as God in the flesh, came to this earth and provided the proper example for us, that we should follow in those steps (1 Peter 2:21-22). Note that living a sober and righteous life is directly related to living a godly life. It is by God’s grace that He has given us His Divine scheme of redemption, that we may live godly lives. One who wishes to receive the ultimate reward of eternal life in heaven will do so by living as Paul wrote to Titus in Titus 2. Man’s obedience coupled with God’s grace gives us the hope of eternal life!

It is important to emphasize the location where man is to live the Christian life. Titus 2:12 states: “in this present world.” The fact that God gave specific commands for us to be saved, and the fact that we are to obey these commands in this world, suggests to us that those in the world aren’t obeying the commands God has given.

The World And Ungodliness

The fact that ungodliness and sin run rampant in our world today is no secret. Jesus came to seek and to save the world which is lost (Luke 19:10). Paul wrote concerning Jesus Christ, "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4). Romans 5:20 indicates that sin abounds. John writes in 1 John 5:19, "the whole world lieth in wickedness." The world is corrupt with sin, yet the Christian must be sure to live in the world (simply as inhabitants thereof), not **of** the world. 1 John 2:16 declares, "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." There is a clear separation between godliness and worldliness (ungodliness). Yet, temptation to cross that separation abounds and no one is exempt from Satan's wiles.

Jesus Christ was tempted of Satan (Matt. 4). Judas Iscariot, one of Christ's chosen twelve, fell into Satan's ways (Luke 22:3). Jesus warned Simon Peter, "behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31-33). Jesus and His followers weren't exempt in the first century, and the same is the case with the followers of Christ in the twenty-first century. Peter wrote, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Satan's desire is to draw the faithful farther from God, while pulling closer to the world. James wrote, "know ye not that the friendship of the world is

enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). Knowing that it is impossible to serve both God and the things of this world (Matt. 6:24), the desire of the faithful is to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

Ungodliness: Then And Now

Since the beginning of time, Satan has been working to turn man against God. In Genesis 3, the devil tempted Adam and Eve, who fell therein and did eat of the forbidden fruit. In Genesis 4, Abel's offering was more excellent than Cain's, which resulted in Abel's murder. By the time of the Noachic flood (Gen. 6-8), the Bible indicates that man's thoughts were only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). It repented God that He had made man on the earth (v. 6), causing world-wide destruction of all that inhabited the earth, with the exception of faithful Noah, his family, and the animals contained on the ark. One could fast-forward throughout the entire Bible and see Satan and sin working against God's people, the children of Israel. The Bible is filled with examples of those that fell to the temptor. But, note the consequences of the said examples. In Genesis 3, man was punished for his evil deeds (3:17-19), woman was likewise punished (3:16), and the serpent was cursed. Enmity was placed between Satan and the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). In the case of Cain and Abel, Cain's ungodly offering cost the life of righteous Abel. Also, Cain was cursed from the earth (Gen. 4:11-14).

In Genesis 6, the ungodliness of mankind in Noah's day was such that the entire world was destroyed, save Noah and his family. God's hatred of sin (a hatred which Christians should likewise share) is proven time and time again through Old and New Testament examples. Godliness will be exalted, wickedness will be punished.

God's hatred and condemnation of sin was clearly portrayed in Biblical times, and today is no different. The ungodliness in the world may be different in case, but is not different in type compared to that of Biblical times. In several passages, the Bible writers listed sins of the people of that day. Many of these listings describe America in its present state. In Romans 1:21-32, the apostle Paul wrote with the inspired pen concerning the Gentiles. Paul explains that these people knew God, but glorified Him not as God (v. 21); "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (v. 28). Paul explains that these people, "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (v. 24). Verses 26 and 27 describe their homosexual sins, in which "women did change the natural use into that which is against nature" (v. 26), and the men "burned in their own lust one toward another" (v. 27). The Gentiles were not serving God, but fell into Satan and ungodly living. They first gave up God; as a result, "God gave them up..." (v. 24) and "God gave them over..." (v. 28).

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, the apostle Paul describes the Corinthian brethren prior to their baptism and conversion. He emphatically declared that the,

...deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, 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 (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Before listing these specific things, the inspired writer stated, "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9). As mentioned before concerning Titus 2:11-12, living godly is directly related to living soberly and righteously. The unrighteous (wicked, ungodly) shall NOT inherit the kingdom of God.

In Galatians chapter five, one will find a list of the works of the flesh. Beginning with verse nineteen and going through verse twenty-one, the apostle Paul writes:

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, revellings, 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.

Many, if not all, of these listed fleshly works apply to today's world. Note, again, the emphasis at the end of the twenty-first verse, "that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The Bible is clear concerning the ungodly works and the condemnation of such. 1 John 2:15 admonishes Christians to "love not the world, neither the things

that are in the world.” Those that love the world have not the love of the Father. Romans 12:2 states: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” As those of the twenty-first century compare the problems then and now, they quickly realize that the problems are the same, as well as that the punishment is the same.

A Focus On Several Modern-Day Demonstrations Of Ungodliness

In today’s society, that which used to be despised is now viewed as normality. Slowly but surely, liberal viewpoints creep into the general public, while denominational preachers, the news media, and others work hard to gain more acceptance from the world. Liberals feed this doctrine to all who will hear, causing major devastation to two of the Divine institutions which God has set forth on this earth: the church and the home.

The Lord’s church is constantly under attack; in fact, the church has been under attack since it was established in A.D. 33 (Acts 2). Saul was a persecutor of Christians prior to his conversion. The Galatian brethren had fallen away from the truth, unto that which they thought was another gospel (Gal. 1). Even still, the body of Christ is suffering as a result of ungodly works of darkness. Once the most rapidly growing of all the religious bodies in the world, the church of Christ is suffering in a world that seeks “feel

good” and “cafeteria style” religion. Denominations, wearing human names as well as falsely wearing the name of Jesus Christ, are rampant in 21st century society. Even brethren in the church are falling away, as did the Galatians, to the liberal standpoint. Jesus said, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13). As a peculiar people, Christians are to cleave to the truth, and nothing but the truth (John 17:17; Acts 11:23)!

Likewise under attack is the home. God created Eve from Adam as a help meet for him (Gen. 2:20-23), thus creating the first home. The home is the very foundation of society. Wayne Jackson wrote, “Man did not live one day upon this earth apart from the environment of a home.”⁵ Brother Jackson goes on to state, “[Marriage] is the cement that holds society together.” The home is the environment formed to strengthen and encourage man and wife as they live the Christian life, as well as the ideal situation in which children can be taught and the gospel of Christ can be spread. Yet, unauthorized divorce plagues our country and world. Jesus taught clearly concerning the basis for divorce: “except it be for fornication” (Matt. 19:9). Note some statistics mentioned in brother Jackson’s article:

The divorce problem has reached alarming proportions. In 1970 there were 4.3 million divorced people in America. By 1994, that number had more than quadrupled to a staggering 17.4 million. According to the **Journal of Marriage and the Family**, the fairly recent phenomenon of “no-fault” divorce has

significantly accelerated the plague of American divorce. The United States now leads the world in marriage break-up.

The number gradually rises year after year, yet the world claims that they have the right to divorce out of a marriage in which they are not happy – for whatever reason they so choose.

Not only is the home under attack in the light of divorce, but just as equal problems in today's society are those of abortion, homosexuality, evolution, etc. The promoters of said doctrines and practices will infiltrate the home in any way, shape, or form. Radio, television, the internet, friends, teachers, textbooks – The list could go on and on. The need for godly, Christian homes is evident! There is no way for the Christian parents to shelter their children completely from all of the evil that is awaiting each young mind. The only possible way to “train up a child in the way he should go” (Prov. 22:6) is to teach the godly principles from the Bible **in the home**.

Man has perverted the Scriptures, making that which is sin be acceptable in society today. In John 17, Jesus prayed for His apostles, saying, “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Christians are not of the world, thus the world despises them. The Christian faith is under attack in every aspect, but such does not give us an excuse to retreat from the on-going battle.

Standing Against Ungodliness

Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that all things

work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Ephesians 3 speaks of "the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11). The eternal purpose was purposed in Christ, meaning that Jesus Christ was given for the sins of man that all men might have hope. God's eternal purpose for the church is that this eternal institution might be saved on the day of judgment. Since ungodliness cannot enter into heaven, it is important that the Christian strive with all his might to avoid and flee from unrighteous (ungodly) things.

While emphasizing the importance of putting on the whole armour of God, the apostle Paul gave us reasoning why it is so important to make sure that Christians are prepared with this protection – "that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). In verse 13 he repeats the thought for further emphasis, saying, "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." The word translated "withstand" is from the Greek, ANTHISTEMI, meaning "to stand against, i.e. oppose: resist, withstand." The Greek HISTEMI is translated "stand" in this passage and means to "hold up; commit." Christians are to be equipped to stand against evil; committed to following and defending the truth of God's Word. Paul declared in Romans 1 that he was ready to preach the gospel, saying, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:15-16). Paul was ready and willing to stand in defense of the gospel, preaching it to all who would hear,

whether Jew or Greek (Acts 18:4; 19:10; 20:21; 1 Cor. 1:18, 24, et al).

As one studies the Bible, the need to stand against ungodliness is seen time and time again. Romans 1:18 teaches that God's wrath has been "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Romans 11:26 refers to Jesus Christ, the Deliverer, who "shall turn away ungodliness." The Bible is clear in noting that God's Will condemns ungodly works of darkness. In fact, 2 Timothy 2:16 directly commands that Christians shun things that will increase ungodliness. This word "shun" is from the Greek word PERIISTEMI, meaning, "to stand all around...to keep away from:— avoid, shun, stand by (round about)." Christians today must live in the world, but must avoid at all costs living of the world (being a part of the world's sinful activities—See Rom. 12:21). Each follower of Jesus Christ should strive to avoid and shun all that is ungodly at all costs, that we may be able to **stand** against such.

The Importance Of Teaching / Preparing Children To Live Godly Lives

At his current young age, the writer feels that he is unable to speak from experience in teaching and training children. Yet, the Bible strongly urges parents not to waste valuable time which could be spent teaching their young ones. The wise man wrote, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). In Deuteronomy 6, the Bible says,

And 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).

Every possible moment should be used in the teaching and training of children. Imagine if every family in America were a Christian family. The society today would undoubtedly change completely. There would be no question as to the legality of homosexuality because homosexuality is Biblically condemned (see Lev. 20:13, Rom. 1:26-27, 1 Cor. 6:9-10, 1 Tim. 1:9-11, Jude 7, et al)⁶. Ephesians 6:4 encourages fathers, saying, "provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In Titus 2:3-5, aged men and women are to teach the young men and women to have godly conduct. The home's responsibility of teaching children is a great one. Even as the fact is often stated in the church worldwide: "the youth is the church of tomorrow." Are children being trained now to fill the shoes of current leaders and willing to step up and go to battle for the cause of Jesus Christ?

What Can The Christian Do To Survive The Storms Of Ungodliness?

Focusing on the effects and reality of ungodly works in society leads to the question, "**Does the Bible state what Christians should do in response to ungodliness?**" And, of course, the answer is "yes!"

Note the following things that Christians can and should do TODAY to stand up and ultimately overcome ungodliness.

Go To God's Word

There is no book like the Bible. It is literally "a book of books," comprised of sixty six individual writings, divided into Old and New Testaments. Over forty inspired writers penned the material within the pages, yet, one will not find a single contradiction anywhere therein. This is truly a remarkable book!

The key to fighting against sin is to know the Bible. It is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path (Psm. 119:105). Thus, this is a book that needs to be studied daily (2 Tim. 2:15)! If properly studied and applied, the student of God's inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17) can know how to effectively shun evil and teach the lost to come to Christ. The Psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psm. 119:11). The Bible provides comfort for the Christian in time of need. 1 Corinthians 10:13 provides help in time of temptation, assuring the faithful that "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but 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."

No longer applicable to present-day society, there are some books that have been published that have gone out of print today. Such is not the case with the Bible. Jesus said, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). One

must realize that, as long as the world stands, sin will endure. But when the world is no more, the Word of God will still exist! Everything which the Bible discusses concerning the salvation of the faithful and the destruction of the sinners will remain. God, through His Word, has given us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:" (2 Peter 1:3). What a glorious thought it is to know that God hath given the students of His word all things needed to live a godly life in service to Him!

Pray.

Prayer is an important part of the Christian's service to God. Jesus said, "men ought always to pray" (Luke 18:1). To know that God will listen to the righteous prayer (1 Peter 3:12) is a comforting thought. When discouraged, one can go before the throne of God in prayer with full assurance that He will hear. There is never a time which one should cease to pray over a long period of time (1 Thess. 5:17). Romans 12:12 teaches that children of God ought to continue "instant in prayer." Prayer is the powerful privilege that Christians enjoy, for nothing can be done without asking for God's help. May all Christians pray for efforts world-wide in battling Satan and sin.

Abstain Fleshly Lusts.

Fleshly lusts war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11-15). Satan thrives off of the abounding fleshly lusts that plague the world today. The Bible is very emphatic concerning the need of the Christian to be separate

and apart from all things of the world. James wrote that disciples of Christ ought to keep themselves “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth: “for then must ye needs go out of the world” (1 Cor. 5:10). In 2 Corinthians 7:1 the Bible says, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” The world is corrupt with sin. Romans 6:23 teaches that the wages of sin is death. One cannot receive the hope of eternal life unless he is living differently from the world’s lifestyle. Romans 12:2 says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Being transformed (changed) from the world will allow one to properly live the Christian life, as set forth in the holy will of God. If one will walk in the light as did Jesus, he will have fellowship with Christ and receive the cleansing of his sins (1 John 1:7-10). To deny ungodliness is possible – even in this present world! But this can only be done by abstaining from fleshly lusts. The thoughts of Romans 12:9 come to mind: “Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.”

Keep A Clean Heart.

The word translated “heart” in the english translation of the Bible can mean one of three different things. The word translated “heart” could be referring to the organ within the human body through which

about five quarts of blood are pumped every minute; or this word could be referring to the middle, innermost part of something (see Matt. 12:40). But this word is also used in reference to the mind, the thought process. When discussing keeping a clean heart in the battle against Satan and ungodliness, the word "heart" is being referred to in the sense of being the mind.

The heart is the fountain of one's actions. Everything that one says or does originates in the mind. Matthew 12:35 describes the good man who will, out of the good treasure of his heart, bring forth good things; but the evil man "out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." The things which men focus on in mind will eventually come out in their actions. Matthew 15 and Mark 7 are two places in the Scriptures that further prove this point. In Mark 7:21-23, Jesus said, "For from within, **out of the heart of men**, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (emphasis mine, RH). Note the specific sins that were given in this verse, then note their origin: "out of the heart of men." The Psalmist wrote, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psm. 51:10). The necessity of the Christian having a clean and pure heart is great, for out of the heart proceed one's actions. The words of Jesus Christ are an encouragement to followers today: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

Follow Christ's Example.

Never has there been a more perfect example than Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews describes Jesus as the high priest. In Hebrews 4:15 the Bible says that the high priest was tempted as we are, "yet without sin." 1 Peter 2:21-22 states,

For even hereunto were ye called: because 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.

The case was not that Jesus wasn't able to be tempted. The Bible teaches that Jesus was tempted (Matt. 4), and that He even had characteristic desires of any normal human being. Yet, the abnormality of the Christ's humanity is seen in that He left this earth sinless. Jesus knows about that from which we suffer; He can relate to our temptations. Yet, He provides hope through His example and through the promise through His church, as well as through His death, burial and resurrection.

Teach Godliness To Others.

1 Peter 2:9 states that Christians are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Those who are part of this royal priesthood have been called out from the darkness of sin, into the light of salvation in Christ Jesus. Part of the obligation that comes with being called out of the

world is to help others be called out of the world, too. The Christian's goal is to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all (Mark 16:15-16). We must keep our eyes on that goal, keeping in our minds that which is taught in Scripture concerning the second coming and the day of judgment. Jesus Christ will come again and all who have ever lived will be brought before the Judge. Jude 15 states that the Lord will come "to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Will Christians, the called out from the world, help sinners that they might likewise be saved?

Conclusion

Paul encouraged the church at Colosse to put to death (KJV says "mortify") the earthly things and to set their affections on things above (Col. 3). Listed in verses 5-9 are those things which the people were to "put off." Such things include fornication, uncleanness, homosexuality ("inordinate affection), evil desires, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of the mouth, and lying. The point is made in verse 6: "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." Works of ungodliness (sin/going against the Will of God) will cause the wrath of God to come upon those who so chose to disobey.

Ungodly works of darkness are not acceptable to God. His will has been revealed to man, providing

a student of the Bible to be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:17). The Bible is clear concerning the judgment day, when the sheep shall be placed on the right hand of God, and the goats on the left (Matt. 25:31-46). These groups will never meet again, for one will go into life eternal and the other into everlasting punishment.

Those things which one should put on are then listed in Colossians 3:10-17. The new man, whether he is Jew or Greek, Barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, is to be put on with a renewed knowledge of his Creator. Note then some specific things that every Christian should put on. This provides a wonderful guide which those striving to be “God-like” (godly) should follow:

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 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. 3:12-16).

Verse 17 summarizes all those things listed, and even covers those things which aren't listed in the previous verses by simply stating, “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.” The key to living a godly, Christian life is to make sure that everything one does is backed by Biblical authority – Doing “all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” If the Bible says it then one can be sure that it’s truth (John 17:17), and if the Bible authorizes it then one can be sure that it is acceptable in God’s sight.

On the last day, all shall appear before God in judgment to give an account of all that we have done, whether good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10). God will judge according to the gospel (Rom. 2:16; John 12:48). Will we have lived by it as much as we should have? On that day will we be found godly Christians or ungodly sinners? A godly life is possible today. God doesn’t ask us to do that of which we are incapable, but will strengthen us through His word and through prayer that we might be able to attain heaven on the other side of eternity!

May all Christians strive to examine ourselves, that we are living godly lives as the Bible commands. Then let us all realize our duty to our families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc., and go out into the world with an urgent PLEA for godly living today.

ENDNOTES

- 1 All Scriptures are taken from the King James Version.
- 2 Robert R. Taylor, Jr., **Studies In First and Second Timothy, Titus, and Philemon** (Ripley, TN: Taylor Publications, 1995), p. 155.
- 3 James Strong, **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible** (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers). NOTE: All original Greek or Hebrew language references taken from this reference.

4 "Pious," **The Merriam-Webster Dictionary & Thesaurus**, 2002 (Software for the PC).

5 Wayne Jackson, "The Devastating Effects of Divorce," (June 28, 1999), <http://www.christiancourier.com/penpoints/divorce.htm>.

6 Apologetics Press Staff, **Reason & Revelation**, "Does the Bible Approve of Homosexuality?" (April, 1995), <http://www.apologeticspress.org/modules.php?name=Read&cat=1&itemid=267>.

Chapter 10

The Power Of One Life For God – Esther

Perry B. Cotham



A Christian gentleman, a zealous work in the kingdom of God, an evangelistic mission preacher, faithful proclaimer of the truth, dear and esteemed brother. Perry Cotham has preached the gospel for over seven decades, literally around the world. Missionary efforts in numerous countries. Author of 16 tracts and books. Perry and Theresa (deceased) have three children and were a beautiful team in the service of the Lord.

What can one person do for the Lord's church in our society today? Some often say, "I can not do much; I am only one person." But this is not true. Much good can be done by only one person.

A good example of one person who did much good for the Lord's people during Old Testament times is Esther. She saved the Jews from extermination. Esther (her Hebrew name was Hadassah) was a young Jewish girl who became queen of Persia in about 478 B.C. She appeared about forty years after some of the Jews had returned from Babylonian captivity and the temple had been rebuilt, about thirty years before Nehemiah led in the rebuilding of the wall around the city of Jerusalem.

Although the book of Esther that describes her

life and work comes after the book of Nehemiah in our Bibles, its events antedate the work of Nehemiah. Perhaps Esther made the work of Nehemiah possible. We have no way of knowing what might have happened to the Hebrew nation at that time had there not been Esther. She saved the nation from being entirely wiped out of existence. The book of Esther, in sequence, fits between the sixth and seventh chapter of Ezra and tells the story of the vast majority of Jews who chose to remain in Persia after the exile. It shows God's faithfulness on behalf of His people.

Esther was an orphan and the cousin of Mordecai, a Jew, who reared her as his own daughter. Hence, when the Jews in the Persian Empire were faced with destruction, she saved them. This was about the year 473 B.C. Ahasuerus, who was also called Xerxes in history, was the king. He was the son of Darius the Great and grandson of Cyrus the Great (cf. Isa. 44:28; 45:1). When Darius died, his son (Xerxes) took his place on the throne.

Although the name of God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, yet His providential care of the Jews is very evident in the book. It is interesting to note that there is one other book of the Bible—Song of Solomon—where God is not mentioned.

The Story Of Vashti

Let us now note some interesting things about the story of Esther as given in this, the last historical book in the Old Testament. Ahasuerus (Xerxes), "in the third year of his reign" gave a great feast for all

the officials of his great kingdom in which he,

...shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor of his excellent majesty, many days, even an hundred and fourscore days (Esther 1:3-4, KJV).

There were one hundred twenty-seven provinces represented at this feast (v. 1); afterward he then "made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace" (v. 5).

When the king and his nobles at the feast were all drunk with wine, he sent for his queen, Vashti, that he might let all the nobles see how beautiful she was. Vashti refused to come to the feast. She did not want to appear before a bunch of drunken revelers. She had the courage to say "No!" This made the king very angry. After talking this over with his nobles, he said that Vashti would not be his queen any longer since she did not obey him. He put her away from him; he divorced her.

O, the evils of strong drink!

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder (Prov. 23:29-32).

He deposed Queen Vashti in 482 B.C. This was just before his famous expedition against Greece in 480 B.C. where he fought the battle of Thermopylae

and Salamis. He was severely defeated there, even though he led the largest army that ever marched into Europe in this invasion of Greece. It is thought that the feast in Esther 1 may have been given in preparation for this invasion.

Esther – A New Queen

Later, on his return, the king sought a new queen. In order to procure another queen, he ordered all the beautiful young maidens of the land to be brought together. Mordecai wanted Esther to go, knowing that she was very beautiful. She did, and the king, after carefully looking over all the maidens, chose Esther to be his queen. This was in 478 B.C. Esther married the king and became queen. The purpose of this book is to show how a young Jewish maiden became queen of Persia and later did her work of saving her people from utter destruction.

Mordecai And Haman

Ahasuerus was not like his father Darius, who had been a wise man. Instead, he was hasty in his temper and did many foolish things. At that time many Jews were living in the cities of Persia for only a small part of the Jews went back to their homeland of Israel when King Cyrus allowed them to return. After her coronation, Mordecai could no longer meet with his cousin, Queen Esther. But she could see him from her window as he walked by, and she could send word to him through her servants and receive his word back from him in the same way. Every day he

would sit at the gate of the palace.

One day while he was sitting at the gate, he saw two men, keepers of the gate, whispering together. He learned that they had made a plan to kill the king. He sent word of this to Esther, who then in turn told the king, in Mordecai's name. The men were taken, and they both were slain by being hanged on a tree. An account of how Mordecai has saved the king's life was recorded in the chronicles of the nation, but he received no reward for his noble deed.

After this a man named Haman arose to great power in the kingdom. The king gave him a seat above all the other princes and allowed him to do whatever he pleased. Everybody in the palace showed great respect to the king's chief minister by bowing down to him as he passed by. Only Mordecai refused to do so because he was a Jew, a worshipper of the God of heaven. He would not bow down for any man (cf. Exod. 20:2-5).

Haman was a wicked man (he may have been with those men who plotted to kill the king), and when he noticed that there was one who did not bow down as the others did, he asked his servants, "Who is that man sitting by the gate, who does not bow down when I pass by?" They answered Haman, "That is Mordecai, the Jew." (But they did not know that Mordecai was cousin of Queen Esther, or that she was a Jewess?). Haman became infuriated with the Jews. He hated them because of Mordecai and decided to destroy not only him but also all of the Jews in revenge for his hurt feelings.

So, Haman went to the king and said,

And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries (Esther 3:8-9).

The king believed Haman's words. He took from his hand the ring on which was the royal seal and gave it to Haman telling him to do unto the people "as it seemeth good to thee" (v. 11). Then Haman had a law written and sealed with the king's seal that on a certain day all the Jews in every part of Persia would be slain and their gold and silver and garments taken from them.

The copies of this law were sent with haste to every city of the empire so that all might know that the Jews were to be destroyed. The consent of the king was obtained by Haman, and an official decree was written and signed and publicized throughout the empire. Lots (called purim) were cast for the best day to have the Jews killed, which fell on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, eleven months away.

At this time the king did not know that Esther was a Jew or that Haman hating Mordecai as he did, was doing this to get rid of Mordecai and all the Jews in the empire. This was in the king's twelfth year of his reign and in the fifth year of Esther as his queen.

Everybody who heard of this was filled with wonder, for no one knew of any evil against the king that the Jews had done to deserve death. They did not understand why the law had been made, but they knew that it could not be changed.

The news of the law came to Mordecai as it came to all the Jews in Shushan. He was stricken with grief and went forth in front of the palace crying a bitter cry. Queen Esther saw him and heard his voice. She sent one of her servants to find out why he was in such deep sorrow. Mordecai told him and asked him to tell Esther and for her to go unto the king and beg him to spare the lives of her people. She must, he said, plead for her people before the king. She did not want to do it. She explained to her cousin that the law of the Persians forbade her to go in unto the king uninvited. Unless he held out to her the golden scepter, she could be put to death. Furthermore, she had not been invited for thirty days to come before the throne.

When Mordecai heard this message, he sent word to her again, pleading with her and urging her to go in unto the king. He said,

...Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: **and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?** (Esther 4:13-14, emp. added, PBC).

Yes, who knows? **You must do it!** This is what Mordecai meant.

She asked that Mordecai and her people would pray to God for three days, along with her and her maidens, neither eat nor drink, night or day, “and so I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: **and if I perish, I perish**” (Esther 4:16, emp. added, PBC). Then Mordecai, hearing this, “went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him” (v. 17). So Esther let him know that she would go in and risk death (or “perish”) for the sake of her people. For Mordecai had said maybe she had “come to the kingdom [in God’s providence–PBC] for such a time as this.” Esther thought that if it be God’s will that she should die in trying to save her people, then she would die trying to do it.

Esther Before The King

So after three days Esther must have dressed as beautifully as she could, and with trembling heart and a smile on her face she went in unto the king’s presence. After five years of marriage he still loved Esther. He held out the golden scepter. His heart was touched with love for her. He welcomed her.

“Why have you come?” he asked her. He knew it must be something of great importance for her to have done this. “It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom.” She could not tell him then. She said that she wanted him and Haman to come this day to a banquet “that I have made ready for you.” Immediately, word was sent to Haman to make haste and to come and dine with the king and the queen.

While the three were sitting together, the king

asked Esther if there was anything that she wished, even to half the kingdom. But she put it off again and invited the king and Haman to another banquet the next day.

Haman was very delighted at being invited to be with the king and his queen. He walked out of the palace that day happy at the honor that had come to him. But as Mordecai passed by, Haman was incensed at his lack of worship to him; Mordecai did not rise up to bow before him, and it made him angry in his heart.

He hurried to his own house and told his wife, Zeresh, and his friends how the king and queen had honored him and that he would return again tomorrow. But then he said that all of this was nothing to him when he saw that man, Mordecai, the Jew, who sits at the king's gate, would not bow down to him. Then his wife advised him to have a gallows made, fifty cubits high, and then ask the king early in the morning to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then later he could go to the banquet with the king and the queen and enjoy it. That suggestion pleased Haman, so he ordered the gallows to be made that night for hanging Mordecai early the next day, before the evening's banquet with the king and the queen. He planned early the next morning to go to the king and ask for the death of Mordecai.

However, that night in the palace the king was having trouble sleeping, so he asked for the chronicles (the dairy) of the kingdom to be read. When the account of the discovery of the assassination plot was read, he asked what reward had been given the man

for his noble deed in saving the king's life. He was told that none at all had been given to the man. So he thought he must do something to show his appreciation to Mordecai. It was now early dawn.

When early morning arrives, Haman makes his way to ask permission of the king to hang Mordecai. But when Haman arrives, the king asks if there is anyone of the princes standing outside of the court. He was told that the noble Haman had just arrived. The king sent word for Haman to come in. As soon as he enters, the king said to him, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" (Esther 6:7). Haman thought within himself, "That means me. Who else would the king want to honor?" So, he suggested the greatest of honors he could imagine. He said,

For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,
Let the royal apparel be brought which the king
useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth
upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his
head: And let this apparel and horse be delivered
to the hand of one of the king's most noble
princes, that they may array the man withal
whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring
him on horseback through the street of the city,
and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done
to the man whom the king delighteth to honour
(Esther 6:7-9).

The king then replied to Haman:

Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse,
as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai
the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing
fail of all that thou hast spoken (Esther 6:10).

This humiliated Haman to no end. He was cut to the heart. But he obeyed the king's command. When he does this and then goes back home and reports to his wife what happened, his wife tells him that danger must be ahead for him. But the time comes, and Haman goes to the second banquet. Just Haman and the king go. He had not said a word to the king of having Mordecai hanged upon the gallows which he had set up the night before.

At this time Ahasuerus knew very well that his queen still had some favor to ask, and again at the feast, he asked her what she wanted. Esther realized that her time had now come, so she said to the king:

If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage (Esther 7:3-4).

Then the king said, "Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?" (v. 5). I like to think she pointed her finger right at him and said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman" (v. 6). In other words, "He is responsible for the plot."

"Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen" (v. 6).

The king becomes very angry. He walks outside for a few moments. During this time, Haman, seeing anger in the king's face, falls down before queen Esther to plead for his life. When the king comes back into

the room and sees this he puts the wrong construction on it, saying, “Will he force the queen also before me in the house?” (v. 8).

They covered Haman’s face, and one of the chamberlains said that just outside are the gallows, fifty cubits high, that Mordecai might be hung on them. “Then the king said, ‘Hang him thereon’” (v. 9).

“So, they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king’s wrath pacified” (v. 10).

On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews’ enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her. And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman (Esther 8:1-2).

And all the family of Haman were put to death for his evildoing.

A New Decree

But a decree by a Persian king could not be changed. So the decree to kill all the Jews could not be reversed. The lot (purim) had been cast and the date had been set, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and it had been sent to all the provinces. The law could not be taken back. But another law could be made. So Esther went in and persuaded the king to make another decree. This one was sent out asking the Jews to rise up and defend themselves on that date set for their destruction. This was done, and this

enabled the Jews to save themselves. In the two days of fighting they were victorious everywhere through all the land, each of the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. Thus Esther saved the Jewish race from annihilation.

Feast Of Purim

Esther and Mordecai then wrote letters to the Jews instituting the commemoration of these two days in an annual feast of thanksgiving to God for His mercy in saving them from their enemies. The same feast, called the Feast of Purim, was kept on that day and is still kept among the Jews in all lands.

Mordecai Advanced

Mordecai, now being advanced next to the king, was in a high place of honor, and he brought blessings to the people. Esther lived with Ahasuerus, her husband, for thirteen years, but after he died, she lived far into the reign of her step-son Artaxerxes, who helped make possible the rebuilding of Jerusalem. This was done by Nehemiah, who first served as the king's cupbearer but was later appointed governor of Jerusalem.

Mordecai was great in the kingdom, next to the king. His fame went forth throughout all of the provinces, and through him the Jews gained prestige.

So, Esther, with the help of her cousin, saved the Jews from extermination. The work of Satan to kill all of the Jews through Haman, his agent, was defeated. His success could have kept the Christ child from

being born of the seed line of Abraham and David through the virgin Mary, and thus negating the establishment of the church. The providence of God runs throughout the story.

Esther must have continued to exercise a great influence for her people during the days of Nehemiah.

Satan's Work Today

Satan still wants to destroy the Lord's church through false teachers and unfaithful members. Many today are being led away from the faith into religious errors (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:3-12; 1 John 4:1). The "Winds of Change" are blowing (Eph. 4:14). Some want to make the church into just another denomination. But will they succeed? NO! The Lord predicted that this would happen:

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful (Rev. 17:14).

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 (Rev. 12:11).

...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

If the Hebrew nation had been wiped out of existence during the days of Esther as queen, five hundred years before Christ came into the world, this would have made a great difference in the history of

mankind. Esther—just ONE PERSON—helped prepare the way for the coming of our Lord and the Saviour of mankind.

And there are those faithful, devoted, dedicated gospel preachers, elders of churches, and faithful brethren today who are determined to keep the church pure in its teaching and worship.

They will succeed! The church will stand forever (cf. Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28). It is always right to do right and to leave the results with God.

Conclusion

To every faithful gospel preacher—especially to the younger preachers—we say: “who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14). In God’s providence, Esther became queen and saved her people. Maybe He has brought us to the church for this critical time of apostasy. If we will also say with Esther, “if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16), while remaining faithful to the Lord, the preaching of His Word, and living the Christian life, then the Lord God will likewise give us success. This may be the time and place that God has put us to do the job for the church. As Esther, though, we cannot choose our lives in a better cause.

But what if there had been no Esther? This beautiful girl played her part in paving the way for the coming of the world’s Savior and Redeemer, as prophesied (Gen. 12:1-3; Isa. 7:14; 2:1-2; Micah 5:2). Esther risked her life to save her people. May God bless us to learn a lesson from this beautiful story.

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Chapter 11

“Steady As She Goes” In The Storms

David Sain



A faithful preacher of the gospel for over 50 years. Experienced in radio and television. Author of **Searching For The Lord's Church** and **The Time To Get A Divorce**. Regular writer for the **Spiritual Sword** journal. Instructor in the School of Bible Emphasis. Presently working with the West Fayetteville (TN) congregation. David and Phyllis have two children and five grandchildren.

Introduction

Imagine yourself watching an old movie on television, an old World War II movie. The scene that you are watching is inside a submarine. Under the orders of the commander-in-chief, the captain of the submarine and his crew maneuver themselves through deep waters. Their strategy is to position themselves to effectively attack the enemy while also staying on guard against attacks from the enemy.

At various times, the captain calls out to a member of the crew, “Up periscope.” Then he takes the periscope in hand and surveys the situation outside of the submarine, to determine if they are where they need to be, or if they need to change their course. After carefully sizing up their surroundings,

he orders, “Down periscope.” Then he announces to the crew, “Steady as she goes!”

In that setting, what does “steady as she goes” mean? What does it imply? That pronouncement simply means, “We are at the right depth and the course that we are presently on is right. No changes are needed at this time; proceed ahead.”

Now, compare the circumstances of the church to that dramatic scene. Following Jesus, the “captain of our salvation” (Heb. 2:10), we, who comprise the church of Christ, are at war with Satan. As we maneuver ourselves through this world of darkness, our “strategy” should be to effectively attack the enemy while staying on guard against attacks from the enemy.

Just like the captain of the submarine does (as depicted above), it is in order for us to regularly survey our situation and ascertain if we are correct in our “position.” If we are not, appropriate changes in our “course” need to be made. However, if we determine that we are “on the course” that we should be on, we can firmly and confidently announce, “Steady as she goes!”

Following that line of thought, this study will attempt to do two things: (1) Present a brief summary of circumstances currently facing the church, and (2) determine if we are, indeed, on the appropriate course.

Circumstances Currently Facing the Church

Let me begin by reminding you that Satan, our enemy, is alive and very active in the world. It is his mission to “bring us down” spiritually and cause us

to lose our souls. He works against righteousness – against everything that is right and true. And, day after day, he is aggressively attacking the church from without and within.

From without, the forces of evil are relentless in their efforts to remove every mention or recognition of God, Christ, and the Bible from American life. Under the influence of pluralism and relativism, the liberal forces preach “tolerance,” and declare, “Who are you to judge or condemn what another person believes and does?” But, they quickly become “intolerant,” and “judge” us when we speak out against those things which are ungodly and evil, like homosexuality.

The church is also challenged by the way our culture continues to redefine deviant behavior, calling good evil and evil good (cf. Isa. 5:20), Adultery is now made to seem more acceptable by referring to it as “an affair.” Abortion is made to sound so innocent by calling it “a choice.” Homosexual behavior is falsely classified as a genetic-driven “orientation” rather than identifying it as what it actually is – sexual perversion and an evil choice.

From within, Satan is attacking the very fiber of the church through those who, although members of the church, are false teachers. Of course, this is not the first time such people have existed. The apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders of those *within* the church who would speak perverse things and draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:28-30). Also, Paul wrote the Corinthian Christians about those who would appear to be ministers of righteousness,

but who, in reality, would be servants of Satan (2 Cor. 11:14-15). And, remember that Jesus warned his disciples to beware of false teachers who come in “sheep’s clothing” but, inwardly, are ravening wolves (Mt. 7:15).

In ascertaining the state of the church today, we must recognize the presence of those who would lead the church astray, away from the truth.

(1) There are those who will no longer teach, as essential, that which the Bible teaches to be essential to salvation. For example, some within the church now refuse to say that one *must* be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) in order to be saved.

(2) Another example of false teaching within the church is that of brethren who say that we should not make the use of instrumental music in worship a decisive factor in whom we should fellowship.

(3) There are some who teach that the only thing that should be a determining factor in deciding whom we should fellowship is whether the person believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

(4) Some of our brethren are advocating that the church must change if we are going to reach people in the twenty-first century. Describing themselves as being “progressive,” they contend that we must be willing to abandon the traditional way that we have always done things. They advocate changes in worship, such as having special singing groups rather than having only congregational singing. They also believe that there should be a wider role of service for women, including the role of public leadership during worship. Some have already “expanded” their

thinking in this matter to include woman in any role of leadership except that of being an elder.

(5) Churches now hire “youth ministers,” “involvement ministers,” “pulpit ministers,” “ministers of music,” and “visitation ministers.” Why? Well, in the quest for growth and to meet the “needs” of people, congregations add more and more “ministries” — a ministry for the small children, a ministry for the older children, a ministry for the “young professionals,” a ministry for the seniors, a ministry for the singles, a ministry for the divorced, a ministry for young mothers, etc.

I recently read of a church that has now gone into the medical field, having initiated a “wellness ministry,” to promote better physical health among the members by providing medical information. Brethren, providing medical information is not the work of the Lord’s church. Providing information about how to be saved, otherwise known as *preaching the gospel*, is the work of the Lord’s church.

Most of the ministries mentioned above are self-serving programs that bear little if any resemblance to the New Testament pattern for the church. Let us be honest about it. Many ministries are designed simply to increase attendance by providing activities that appeal to young people and keep members contented.

Are We On the Right Course?

Having examined the circumstances currently facing the church, as briefly mentioned above, let us now turn our attention to determining if we are *on*

course.

(1) The church is *on course* when we preach that Jesus Christ built the church.

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).

The church of Christ was established in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Isa. 2:1-4; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 2:1-41, 47).

(2) The church is *on course* when we preach Jesus Christ is the head of the church. In Ephesians 1:22-23, the apostle 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.

(3) The church is *on course* when we preach that Jesus is the Savior of the church, which is his body. ...Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body (Ephesians 5:23).

Therefore, the church is *on course* when we preach there is only one church, the church of Christ, in which one can be saved!

(4) The church is *on course* when we preach that our only rule of faith and practice is the New Testament

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, throughly

furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Also, see 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 2 Peter 1:3.

(5) The church is *on course* when we preach that teaching and following the commandments of men makes us unacceptable to the Lord.

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth 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).

(6) The church is *on course* when we preach that the church has no earthly head, such as a President, and the church has no earthly headquarters. The church is *on course* when we preach that every congregation is autonomous and that the only power or authority above the local congregation is Jesus Christ, who has been made head over all things to the church, which is his body (Eph. 1:22-23).

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence (Col. 1:18).

(7) The church is *on course* when we preach that elders have authority in the local congregation.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

The church is also *on course* when we preach that

deacons are to serve in the local church (1 Tim. 3:8-13; Phil. 1:1).

(8) The church is *on course* when we preach that people are added to the church, and that the only people whom the Lord adds are those who are saved.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls ... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:41, 47).

Therefore, the church is *on course* when we preach that there are no saved people outside of the church.

(9) The church is *on course* when we preach that one must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of God, in order to be saved.

...Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house (Acts 16:30-31).

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).

(10) The church is *on course* when we preach that God commands all men to repent.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he 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).

The church is *on course* when we preach that one must repent from sin in order to be saved.

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).

(11) The church is *on course* when we preach that the one who believes in his heart that Jesus is the Christ, must confess that faith in Jesus *unto* salvation.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9-10).

(12) The church is *on course* when we preach that one must be immersed in water in order to be saved.

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).

And the church is *on course* when we preach that the purpose of baptism is "for" the forgiveness of sins.

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).

Therefore, the church is *on course* when we preach that one is not saved until he is baptized in order to obtain the remission of sins!

(13) The church is *on course* when we preach that not all worship is acceptable unto God; that acceptable worship is that which is done in spirit and in truth.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

The church is *on course* when we preach that the only acts of worship acceptable unto God are those acts that he has authorized.

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth 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).

Under the law given through Moses, the Lord executed Nadab and Abihu because they “offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.” In other words, they did that for which they had no authority (Lev. 10:1-2)! Although we are under the law of Christ, and not the law of Moses, this is given to us for our learning (Rom. 15:4), and we would do well to adhere strictly to the divine instructions given to us for worship, and not be guilty of doing that for which we have no authority!

Also, consider the rejection of God to Saul and his people who disobeyed God and proposed to worship God with unauthorized sacrifices.

Their intent was to worship God, but Samuel declared,

Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king (1 Sam. 15:22-23).

(14) The church is *on course* when we preach that the first day of the week is the only Biblically authorized day on which to observe the Lord's Supper.

And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight (Acts 20:7).

This example of the early Christians observing the Lord's Supper illustrates them doing that which the Lord commanded (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-29), and, thereby, becomes an authoritative example for us to follow. We have no New Testament command or example that authorizes eating the Lord's Supper on any day other than the first day of the week.

(15) The church is *on course* when we preach that Christians are not commanded to tithe, but that every man is to give as he is prospered, and purposes in his heart.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

(16) The church is *on course* when we preach that vocal music is the only type of music divinely authorized for Christian worship.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19).

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).

Therefore, the church is *on course* when we preach that the use of instrumental music is unauthorized in Christian worship.

Furthermore, according to the scriptures cited, the singing is to be done by the whole congregation. So, the church is *on course* when we preach that special singing groups are unauthorized for Christian worship.

(17) The church is *on course* when we preach that the worship of the church is to be done under Christian male leadership.

I will therefore that **men** pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided

hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But **I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man**, but to be in silence (1 Tim. 2:8-12, emp. mine, ds).

According the precepts of the New Testament, the church is *on course* when we preach that the Bible forbids women to exercise authority over the man. Therefore, we are *on course* when we insist that women are not authorized to lead in the assembly of the church.

(18) The church is *on course* when we preach that the work of the church that is divinely authorized is threefold:

(a) Teach the gospel.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16).

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).

(b) Give aid to those in need, who are unable to provide their own needs.

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).

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who

are of the household of faith Gal. 6:10.

Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.... But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:3-4, 8).

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread (2 Thes. 3:10-12).

(c) Encourage one another to be faithful.

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Heb. 10:24-25).

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ Gal. 6:1-2).

(19) The church is *on course* when we preach that the names by which the members of the church are to be identified collectively are:

(a) Church of Christ.

Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you (Rom. 16:16).

(b) Church of God.

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord...(1 Cor. 1:2).

(c) The house of God. The church of the living God.

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

(d) Body of Christ.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular (1 Cor. 12:27).

The Biblical names by which the members of the church are identified individually are:

(a) Disciples / Christians.

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26).

(b) Children of God.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27).

(c) Saints.

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints... (1 Cor. 1:2).

(d) Brethren

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness... (Gal. 6:1).

(20) The church is *on course* when we preach that we should not extend fellowship to those who teach and practice things contrary to the doctrine of Christ.

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 God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (2 John 9-11).

Therefore, the church is *on course* when we preach that it is wrong to “join hands” with a denominational group and engage in worship with them, as if they are acceptable unto God in their unscriptural teaching and practices.

Practical Conclusions

Indeed, the church is *on course* when we preach these things, but we must accept the fact that preaching these things will not make us popular with the majority of people, because the majority of people choose to walk the broad way that leads to eternal destruction (Matt. 7:13-14). And, because of that fact, neither should we expect the church to enjoy the growth and success that many churches experience by catering to the desires and interest of the populace. Assuming that the Lord permits man to dwell on this

earth for another hundred years, let us suppose that someone decides to write an up-to-date history of the church. What do you suppose that author would say about the church during the latter part of the twentieth century and the first part of the twenty-first century? If he were to research the matter in a responsible manner, he would, no doubt, note that during this era, he would say that “change” characterized many churches of Christ in this era. If he were to report the facts, he would write that a lot of churches departed from the New Testament pattern, and did things for which they had no divine authority.

And, if his writings were complete, he would also note that, in spite of the efforts of “change agents” that there were some churches of Christ in this era who did not get on the popular bandwagon of “change,” and being “progressive.” Instead, they remained steadfast in preaching the truth and following the instructions given to the church in the New Testament!

While numerous departures from the truth characterize the world through which we must navigate, let us not sway brethren. Instead, let us make sure that we are *on course*, faithfully following the charted path of the New Testament, and then declare, “Steady as she goes!”

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Chapter 12

God's Changeless Authority In A Changing World

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.



Robert Taylor has been preaching the gospel for over fifty years. He is appreciated and loved by the faithful brotherhood for holding to the “*old paths*,” his thorough and exhaustive study of any subject; his excellent writings in journals, books and magazines. He continues his work with the good church at Ripley, TN (now thirty years). Robert and Irene have two children and four grandchildren.

It continues to be a deep delight and high honor, year after year, to come to pleasant Pulaski, Tennessee, and speak on East Hill's good, grand and great lectureship. This year is no exception. My thanks to Paul, Brandon, the elders and all the East Hill congregation for the appreciated invitation to speak and pen a chapter for the lectureship volume.

Laying A Scriptural Foundation

Holy Writ is permeated with authority. It inheres God's past, present and future dealings with man. Deity has always, is now and ever shall be the Godhead of authority as this select sampling of Scripture amply attests:

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you ... What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it ... man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live ... Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar ... I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame ... For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven ... For I am the Lord, I change not ... Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever ... All power [authority, ASV] is given unto me in heaven and in earth ... 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 ... For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; 8:3; Prov. 30:6; Psm. 119:31, 89; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:17; Rev. 22:18-19).

Some stately truths stand out in these cited verses: (1) the Godhead is authoritative and

unchanging; (2) the Bible is authoritative and unchanging. These stand in marked contrast to the world which is fickle and ever changing in particular. We would be in constant chaos and utter confusion if God and His Book breathed the ever changing nature of fickle man and changing society. We never could be assured of **any** lasting certainty. Faith, hope and love never could survive in such a changing atmosphere. We never could preach or practice anything today for fear that tomorrow would find abrupt and opposite changes.

Changeless Authority In Eden

Adam and Eve were commanded to be fruitful, replenish the earth, subdue God's green footstool and have dominion over all created animals (Gen. 1:28). This was changeless authority. As long as this first created couple remained in Eden they were to dress and keep this garden paradise (Gen. 2:15). This was changeless as long as Edenic tenure continued. As long as they were in Edenic pleasure they were to refrain from eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 2:16-17). This was a Divine, positive prohibition—right because God commanded it. It remained in effect as long as they were allowed to live in that garden home. It did not change when the serpent, agent of Satan, promised otherwise. It did not change when Eve believed Satan's lie. Even when cast forth subsequent to their disobedience, God set guard a flaming sword barring re-entrance into Eden ever again.

Man, though a free moral agent, was under authority even while in a state of perfect innocence.

Naive is any person who envisions fallen man as being under no restraint and void of all regulative authority as the remainder of this study will amply sustain in an argument format. God's Word of authority is just as unchanging after man's fall as it was prior to man's fall. Our constantly changing world and ever fickle society need to recognize this and adapt to it and adopt it with permanency.

Change Agents, in the church and outside the church, are not going to change unchanging Jehovah, Jesus Christ and the Spirit. They are not going to change Their unchanging volume—the Holy Bible. I, for one, wish they would leave the Bible alone. Harry Reasoner once read one of his favorite passages from a new Bible that came out with noticeable changes made. He responded, "I wish they would leave the Bible alone." I was in total agreement with his sage comment.

Changeless Authority In Patriarchy

In Genesis 4 Abel respected, accepted and acted in accord with God's changeless authority. God said it; that settled it; Abel believed and abided by it. Cain disrespected, refused, rejected and opposed God's changeless authority. It landed him in a category of continuing difficulty.

Noah and his family respected, accepted and abided by Jehovah's unchanging authority. It did not change from the time God first revealed man's future watery destruction until the first drops of rain began to descend and the great fountains of the deep began to open up in that universal flood. A local flood is **not**

a viable option as liberal commentators on Genesis have advocated. The ungodly world that perished amidst those waves of water disregarded God's changeless Word of authority (cf. 2 Peter 2:5).

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph all accepted and abided by God's changeless authority while their infidelic peers sneered at such and lived as though there were no God of wrath in heaven on high. Sinful Sodom and godless Gomorrah thought they could turn up their spiteful noses at God's changeless Word of righteousness with impunity. Genesis 19 relates how wrong they were in such wishly thinking. They are suffering still in the torments of Tartarus as per Jude 7. Eternal Gehenna from judgment onward awaits these sneering and scoffing sinners. Patriarchal precepts were changeless in their authoritative and stately sweep of power. Those who rejected such found there was a sure payday for sin. The law of sowing and reaping was then in effect and has never been repealed. Jacob certainly found that to be the case. he deceived blind Isaac and later his own sons deceived him relative to Joseph.

It has long been my contention that patriarchal precepts and principles of morality continued for non-Israelites till they became amenable to worldwide Christianity. This has to be the case for Mosaic mandates were given to Israel and not the whole world as per Deuteronomy 5:1-5. Yet, non-Israelites were amenable to some system of law else they would not have been held in the shackles of sinful indulgence as per Romans 4:15 and 5:13. Nineveh and Babylon are

examples of such—being amenable to Divine law of some sort.

Changeless Authority Under Moses And The Prophets

From Sinai till Pentecost the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were under the mandates of Moses and the pronouncements of a line of God-sent prophets. In the erection of the tabernacle and the establishment of the Levitical order of worship God's Word was inviolable—not subject to fickle change at the hands of irreverent men. Nadab and Abihu found that to be the case in Leviticus 10:1-2. So did the man who picked up sticks on the sabbath day in Numbers 15:32-36. Korah, Abiram and Dathan could not commit mutiny against Mosaic authority as lawgiver without paying a dear price indeed (Num. 16). Unbelieving Israel in accepting the majority report of the faithless ten as opposed to the minority report of faithful Caleb and Joshua paid dearly the next forty years of wilderness wandering. Even Moses, as lawgiver, and Aaron, as first high priest, found they were not above God's unchanging Word of absolute authority in Numbers 20. Each fell short of a coveted entrance into desirable Canaan though Moses desired such with stirring fervency (Deut. 3:23-27).

The book of Judges is full of cases of those who thought they could circumvent God's Word of absolute authority. So are the six historical books of 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles. King Saul, in his apostasy, could not do so. David, in his

immorality with a bathing beauty, could not do so. Solomon, in his inexcusable plunge into idolatry, could not. Nineteen kings over Israel could not. Asa, Jehosphaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah in Judah respected God's unchanging authority set forth in His inviolable Word.

Contemporaries of the major and minor prophets thought they could reject the clear authority of God's Word with impunity. They could not do so. The four major prophets and the twelve minor prophets knew what God said was true and authoritative. God said it; that settled it; they believed and abided by it. As such they became wonderful worthies of obedience to Divine revelation.

We can either emulate them or those who hated and despised God's Words of authority.

The law of Moses was still in effect when John and Jesus engaged in their respective ministries. Yet, multitudes of Jews were far more wedded to the traditions of the elders than they were to Jehovah's commandments as evidence in Matthew 15 and Mark 7.

Changeless Authority And The Christ

Authority cannot be separated from Christ and Christ cannot be severed from authority. Betwixt twelve and thirty He grew in wisdom, stature, favor with God and favor with man (Luke 2:52). Authority inheres each of these Messianic advancements. It was changeless authority. Standing on the threshold of His teenage years, He was submissive to Joseph and Mary. He was not a smart-alec as many are at this age,

thinking they know far more than Dad and Mother combined. When I taught in the public school system during the 1950's and early 60's, I used to tell my seventh and eighth graders that they knew more at that age than they would know the rest of their lives! At least this was their assessment of their assumed knowledge and experience. Jesus respected parental authority. Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 enjoined such upon every Hebrew or Jewish youth. This was/is changeless authority for Ephesians 6:1-3 demands the same for the gospel dispensation. The commandment of children being in submission to parents has graced all dispensations—patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian. Youthful ears now should be wide awake relative to Ephesians 6:1-3. Devotion to such is quite rare in our day even among so-called Christian households as many parents are totally derelict relative to matters of strict discipline.

At age thirty Jesus left Nazareth and traveled to Jordan where the fearless preacher John was preaching to the masses and baptizing the many (Luke 3:19-21; Matt. 3:13-17). Though He had no sins to be remitted in the watery ordinance, He demanded John immerse Him under Jordan's wave. John's baptism had God's authority undergirding it even for Jesus. It was to fulfill or fill full all righteousness. Respect for authority undergirded this whole proceeding at Jordan's edge and in its waters. The Father in heaven eloquently enunciated His full approval of what His only begotten Son had done. Would there have been this heavenly bestowed approval had He reneged at this point? What of those today who have sins many to remit and balk

at the prospect of a watery burial? Will the Father accept with approval such? In **no** wise will He do so!

Subsequent to His baptism was His ordeal with Satan in the Judaeian wilderness, on the temple pinnacle and upon the mount of temptation. Satan challenged Him to turn stones into bread, leap from the dizzy heights of the temple top and fall down in worship to the prince of this world—the kingpin of all ungodliness and unrighteousness (Matt. 4:1ff; Luke 4:1ff). The repeated response each time was, “It is written” followed by quotations from Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16; 6:13. Satan appealed to Him through the lusts of the flesh (turning stones into bread), lust of the eyes (showing Him all worldly kingdoms instantly His upon rendering Satan worship) and the pride or vainglory of life (jumping from the temple with ardent applause from every onlooker). Jesus did not yield to this treacherous trio of temptations as Eve had done in Genesis 3. “It is written” were His first recorded words subsequent to His immersion. These words were a royal recognition of His awed respect for the authority of God’s Word. This would prove to be the very tone and tenor of His future ministry—steadfast loyalty and undying fidelity to God’s Word of weight, wisdom and worth.

An inquiring lawyer in Luke 10:25-26 heard the Sovereign Lord of Glory say, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” Here is ready recognition of authority inhering God’s Word. Though, later, He would remove the Mosaic and Levitical system, yet He would give His own law and it would be unchangeable amidst a constantly changing world. His

law is inflexible in a world of constant change.

He told the cured lepers in Luke 17:14, "Go shew yourselves unto the priests." Here is respect for priestly law among the Levites. It was unchanging as long as Levitical law remained in effect.

He summed up Mosaic law in a duet of demands—love God supremely and one's neighbor as himself (Matt. 22:36-40). here is royal respect for the law under which He lived. He never bashed the law. He never minimized that law. He never did say that for any Israelite there was no rule, regulation, charge, demand or commandment as Fletcher did for the Christian in his infamous, error-filled volume, **Situational Ethics**. A short time later Fletcher signed the infamous Humanist Manifesto which only atheists can sign. Jesus never said there are myths, contradictions, unbelievable folklore and jarring disharmonies amidst Mosaic mandates. The Mosaic system was God's law to Him and for Him and He never manifested any disrespect for it in any form. He kept it in flawless fashion.

Changeless Authority And Christ's Gospel

Better is the keynote of Hebrews being mentioned a dozen or more times. Proved therein is the superiority of Christ over angels, Moses, Aaron and the Levitical priesthood. Likewise, the authority that inheres Christianity is superior to the authority that inhered Moses and Hebrew prophets as we see reflected in Hebrews 2:1-3; 10:26-31 and 12:25. Moses was faithful in all his house as a **servant** but Christ is faithful in all His house as **Son** (Heb. 3;1ff). Mosaic

authority was changeless as long as that system remained operative. Christ's authority remains changeless from Pentecost in Acts 2 till His second coming. Catholicism does not believe this. Protestantism denies this. So do all the cults and occults that disgrace the religious climate of our day. So do the so-called World Religions such as Islam, Buddhist, Hindu, etc. Now, to our utter shame and absolute disgust, we have an emerging number of Change Agents who seem to think they are in the driver's seat and their thoughts have turned now to actions—inexcusable, unjustified and disapproved actions. What they are seeking to bind or loose on earth is not covered in what Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16:18-19 and what He told all the apostles in Matthew 18:18. Peter and his fellow apostles were inspired echoes on earth announcing what already had been bound or loosed in heaven. Change Agents are not inspired legislators of the 21st century regardless of how pompously they voice their claims. The gospel was/is changeless in a changing world. The complete gospel was preached at first on that memorable Pentecost in Acts 2. The twelve preached at first and then Peter sermonized later beginning in verse 14. All of them preached authoritatively and articulately. "Hearken to my words," in verse 14, is a commandment brimed full of authority. He preached Jesus Christ to them and each sentiment was saturated with apostolic authority. They inquired what they must do in verse 37. He told them to repent and be baptized (immersed) in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins (v. 38). This meant by the

authority of Christ that was invested in him. He was operating under the auspices of the Great Commission that was given by Him who possessed all power (authority, ASV) in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:19). I write this while in a gospel meeting in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Just last night, March 22, 2005, I preached on Acts 2:38. That passage is just as authoritative now as it was when first announced by Peter in Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago. It is unchanging authority in a changing world of religions that is not about to have Acts 2:38 and Mark 16:16 in their current curriculum. I preached this in Billy Graham's home state but North Carolina never hears him preach Acts 2:38 as obligatory on alien sinners seeking salvation. His world-wide popularity would fade with rapidity were he to preach the full gospel of Christ—hearing, faith, repentance, confession, immersion and full commitment to Christ—as they did in Acts and throughout the epistles. The truth has never been safe in his hands or those like him.

Paul wrote in Galatians 1:6-9,

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. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him

be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).

The gospel was so changeless that not even an angel in heaven or an apostle on earth could change an iota of it! Now that is changeless authority minus question or quibble, period! Do Change Agents know this passage is in the Bible? If they do, they ignore it with profane boldness. Their attitudes and actions are the very antithesis of every Galatian sentiment expressed so eloquently in 1:6-9.

Paul, in Colossians 3:17, inculcated that whatever we do in word (message) and deed (actions) **MUST** be done in the name of Jesus Christ. This means by His authority for He possesses it all (Matt. 28:18).

Conclusion

The world is in an unsettled state of constant change but not the authority inhering God's glorious gospel. It is unchanging amidst a world that loves change and is wedded to it. Truth belongs to Deity. It is not our prerogative to change any of it regardless of pressures from peers to do so. We add to or diminish from God's Word at our own peril.

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Chapter 13

Strength Needed To Survive The Threats

Brandon Britton



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There is an old proverb which declares, “Into every life a little rain must fall.” Life is uncertain and unpredictable. Tragedies occur, pain is inevitable and trials will be frequent. This does not mean that all is lost and that we have cause to be discouraged, though we know there will be events that will challenge our faith and test our devotion. James teaches us to view these challenges as an opportunity to grow.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:2-4).

Paul reassures us that these difficulties do not mean that God has forsaken us.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but 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 (1 Cor. 10:13).

Paul also practiced what he preached. It is always easier to tell someone what they should be doing, or what would be the best thing to do, but it is very difficult to take your own advice. Paul not only encouraged others that the Lord would strengthen and enable them to endure any hardship, he also believed the same thing concerning himself.

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:11-13).

He found strength in knowing that God would always stand by him and help him through any problem.

Paul could not always count on people to be so reliable.

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me...and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (2 Tim. 4:16-18).

Paul had learned that his brethren might not always be faithful and loyal to him, but God is faithful. Paul had learned that his family might not always be faithful and loyal to him, but God is faithful.

Perhaps you have learned that friends are not always faithful. You may have experienced the pain of learning that a spouse may not always be faithful. Take comfort in knowing that there is One in your life Who is always faithful. Not even in death will He forsake you or leave you alone.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me (Psm. 23:4).

Some of the threats we face are simply a part of life and inevitable. You will recall a statement from the previously quoted 1 Corinthians 10:13 that declares, "...there hath no temptation (peirasmos = outward trial, hardship, BAB) taken you but such as is common to man...". The point of emphasis is that whatever happens to you could happen to me or anyone else. There are sufferings in life that are not peculiar to any one person, but rather circumstantial hardships that naturally befall people. However, other threats are the result of direct attacks. They are not the result of the natural order of things (sickness, death, etc), but are brought about by those who intentionally choose to go against the will of God. Already mentioned in previous chapters are the problems brought about by the teaching of evolution, the advancement of the homosexual agenda, distortion and perversion as spread by the media and the

changing of the traditional roles of gender as encouraged by the feminist movement. These threats are not merely the consequences of life in the flesh, but the result of open rebellion against the will of God.

Far too many Christians find themselves losing their faith or going astray from God due to the circumstances and sufferings they face in life, or the attacks they have endured from the ungodly. Most likely you know someone who suffered the loss of a loved one, contracted a terrible sickness or endured some other catastrophic event in his life, but was never able to “bounce back.” Whereas there are many others who have suffered the same, similar or worse problems, yet they never wavered or even seemed to stumble. What is the difference? Why is it that some are able to hold it all together, while others fall apart? The answer is certainly not a simple one, but I am confident there are some very strong factors which determine the outcome when unfortunate events occur.

Failure To Prepare

I once saw a sign that read, “Those who fail to prepare, prepare to fail.” So many seem to wander aimlessly through life with no idea of where they are going, what they are doing or how they are going to get there. Have you ever seen the statement on a church sign which reads, “Plan ahead. It wasn’t raining when Noah started building the ark.”? The idea behind the sign is one that is certainly biblical and was demonstrated by Noah. Rather than being like a tumbleweed that goes wherever the wind blows,

Christians must have a clear understanding of their purpose and goal in life.

Consider some of the things Paul wrote concerning spiritual direction.

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:11-14).

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds (Heb. 12:1-3).

He also warned against other Christians expecting to be fruitful servants while floating through life without purpose and focus.

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Eph. 4:14).

In defending John the Baptist, Jesus indicated that he was a man on a mission. John was not drifting aimlessly, but focused upon completing the task given to him.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee (Matt. 11:7-10).

The Lord also illustrated the folly of being ill prepared, as seen in the parable of the ten virgins.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the

other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh (Matt. 25:1-13).

Their mistake was lack of preparation and it is also the mistake of countless Christians today. How will we be able to withstand the threats of Satan without preparing for his attacks? When those attacks come, and they will come, we will not be able to withstand them.

Peter also encouraged the saints to prepare and be ready.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (1 Peter 3:15).

Those who fail to prepare will not be ready and when the time comes that their faith is tested or challenged they will not be able to be steadfast and unmovable (1 Cor. 15:58). It has been said that even a dead fish can swim downstream. Only those who prepare themselves will be able to go against the grain in times of trouble.

Going To War Without Armor

Another factor leading to the destruction of our faith is our failure to put on and utilize the armor that God supplies. The song "Soldiers Of Christ, Arise" beautifully portrays the providential care of God in giving His people what they need to withstand the threats of our enemy. "Soldiers of Christ arise and

put your armor on. Strong in the strength which God supplies." The Lord has issued the necessary equipment, but it is of no value unless the soldier puts it on. Can you imagine the foolishness of a fireman trying to extinguish a blaze while refusing to use the firetruck and water hose? How effective would a surgeon be in saving a life if he refused to use his surgical instruments? What soldier would dare go into battle without his offensive weapons and defensive protection? Why then do countless Christians enter into spiritual warfare with no armor?

Have you ever noticed that in the inventory of the armor of God recorded in Ephesians 6, is also a description of the function of each piece and the purpose of the armor as a whole?

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. 6:13-17).

Why do I need a shield of faith? To withstand the fiery darts of the wicked. What does this imply? That the wicked one(s), Satan and his servants, will be launching flaming darts at me. In other words they will threaten and attack me, therefore I need protection or I will be pierced and burned. Why do I need the armor of God? To be able to withstand in the evil day

and to stand. Again the implication is that there will be challenges and threats that could potentially bring me down, unless I have something to protect me. The armor of God will enable me to endure the attacks and remain standing when they cease.

Those who do not put on the whole armor of God will not make it. When the threats come their way it will be more than they can stand. Their faith will falter and their strength will fade. They will not be able to endure, and all because they refused to utilize what God had made available to them.

Trusting In Anything Other Than God

The Bible says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). Additionally, there are some nineteen other verses which indicate the necessity of trusting in the Lord, yet untold numbers do not, both within and without the church. There are a multitude of other people, things and ideas in which people place their trust. Those who trust in anything or anyone other than the Lord God, quickly discover that they have built upon an unsure foundation (Matt. 7:24ff). This is not a problem limited to our day. Even in Bible times, and even amongst God's people, men were devastated by threats and attacks because they did not trust in God to deliver them. In the Old Testament there are numerous examples of men of God seeking strength in things other than God, only to discover their weaknesses.

Solomon was blessed by God with unlimited resources in life. He inherited a kingdom from his

father David that had conquered all enemies. He enjoyed material prosperity beyond measure (Eccl. 2). He reigned during a period of unprecedented peace in the kingdom. Perhaps the thing for which he is most remembered is the wisdom he received from God. Solomon was the wisest man in all the earth. His wisdom was legendary, as was his wealth, to the extent that other figures of royalty would travel great distances to see for themselves (1 Kings 10:1-13). A man of his stature, prominence and wisdom would surely recognize that all things he had came from God, yet he did not. Solomon was the wisest fool to ever live. For a time he recognized God as the source of all his prosperity and blessings, but in later years he allowed his heart to be turned. His love for and marriage to strange women (Gentile women) started him down a path that would ultimately end in idolatry. The Bible says,

But king Solomon loved many strange women
...Of the nations concerning which the LORD said
unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to
them, neither shall they come in unto you: for
surely they will turn away your heart after their
gods: Solomon clave unto these in love...and his
wives turned away his heart after other gods (1
Kings 11:1-3).

This distraction caused Solomon to take his eyes off of the Lord and to put them on his possessions. In his own words Solomon confessed to his trust in riches,

And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not
from them, I withheld not my heart from any
joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and

this was my portion of all my labour (Eccl. 2:10).

Solomon learned the hard way what the apostle Paul would later teach to Timothy.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17).

As he drew near to the end of his life, Solomon realized the foolishness of trusting in his wealth instead of the God Who had given him this wealth.

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun...Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me (Eccl. 2:11, 17-18).

In this miserable condition Solomon was able to regain his wisdom and humility and remember the purpose of his life.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man (Eccl. 12:13).

Samson was another Old Testament hero, chosen by God to accomplish great things for Him, who fell into the trappings of success, instead of at the feet of God. Samson began his life with a great advantage by being born to two godly parents who sought to do

the will of God in all things. Before he was born his father prayed to God on behalf of his unborn son.

Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born...And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him? (Judges 13:8, 12).

His mother would live by and raise Samson, according to a very strict code. Samson would live the life of those under a Nazarite vow, which required him to abstain from intoxicating beverages, the product of grapes, unclean foods and cutting his hair (Judg. 13:4-5, 7, 14). After his birth, Samson grew and the Lord blessed him (Judg. 13:24). Sadly, the blessings and advantages that God had given Samson gradually gave way to arrogance and recklessness. He was determined to marry a Gentile woman, despite his parents advice to the contrary (Judg. 14:1-4). At his wedding feast he began to taunt and mock the Philistines with a riddle (Judg. 14:12-18). Later he would be responsible for burning down their fields and all of their crops (Judg. 15:3-6). During his days as a judge of Israel and hero deliverer from the hands of the Philistines, he would visit a prostitute (Judges 16:1). Seemingly his greatest weakness and ultimately his downfall, was his love of women. His love for Delilah, coupled with his trusting in his own strength would lead to his downfall (Judg. 16:6-21). All of his success, which was given to him by God, had "gone to his head" and he began to trust in himself and in

his own strength. Samson did not realize that when he cut his hair he had broken his vow to God and it came at a great price.

And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him (Judg. 16:20).

Ironically, his strength became his weakness, just as the wisest man Solomon was the greatest fool. When he arrogantly and foolishly trusted in his own strength he was defeated, humbled and brought down. In his humility, Samson then turned back to God and asked for His strength, instead of trusting in his own, and God gave him victory again.

And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life (Judg. 16:28-30).

The children of Israel as a nation had been chosen by God to be a great and mighty people and an instrument in the hand of God to punish wicked nations by driving them out of the land of Canaan.

They were not great in number and they were not highly trained and seasoned veterans of war, yet God would use them to defeat all of His enemies. The nation of Israel would become the most powerful nation on earth and the Lord would give them a fruitful and abundant homeland to enjoy and inhabit. The only problem with this plan was that the children of Israel did not trust in the Lord to give them victory over their enemies. Throughout their journey from Egypt to Canaan they had repeatedly demonstrated that they did not trust God to take care of them. Instead of being grateful for their freedom and riches, which God had given them from the hands of their captors, they grumbled, murmured and complained about everything God did for them. Once they reached the borders of Canaan they began to doubt that God would give them victory. They did not trust in the Lord.

Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there (Num. 13:28).

But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight (Num. 13:31-33).

And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt (Num. 14:1-4).

This lack of trust was very costly. Instead of inhabiting a land of plenty and abundance, they found themselves wandering in the wilderness and desert for forty years. The generation that did not trust in the Lord would never live in the land of Canaan.

Once the people realized they were going to be doomed to a lifetime in the desert and that those who gave the evil report were killed by a plague from God (Num. 14:26-39), they decided to do what God said and go in to take the land. Moses warned them not to go into battle because it was too late and the Lord would not be with them in the fight (Num. 14:40-43). They were foolish in presuming that they would be able to overthrow the people on their own and without the strength of God. They trusted in their numbers and in their armies and in themselves instead of in the Lord and the consequences were significant.

But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then

the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah (Num, 14:44-45).

Many years later Moses would remind the younger generation of the sins and mistakes of their fathers. He would remind them that their strength was not in their numbers, armies or themselves, but in the Lord and Him alone.

Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people. Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord (Deut. 9:4-7).

Moses rehearsed in their ears that although they were inferior to their enemies, the strength of God had given them victory over all of their enemies and would continue to do so if they trusted in Him.

Then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves (Deut. 11:23).

Whereas these “pep talks” would be effective for a short time, the children of Israel would gradually slip back into the habit of trusting in their numbers and armies instead of the Lord Himself. After an unlikely victory over the well fortified Jericho, which was given into their hands by the Lord (Josh. 6:2), they boldly set out to conquer the tiny village of Ai. The village of Ai did not compare to Jericho in size or defence and the children of Israel assumed they would have an easy victory.

And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few. So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water (Josh. 7:3-5).

A short time later, after dealing with the sin of Achan, they would again go into battle with Ai, only this time they would have victory. The Bible clearly tells us the reason for their victory,

And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have

given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land...Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand (Josh. 8:1,7).

When they were defeated they trusted in themselves, their numbers and their armies, when they obtained victory they trusted in the Lord.

The lessons and comparisons for us should be very easy to draw. How many people today, like Solomon, trust in their wealth and possessions to deliver them from trouble? How many are like the rich fool who thought that full barns meant that he was set up for life (Luke 12:16-21)? The Bible warns against this attitude.

God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah. The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness (Psm. 52:5-7).

How many people today make the mistake of Samson and live carelessly and sinfully because of a perverted view of the grace of God?

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).

Is it not the case that the grace of God should cause us to live more pure and holy lives?

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 (Titus 2:11-12).

Like Solomon they trust in their own strength and ability to save themselves.

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

God provides His people with the strength to overcome any challenge, threat or attack we may face in life. It is often the case that when we do not have the strength to stand fast it is because we have not turned to Him to receive this strength (James 4:2). Is it that God has not answered our prayers simply because we have failed to offer them? "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psm. 55:22). The strength we need to face the threats of the wicked one is the strength that is given by the Lord. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psm. 46:1). "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

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Chapter 14

Securing The Home For The Storms Of Life

Paul Sain



Paul began preaching in 1961. Author of numerous books and tracts. One of his books, **Ready Reference For Growing Christians** has gone around the world (translated into five languages). Owns Sain Publications (publisher of many brotherhood books each year). LaDon and Paul have three children and six grandchildren. They are presently working with the East Hill Church of Christ in Pulaski (since 1987).

The facts are true and known by all — “As goes the home, so goes the nation.” We know this to be true. But Satan also knows this to be true, thus, realizing the value of damaging or destroying it, his attacks on the home are continual and vicious.

Examples Of Attacks Presently Being Made On The Home

There are many faces of Satan’s destructive actions on the home, raging storms at this time. A small sampling would include: (1) Re-defining marriage to include a man/man or woman/woman relationship. (2) Viewing homosexuality favorably, as an “alternate lifestyle.” (3) Demanding the woman be

given equal rights, and specifically includes leadership which God prohibits. (4) The liberal media's constant barrage upon the sanctity and sacredness of the home. (5) Sexual permissiveness—the attitude and action of a majority that “anything is acceptable” and “disregard the past” restrictions. (6) Judges who are rewriting the laws, instead of interpreting and enforcing the laws, etc.

Is The Situation Hopeless?

Absolutely not! While things may be gloomy through various viewpoints at this point in man's history, let us be reminded of a few facts. With God's help, by learning and following the guidebook of our Creator, the Holy Bible, by passionately walking in the light of God's way, by striving to live righteous lives, and by leading others toward God and the righteous life, WE CAN BE VICTORIOUS (1 Cor. 15:57)! God is Almighty, all-powerful, and superior to Satan. God will triumph eternally!

There Is WORK To Do!

If we are victorious over the forces of the devil, it will take effort, hard work, continual determination and refusing to grow weary. Victory will not come to us by accident or by luck (?). Satan is working 24/7 to get us to hell eternally. We must work 24/7 to get us to heaven! We cannot let up, give up, or slow up. We must keep our eyes on the goal and press, press, and press toward that eternal home (Phil. 3:12-14; John 14:1-3).

Suggestions For Securing The Home

1. Realize storms will come. Anticipate and know that life will include problems, temptations and major setbacks. Satan is the “god” of this world and will seek your downfall (Luke 22:31). He will wield as much destructive influence as possible. Understand you are not alone in facing these trials.

2. Storms will pass. Most “storms of life” are brief, temporary, and short-lived. Our storms of life are often like a summer storm that quickly appears and soon is past. Some storms may last a lifetime on earth, but even then—brief (in comparison to eternity). Our “home” is not here on earth, but one prepared by our Savior (John 14:1-3).

3. You are among others who are facing storms. You are not alone. We are pilgrims, sojourners and strangers in this world (1 Peter 2:11). Fellow-travelers, our co-laborers in Christ, are likewise struggling. Our problems and trials may vary, but everyone carries a heavy load.

4. The Saviour is with us. We are not alone (Matt. 28:20), according to His promise. We can cast our care on Him (1 Peter 5:7). We have a Master who cares (Heb. 6:14).

5. What really matters can not be destroyed by the storms. Things may be lost. Possessions and wealth can vaporize so quickly. Even health may deteriorate or suffer. But nothing can damage or destroy the soul unless we allow, give, relinquish that power to them. Fear those who can destroy the soul (Matt. 10:28).

6. Plant your feet on solid ground—Jesus

Christ. He is the only power to survive (Rom. 1:16). He is the only way to Almighty God (John 14:6). Love Him with all your being (Mark 12:33). Trust Him to know the way “home” (John 14:1-6). Follow and obey Him (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:8-9)!

7. Passionately, diligently, press toward the goal (Phil. 2:13-14). God demands that we give Him our all, zealously involved in reaching heaven (Titus 2:14; Acts 22:3).

8. Fathers are spiritually responsible. God has placed upon the husband the role of leading the home, and this is especially true spiritually. God has placed upon fathers the responsibility of bringing the children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). Compare how the Israelites were expected to teach their children the ways of the Lord (Deut. 6, 10, and 11).

Conclusion

When we see the beauty of heaven, when we get a mere glimpse of our mansion in glory, when together our family gathers around the throne of Almighty God for the first time – the toils, trials and problems of life will all vanish. Heaven will surely be worth it all.

Chapter 15

Parenting Needed To Weather The Storms

Brandon Britton



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Truly the institution of the home is the foundation for civilization. Virtually everything a child will learn concerning his place and responsibilities in the world will be developed during the first formative years in the home. The attitudes that the child will carry with him for the rest of his life concerning a variety of issues, including authority, marriage, work ethics, finances and loyalty, will be “hard wired” into his brain by his parents behavior and attitudes in these same areas.

Consider the lifelong negative impact it can have on a child if he is not properly molded in any one of these areas.

Work Ethics ~ The boy that is never taught the value of hard work or expected to help in the care

and maintenance of the home (cleaning room, mowing grass, painting fences, etc) may very well grow up to be lazy and fail to be the proper provider for his own family. This is much more than shameful behavior, it is blatantly sinful.

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:8).

Solomon understood how important it was for his son to learn to be a hard worker and warned him repeatedly to avoid being slothful.

Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger (Prov. 19:15).

The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour (Prov. 21:25).

The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets. As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth (Prov. 26:13-15).

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? (Prov. 6:9).

As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him (Prov. 10:26).

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat (Prov. 13:4).

The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing (Prov. 20:4).

How pathetic is it to see a mother out using a push lawnmower to cut the grass, after having worked over forty hours that week, while her teenage son sits in the house playing video games? What lesson is learned by the juvenile that is allowed to stay out half of the night and then sleep until two in the afternoon on Saturday? What will become of the child that repeatedly ignores his mothers instructions to clean his room, only to have her finally do it herself?

We can presently see the consequences of children not being taught in the home the need to work hard and provide for yourself and family, by looking at the highly abused government assistance programs. The welfare system in this country was originally created and intended to help those who were destitute for uncontrollable reasons. It was an extension of help to those trying to "get back on their feet" and a safety net to protect those who were incapable of helping themselves. Tragically it has evolved into a farce in which many people realize they do not have to work to provide for themselves and someone will still take care of their basic needs of food, housing and medical care anyway. Though it is admittedly an extreme example of abusing this system, I recall watching on television a multi-platinum record selling rap musician arrive at the welfare office to receive his government assistance check.....in a limousine! Children need parents who will teach them the value of hard work.

Finances ~ Hand in hand with the need for teaching work ethics is the need to teach financial responsibility. The average American child will have in his room several hundreds of dollars worth of toys.

Most children will have so many that they do not see the need for taking care of the toys and putting them back where they belong when they are finished playing with them. The attitude seems to be, "Just leave them on the floor and if they get lost or broken my parents will replace them with new ones." How many parents have witnessed a child on Christmas morning, surrounded by mountains of paper and hundreds of dollars in toys, cry, whine or complain because he did not get one certain toy that he wanted?

The average American teenager will have an SUV or sports car with two thousand dollar chrome rims, a high tech cell phone, one hundred fifty dollar shoes, one hundred twenty-five dollar jeans and a sixty dollar shirt. All of this comes in spite of the fact that the average American teenager does not have a job and those that do certainly do not make enough money to support such an extravagant lifestyle. In fact, according to most surveys, the average weekly income for American teens is just under one hundred dollars per week. Clearly, the bulk of their lavish lifestyle is funded by their parents, not to mention the housing, food, medical and dental care, college tuition and savings accounts, all paid for by their parents.

What about the adults who are rearing the aforementioned children and teens? What type of lifestyles are they living? The average American home is well over two thousand square feet and costs in excess of one hundred thousand dollars. The driveway will have two relatively new cars, one of which is likely to be a forty thousand dollar SUV. There will be a swimming pool in the backyard and the family will

take one or two vacations per year. Is there anything actually “wrong” with this lifestyle? Not necessarily, but also possibly. If the luxury is beyond their means (i.e. they are so deeply in debt they could go under on any given month), if it is not matched by liberal giving to spiritual endeavors, or if it is the main focus of their lives, then yes it is sinful. In case you are wondering, my “research” was anything but “scientific.” I reached these conclusions just by looking at the world and people around me. I looked at the bedrooms of the children in whose homes I have visited. I looked at the teenagers in the assembly, at the mall and the high school parking lot. I looked at the houses I drive by everyday. Luxury and excess is everywhere we turn.

What lesson is learned and instilled in the heart of the child reared in such a home? Do they learn to,

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:19-21)?

Are they able to comprehend what took Solomon a lifetime to finally understand?

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay

hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun (Eccl. 2:1-11).

Children must be taught financial responsibility in the home. Godly parents will instill in their children that things do not equal happiness and that the wealth God has blessed us with is to be used in His service and to His glory. When I look at the extravagant lifestyles being lived by most Americans, and a growing number of members of the Lord's church, I wonder what would be the reaction if the Lord said to us today what He said to the rich young ruler?

How many church buildings would be virtually empty if instead of “repent and be baptized”, the Lord had said to us,

One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me (Mark 10:22).

Do you suppose any Christians would respond the same way?

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions (Mark 10:22).

It is a great disservice to the child to give him everything he wants without having to work for and earn it. It is misguided love to shower children with excessive gifts and material goods. The child who does not learn to live within his means will become a burden to others and himself due to excessive debt, due in part to being taught through the actions of his parents that he should have everything he wants. Parents have the best of intentions in striving to give their children what they never had, but they must not forget to give them the things they did have, such as a strong sense of right and wrong, willingness to work hard, an understanding that people are more important than things and happiness cannot be purchased.

Certainly some will object and say the previous statements do not describe their homes. Obviously not every family is like this, but those that are not are quickly becoming the exception, not the rule. It is also

true that it is not a sin to be wealthy or have great possessions, but it is certainly a tremendous danger that must be governed with the utmost caution. Did you realize there are more warnings and condemnations in the Scriptures concerning riches than lust, lying and backbiting combined? Should we not “stand up and take notice” when the Lord says, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:25). The parent that does not impress these principles upon the mind of the child is in essence dooming him to a life of frustration due to debt, temporary pleasure to materialism and eternal punishment due to greed and covetousness.

Marriage ~ It breaks my heart to write that we as a nation are rapidly approaching the day when there will be as many or more children from homes ravaged by divorce, as there are children from two parent homes. Looking back at my circle of friends from my school days, I realize that I was one of about five, from a group of over twenty, whose parents are still married.

Virtually everything a child will learn and believe concerning the roles of a husband and wife, the commitment of marriage and overcoming struggles, problems and challenges in relationships, will be learned in the home by observing his parents. If the child is reared in an environment in which the mother is physically or verbally abusive toward her husband, he will come to see this type of behavior as normal and acceptable. If the child witnesses years of infidelity from the husband he will accept that men “have

certain needs” and that “boys will be boys.” If the home is broken because one or both parents decide not to live up to their solemn promise to love one another “for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, so long as we both shall live”, the child will be impacted in ways that will affect every relationship he will have for the rest of his life.

In the world children will see and be taught that marriage has many definitions and options. For some it will be a person of the same gender. For others it will be more than one person at a time and for millions of others it will be several different people during their lifetime. The message of the masses is that your happiness is more important than the commitment you made to work together to overcome any obstacle. The child is going to see example after example of those who have decided that “till death do us part” is unrealistic and too restrictive.

The kind of parenting needed to survive these stormy winds of change is the kind that is anchored in the word of God. When there is turmoil in the world, there needs to be stability, consistency and reliability in the home. Children need an environment in which they can find safety and escape the madness that reigns supreme in the world. The home is to be a safe haven and insulated from the attacks of the Devil. Children need to see their parents live according to the mandate of Jesus in Matthew 19. The best way to teach the child the sacredness and seriousness of marriage is to put into practice,

he which made them at the beginning made
them male and female, And said, For this cause

shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Matt. 19:4-6).

Parenting That Is Not Needed

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the type of parenting that is desperately needed in our day, is to examine the contemporary methods, tactics and approaches that need to be abandoned immediately and avoided permanently.

Parents That Do Not Discipline

Most of the mistakes made by parents are done so out of love and good intentions. With a small number of exceptions, most parents dearly love their children, but it is possible for the displays and acts of love to be misguided. Though well intentioned, misguided love can be a dangerous thing with catastrophic results. Consider the damage done by a misguided missile.

Several years ago an American missile, intended to eliminate a deadly threat (terrorist camp), was misguided and instead hit a factory, resulting in the death and injury of innocent lives. In much the same way parents who refuse or fail to discipline their children fail to eliminate dangerous behavior and instead injure innocent people because of misguided love.

The Lord is the Supreme example of perfect parenting and He teaches us that discipline is loving

and essential to the well being of the child.

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? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (Heb. 12:5-11).

No right thinking or Christian person would excuse, endorse or condone child abuse in any form or fashion, but this does not mean that corporal punishment is inappropriate. The Bible teaches that it not only is appropriate and needed, but to fail to do so would be detrimental to the child. Those who consider all forms of physical discipline to be "abusive" need to realize that failing to do so is equivalent to spiritual abuse by depriving the child of valuable lessons and principles essential to proper spiritual growth and personal responsibility.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he

that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (Prov. 13:24).

Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (Prov. 23:13,14).

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him (Prov. 22:15).

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame (Prov. 29:15).

Why is it that God stresses the need for discipline in the home? Consider the consequences of a child brought up by parents that do not enforce corrective and preventive discipline. The child that does not learn to respect the authority of his parents will not respect the authority of his teachers. The child that does not learn respect for authority figures, usually comes to despise them as a teenager, and will disregard the rules and threats of punishment by the civil authorities such as the police and judiciary. The teen who leads a life of rebellion will become an adult that scoffs at the authority of the Bible and a God that would tell him what he has to do. The adult who refuses to submit to the authority of the Bible will find himself lost eternally. It is utter foolishness to refuse to discipline a child properly in the home and then expect him to be a good student, law abiding citizen and faithful Christian.

It is likely that we have all witnessed the completely disrespectful and inappropriate “temper

tantrums" in the grocery store by a spoiled (undisciplined) child who did not "get his way", or the child that defiantly shouts "NO!" to his own parents before screaming "I hate you." The child does not need parents that will seek to pacify him when he becomes unruly, but those who love him enough to say no, stick to it and then punish appropriately if the order is disobeyed.

Parents That Do Not Put The Best Interests Of The Family First

Selfishness is the root cause for so many problems. Why does a father leave his wife and children for another woman, with whom he will have more children to the neglect of his others? Selfishness. Why does a mother turn her children over to a sitter to raise them so that she can pursue her needs? Selfishness. Why does a father spend all day at work, then hours at the golf course afterwards? Selfishness. Why does a mother demand a standard of living for herself that requires her husband, and possibly herself, to be at work constantly, instead of having time at home with the family, in order to support their lifestyle? Selfishness. What has just been listed is the "ugly truth", but there are ways to dress it up and make it sound much more acceptable and less detrimental. For example, the father who walks away from his family to start another is just looking to be happy. The mother who allows others to raise her children for her is just in need of "me time." The man who leaves work to spend all of his free time with his buddies is just "unwinding and blowing off steam."

The woman who has to have the highest standard of living is just “keeping up with the Joneses” and “wanting the best things for my family.”

Somewhere along the way we lost our way. Have we forgotten that sometimes that which may make me happiest is not what is best for the family as a whole and therefore should be avoided? I certainly do not think it was in the Lord’s best interest to go to the cross, but He did it because it was what was necessary for the rest of us and so He put our needs above His own wishes (Matt. 26:39). Have we forgotten that the Lord values those who are servants and put others before themselves as being exalted (Matt. 23:11). Do we as parents not realize that what our children need more than name brand clothes, new cars, large homes and closets full of toys, is time and attention from us. What good is an expensive toy if there is no one home to enjoy it with? I have learned that my boys long for a ten dollar football that they can throw around with me in the yard, more than a two hundred dollar video game system they can play with on their own.

Putting the best interests of the family first is a tough lesson for parents to teach because it is a tough lesson for parents to learn to live.

Parents That Do Not Make Their Children Do Anything

When I graduated from high school and moved away to college I knew how to pay my bills and balance my checkbook. I could wash and iron my own clothes, cook my own meals and get myself up and

ready for classes in the morning. I was able to do these things because I had loving parents who did not do everything for me my entire life. My mother is a wonderful cook and fed me wonderfully while I lived at home, but she also taught me how to fix myself something to eat. My dad always paid our bills on time and kept a detailed budget to control the money coming and going from our home and he showed me how to do it too. Why did my mother make me occasionally wash and iron my own clothes? It was not because she was lazy or mean, but because she knew she would not always be around to take care of the daily chores that are part of life. In short, my parents wanted me to be able to take care of myself.

Throughout Bible history, God has never done for man what man was able to do for himself. That is not to say that God has never assisted man or done anything for man, only that God expects us to do what we can. It grieves me to see parents who never make their children do anything. Their approach to childrearing is that the child should be free to express himself in anyway he chooses without the parent imposing his will. I certainly believe children must be given space and opportunity to develop according to their own natural talents, desires and interests, and I believe that is the idea behind Proverbs 22:6. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The Pulpit Commentary explains that the Hebrew literally reads, "Initiate a child in accordance with his way." The implication being, his future calling and station or his

character and natural inclination and capacity. However, this does not mean that children do not need guidance and direction in order to reach their full potential. If anything it clearly teaches that the natural leanings and abilities of children must be fostered, encouraged and assisted by their parents.

When I was fourteen I wanted a pair of Nike Air Jordan tennis shoes, which cost about one hundred dollars. My parents did not tell me no or that I could not have them, but neither did they go out and buy them for me. Their advice was for me to get a job, earn the money and buy the shoes, which I did. After working an entire summer cutting grass I had saved enough to buy the shoes and I bought them. Having learned how much hard work had to be put into getting those shoes I took very good care of them and appreciated them tremendously. I literally kept them and wore them until they fell apart and had to be thrown away.

There is a Biblical principle which emphasizes that God expects each of us to do what we are capable of doing.

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample

unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread (2 Thess. 3:6-12).

How can a child grow to be a responsible adult when everything they need and most all of what they want is provided by their parents with no reciprocal requirements? What lesson is being taught to the impressionable young mind when they are allowed to lay around, watch tv, play video games and do whatever they please, while mom and dad work tirelessly to keep the home running smoothly? In cases such as this, the child rarely grows up to be a responsible adult, but rather finds someone else to take care of them. It may be that they get married and doom their spouse to a lifetime of carrying the burden by themselves, or they may find a grandparent, sibling or roommate and “mooch” off of them. In short, the child will grow up to be a parasite, living off of the work that others do for them.

Best Friends Instead Of A Source Of Authority

Were it not such a serious problem, it would be humorous to see the mothers and fathers who are reliving their youth through their teens. Often in the mall I will see mothers with their daughters in short skirts, revealing tops, getting their belly buttons pierced, getting tattoos, wearing their hair and make up and behaving like a sixteen year old. Let it be said

though, that this type of behavior should not be acceptable for the daughter, but much less encouraged by a participating parent. Fathers are sometimes guilty of trying to force their sons into becoming athletically what they never were or wished they had become. I have seen more than one child become “burned out” by a sport that was intended to be fun, because the grown ups ruin it by making too big a deal out of it and asking them to play to the point of exhaustion.

For many parents this is a way to connect with their child. Many parents want to be viewed as just one of their friends. Obviously every parent should want to be close, trusted and enjoyable to be around, all of which are qualities we appreciate in our friends, but a parent must be seen as much more than that. Parents can and should be friends with their children, but it is essential that the child sees the parent as an authority figure too. Most children I know have an abundance of friends in their lives, but the one thing they are lacking is grounded and godly authority figures. Children will have authority figures, and in those homes where the parent does not fill this role it will be filled by someone outside of the home and is likely to be an undesirable role model. It may be that the child begins to follow after a celebrity, viewing them as an authority figure. How they dress, what they say, what they believe, will all be shaped and molded by this person. Walk through a mall on a Friday night and you will see hundreds of Paris Hilton and Britney Spears clones in midriff revealing shirts to show off their belly button rings, skirts literally too short to sit in, streetwalker high heel shoes and enough

make-up for them to look like they are twenty-five. When I see these young girls my first thought is where are the parents? Is there not a father at home who looked at his fourteen year old girl and said, "No you will not go out looking like that." Perhaps it is the case that the father was more worried about being liked by his daughter and did not want to put his foot down and tell her no. I have a friend, who is the mother of a teenage girl, who sees these girls and says, "That poor little girl doesn't have a mother that loves her." When I asked why she said that, her reply was, "If she had a mother who loved her she wouldn't let her go out in public dressed like that."

The problem is not limited to girls by any means. At the same mall you can find an army of adolescent boys who dress, talk and act like they are hip hop thugs. Their arms are covered in obscene tattoos, their pants hang down below their hips, revealing their underwear, their hats are sideways and around their necks are gaudy, oversized gold chains. The clothes are only the tip of the iceberg. They strut like the chickens we have walking around our farm and out of their mouths they spew the most obscene and degrading language. They consider women to be property and view them solely as sex objects. Most authority figures are viewed as the enemy, especially police officers who are, in their minds, corrupt "pigs." They travel in gangs and are proud to show off their tough guy mentality as they will gladly pick a fight with anyone who looks at them the wrong way. Again, when I see these boys I cannot help but wonder what is going on at home. Is there no one in the home to

tell them this is not how a man acts, speaks and dresses? Tragically this void is filled by some ex-con, rapper thug, who glamorizes the criminal and immoral life he leads through his music, leaving misguided youth to imitate his every move.

For other teens the source of authority will be the group, their peers. What is right and wrong, acceptable or unacceptable is determined by what everyone else does and thinks. To some extent all young people will be influenced in this way, as are many adults, but those with strong authority figures in the home will be less likely to cross the line into destructive behavior. The bottom line is, children need, desire and will seek out authority figures in their lives, whether it be parents, peers or celebrities. The type of parenting that is not needed is the kind that would rather be a friend to the child than a role model to guide them and set appropriate boundaries.

Conclusion

We are gradually beginning to see the catastrophic effects of a lack of godly parenting in the home. We are now in the second generation and beginning the third, of homes where there is an absence of both parents. The children who grew up in broken homes have had children of their own and broken homes of their own. In some cases those children have started their own as well. It is a vicious cycle that is repeated over and over and leads to the further decay of the home and then society. The old proverb, "As goes the home, so goes the nation" is being proven to be true. Most of the negative

consequences that are associated with broken homes are now affecting society at large (crime, abuse, drug use, promiscuity, etc).

The only solution to the problem is a return to the biblical principals and patterns for the home. When one man and one woman join themselves together for life (Matt. 19:4-6), promising and then practicing love for one another (Eph. 5:25-29), and willingly submitting to one another (Eph. 5:21-24), most of the problems will begin to be rectified. Children not only need, they deserve parents that are faithful Christians. The type of parenting needed to survive these changes, challenges and storms is the kind that is grounded and founded upon the word of God (Matt. 7:24-25).

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Chapter 16

The Threat Of Evolution In Our Lives

Paul Sain



Paul began preaching in 1961. Author of numerous books and tracts. One of his books, **Ready Reference For Growing Christians** has gone around the world (translated into five languages). Owns Sain Publications (publisher of many brotherhood books each year). LaDon and Paul have three children and six grandchildren. They are presently working with the East Hill Church of Christ in Pulaski (since 1987).

Our children and grandchildren leave home, to further their education they arrive on campus at a university. The first day in a classroom the professor speaks confidently of the earth being millions of years of age, and that man certainly evolved from lower forms of animals. Joe or Jane (imaginary names to represent our precious children or grandchildren) question what they have heard, since it is so different from what they have been taught all their lives. As the professor continues in the days and weeks of that course, Joe and Jane are impressed with the “evidence” presented and the extensive documentation from the “scholars” of the world. They wonder if their parents, Bible teachers, etc. “back home” just were not aware of these facts; maybe they were never given a chance

to hear the “real story” of man’s existence.

Friends, we are far too aware of the frequency with which this senario occurs. Ultimately Joe and Jane are convinced that mom and dad are just “unlearned” and “ignorant.” Learning and gulping everything spoken by the professor, they are now convinced that the Biblical account of creation is foolishness, unbelievable and blatantly untrue.

The “Theory” Of Evolution – A Real Threat To Christians

The word “theory” is from the Greek “theoria” which means “viewing, a sight, a spectacle, abstractly, figuratively, contemplation or conjecture.” It has come to have the meaning of abstract knowledge or unsupported hypothesis.

The ideas and doctrines of man concerning evolution are many. Note the following:

Evolution is definable in general terms as a one-way, irreversible process in time, which during its course generates novelty, diversity, and higher levels of organization. It operates in all sectors of the phenomenal universe but has been most fully described and analyzed in the biological sector (Julian Huxley).

Evolution is an integration of matter and a concomitant dissipation of motion during which the matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite heterogeneity and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation (Herbert Spencer).

Evolution is a fully natural process, inherent in the physical properties of the universe, by which life arose in the first place and by which all living things, past or present, have since developed, divergently and progressively (George Gaylord Simpson).

Our ancestors fell to earth from space after evolving in the warm, wet nucleus of a comet. Single-celled bacteria developed not in earth's oceans but in these cometary pools, feeding off the rich mixture of organic molecules present in interstellar clouds, blowing across the galaxy propelled by the pressure of starlight on their tiny cells and ultimately landing on our young planet (astrophysicist John Gribbin wrote in **Science Digest**, April, 1981).

But then notice Philip Muro's contrasting idea about evolution:

Evolution is a philosophical and speculative theory, of recent origin, whereby it is sought to account for the various elements and compounds of the inorganic world, and also for the countless species of living creatures in the organic world.

The idea of man's origin being attributed to "evolution" is nothing more than speculation, fantasy, unsupported philosophy and downright silly. It is not scientific, for science has to do with "facts." The theory of evolution is unproved and unprovable! As one atheist stated it: "We believe it because the only

alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable!" The evidence is rejected because of their prejudice against God and His Word.

Why is this matter a threat or important? Dear ones, if God did not create man and woman (and all things) as He declares in the opening chapters of the Holy Bible, then we should NOT believe anything that is contained in the Holy Bible! If we can believe anything (salvation, heaven, grace, etc.), then we are forced to believe that God created all things just as the Divine record declares.

For **by him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him**, and for him (Col. 1:16, emp. mine).

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in **God, who created all things by Jesus Christ** (Eph. 3:9, emp. mine).

In Exodus 20:11 we are informed (confirming the Genesis account) that all things were made in six days. Remember, God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

Evolution Is Being Taught Openly And In Many Ways

When the children's character Barney speaks of dinosaurs living millions of years ago on the earth—

children are being taught the theory of evolution. As a song has a brief, subtle reference to “millions of years ago” – children are being programmed to accept man’s foolishness about how he came to be on earth. In the **Time/Life** magazines and/or publications, the phrases and pictures regularly suggest the so-called facts of evolution – children are learning that man came from monkeys. When the Disney, Discovery, or similar channels on television speak of the age of the earth, man’s early history on earth as an ape, or like references – children naturally assume they are hearing the truth.

In the classrooms across America, the theory of evolution is often taught. It requires the faith and strength of a truthful and godly teacher to not do so, since the “theory of evolution” is contained in the textbooks from which the students study. Tragically, the opposing, sensible, and accurate account of man’s existence is not presented in textbooks across the nation. Battles have been fought in different states as sensible people have sought to have “creation” at least included in the textbooks. A few minor victories have resulted in evolution, at least, being taught as a “theory” instead of a fact.

Never underestimate the determination of atheists, agnostics and evolutionists. They will no doubt persist in advocating their damnable, destructive doctrine. Their organizations, publications, documentaries, excerpts on television and radio, etc. will continue – but in spite of it all, we can remain righteous and acceptable to God. Remember Noah and

his family. They lived during a time of immense evil and wickedness (Gen. 6:5). Noah was righteous (Gen. 7:1). Noah and his family were saved from the destructive flood because of their loyalty to Almighty God.

Can We Survive The Threat (Storm) Of The False Theory Of Evolution?

Yes! But not with a casual, light-hearted or passive attitude or response. Satan is aggressive and militant. If we survive, if we overcome his attacks, it will be **ONLY** by our aggressively standing for the truth and opposing error.

What can we do? What must we do, for the sake of our precious children and grandchildren? The following suggestions will help channel our efforts:

1. Teach your children. Not only teach them the Biblical account of creation and immense respect for what God has spoken, but also teach them the false theories of man. Equip and prepare them for the time when they will (not if) meet these damning theories. Give them the “red flag” signs for which to be on guard and alert. Read again the instruction of Moses (from Jehovah) to the children of Israel concerning teaching their children (Deut. 10-11). He commanded them to teach their sons and their son’s sons. He reminded them that they (sons and their son’s sons) had not witnessed many things that had brought them to that point in time. The young ones needed to be prepared, taught, helped to understand what is true and accurate. Such is the case for us today!

2. Do not be afraid to examine theories and hold them up to the truth. Truth never fears investigation. Truth will stand. Theories of man will fall. If the evidence is not clear and true, we should not, must not believe it.

John exhorted God's people to "try the spirits" and see if they are of God (1 John 4:1). Paul said to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21).

3. Oppose and take a stand against evolution being taught. A single voice often can make a great difference. Be kind, firm, Christ-like, but let your voice and vote be heard. Give others an alternative to being a descendant of an ape. They possibly have never heard the Genesis account of creation.

4. Secure literature, pamphlets, brochures, books for distribution. Be as fully prepared and knowledgeable on the subject as possible. Have tracts and small booklets ready to give to others as you have opportunity. Literature from Apologetics Press (Montgomery, AL) is often brief, concise, powerfully convincing and economical.

Conclusion

One may embrace the "theory" of evolution, considering himself to be intelligent, a person who has broken with the archaic beliefs of the past. Doing so, such an individual is guided by mere philosophical conjecture, NOT by scientific evidence. Scientific facts are able to be demonstrated. Evolution is not able to be demonstrated. (If there remains any doubt, have you ever wondered why there are not "beings" (part-animal, part-human) who are yet evolving?)

The Bible yields the accurate, believable, factual account of man's existence. While the Bible is not specifically a scientific book, it contains scientific facts. It should be amazing to all scientists that NOT once has the Bible been shown to contain an unscientific fact or statement.

May we resolve to accept God's Word about all matters. May we teach our children, preparing them for the ungodly world and its ungodly ideas. May we prepare ourselves (and each one within our influence) to challenge and defeat the threat of evolution!

Chapter 17

The Threat Of Divorce In Our Lives

Fred House

Fred has been faithfully preaching the gospel for 40 years • He has worked with congregations in Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi • He is the author of **“Why I Left The Baptist Church”** • Presently he is working with the Second Street Church in Belmont, MS (as an evangelist and elder • Joy and Fred currently live in Fulton, Mississippi • They have 3 children and 5 grandchildren.



May I express my sincere appreciation to the Elders of the great East Hill congregation and their ministers, Paul Sain and Brandon Britton. The lectureship has been a tower of truth as proclaimed by those who have spoken on subjects to strengthen all who have assembled to hear God’s Word preached, and many others who have received the book with the printed matters found therein, and have been strengthened by the material. The kindness shown by the leadership, as well as the preachers and the entire congregation at East Hill is one noted throughout the land. Thank you brethren.

Perhaps there is no subject about which there has been more confusion, misunderstanding, and heartaches than the matter now under consideration.

This subject affects society to its very core. It has been a matter of countless discussions from one end of the country or brotherhood to the other. Debates both public and written on marriage, divorce and remarriage have come forth, and shows the divided attention among far too many. It continues to incite many discussions, simply because it remains to be relevant to every generation. This subject is a thing in which each particular aspect invokes a wide range of emotions. We more times than one see the marriage ceremonies characterized by moments of great happiness. Then we will find those who are involved in divorce proceedings filled with uncertainty, despondency, and even hatred. Why are we finding ourselves in such a wide range of unscriptural practices in both marriage, divorce and remarriage? I believe it is safe to say that it is because we (the church) have not been furnishing proper or adequate instructions relating to this matter we are now considering. Rather than the Word of God being, and continues to be the unmistakable authority, more than a few have turned to their own personal feelings, traditions, or some uncaring social worker who knows little to nothing, and even cares less about the Scriptures.

It is always helpful when noting such matters, and placing them before others to define the terms under consideration. Marriage is defined as:

The state of being married; a legal contract, entered into by a man and a woman, to live together as husband and wife.

A wedding: used to denote the ceremony; used literally of joining man and woman in marriage; figuratively used to describe the relation between Christ and His bride (the church) and that they are one.

Our attention is now directed to the Word of God.

But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery (Matt. 5:32).

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).

(10) And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: ... (36) But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.... (38-39) So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord (1 Cor 7:10,36,38-39).

Then looking at the word divorce, from the verb form it means "to let loose from," "to go free," "to put

away." The noun form is "a defection," "a writing of a bill of divorcement."

Noting the fact that our society has practically dismissed God's commandments on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, we find that the cost of such neglect of Divine authority has been and is now devastating mentally, economically, physically, and most importantly, spiritually! We have only to note the statistics relating to the damage, and find it most shocking. A few years back (1994) 2,362,000 couples married, and 1,191,000 found themselves in divorce court, and another home destroyed. It is estimated that over 60% of the couples living together are not married, all of which points to the very liberal view that has developed concerning marriage and divorce. Further checking will find that the divorce rate has quadrupled from 4.3 million in 1970 to 18.3 million in 1990. It goes without saying – something is very bad wrong! With a little more viewing one will find that the marriage rate has fallen nearly 30% since 1970, while the divorce rate has increased to 40%. Tell me that is not sad. Consequently, our society is functionally hampered by masses of people with marital and emotional distress; while looking for answers in every place except where they should be looking: The Word of God! It still reads today that we can "know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Some Thoughts Of Men In The Bible Which God Never Approved

It is certainly true and very obvious that the

practices and customs regarding marriage had a beginning; however, those customs have evolved in various ways with the various cultures which have developed through the centuries. Without doubt and noted clearing in Scriptures, is the fact that marriage had its beginning and approval by God Almighty (Gen. 2). Nevertheless, we find that almost from the very beginning man's thoughts concerning the matter of marriage have taken a sharp turn from God's original pattern. Remember, "See saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee" (Heb. 8:5). We have only to observe some of the evidence regarding man's thoughts regarding the matter of marriage. One of the first things is the matter of polygamy. This was introduced by man, not by the Lord God. We run into one of the descendants of Cain, Lamech, who may have been the one who introduced the practice of more than one wife (Gen. 4:17-19). In fact several among the patriarchs, judges, and kings had more than one wife. There was Abraham with Sarah and Hagar, Sarah's handmaid (Gen. 16). There was Gideon, one of God's judges, who had 70 sons by "many wives" (Judg. 8:30). Elkanah, Samuel's father, had two wives named Hannah and Peninnah (1 Sam. 1:3). How could we ever forget the wise man Solomon who had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:1-3). O the trouble we face by following our own ways or thoughts. We find that God tolerated the practice of polygamy, but He never sanctioned its practice. "From the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). We are warned that "the times of this ignorance

God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). Under the commandments of Christ, such practices as polygamy or polyandry (a woman having more than one husband) is strictly condemned.

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. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (1 Cor. 7:2-5).

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 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. 5:22-23).

One of the primary traditions of the forefathers of Biblical times involved the betrothal of a man and woman. Many marriages would be arranged by the parents, but not all parties would be consenting.

And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again (Gen 24:8).

However, while some involved a clear romantic interest, not all marriages consisted of a partner which reciprocated the same interest. An example may be that of Jacob and Leah as noted in Genesis 29. It is of interest to note that to the Jews, the betrothal was considered as much or even more important than the wedding itself (Deut. 22:23-24; Matt. 1:19). Under Jewish custom, the engagement was so binding, that if the marriage should for some reason not take place because one of the parties wished to breach the engagement, then the other party could not marry another until there was a writing of divorcement given. To note some of the human thoughts today and how they put aside the Scriptures for their authority. There is what is known as the "common law" marriage which has been accepted in certain areas of our own country. This is simply a continuous cohabitation without the benefit of a legal contract or ceremony.

The Teachings Of Some Concerning Marriage And Remarriage Today

One of the most prevalent errors of our day regarding this subject has been advocated by more than just one or two. One of the positions taken is taking passages like Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 and labeling them as "covenant" text, and will apply only to the Christian. This, consequently, will argue that the non-Christian is not subject to the teachings of Jesus on marriage in these mentioned passages, and therefore not binding to them concerning divorce and/or remarriage. This brings the argument to the point

of an erroneous view or interpretation of Paul's inspired instructions to the Corinthians as noted in 1 Corinthians 7:10-15. The erroneous view advocates that this text in 1 Corinthians is to be divided into two parts. The first part is said to be in verses 10-11, where Paul, it is declared, is speaking to the Christians who are married to Christians. Then the second part is that of verses 12-15, where it is argued that Paul legislated for mixed marriages and revealed the divorce law that aliens are under. The view would then be that 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 is referring to what the Lord was teaching in Matthew 19:9, and since the Lord did not speak about mixed marriages (believer to non-believer), they must continue in the marriage relation, unless the believer wished to divorce; in which case even the believer is supposedly free of the marriage bond, and would be free to remarry. It seems that as days go by that the different views taken by human thought, not God's way, mounts higher and higher. One, they declare who finds himself or herself in an unscriptural marriage, can remain in that unscriptural situation if only they will submit to baptism. The response to such an erroneous view has been taken up one by one by faithful brethren across the brotherhood and have shown the error of such doctrine. Nevertheless, there is the beauty of marriage when entered into by God's standard.

Final And Complete Authority

I believe there must be a full recognized authority and its importance in all things, including marriage,

divorce. and remarriage. The authority of God and His inspired Word is everywhere noted therein.

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).

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12).

Therefore, by giving serious study concerning the authority to be noted on this subject we have now before us, the Scriptures which must be viewed by noting: (1) the authority of the Scriptures; (2) the clarity of the Scriptures; (3) the necessity of the Scriptures; and (4) the sufficiency of the Scriptures. We conclude that the authority of Scriptures means that all the words in the Bible are God's Words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any of the words of His commandments is to disbelieve or disobey God Himself.

Since the words of the Bible are God's Words, and since God cannot lie or speak falsely; it is correct to conclude that there is no untruthfulness or any form of error in any part of the Words of Scriptures. We are told that God "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). It is also stated that it is "impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). We are now able to see that God does not lie, and not only that, but it is impossible for Him to do so. We find this truth affirmed several places in the Bible.

The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times (Psm. 12:6).

The psalmist speaks of the undiluted purity of God's Words—there is no imperfection in them.

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Prov. 30:5-6).

For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven (Psm. 119:89).

Jesus arrived on earth and established the same truth.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Matt. 24:35).

God's Word is placed in sharp contrast to that of man's word.

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? (Num. 23:19).

All these verses affirm explicitly what God hath spoken about the requirements on the subject of marriage and divorce. If we take the Word of God for our final authority, then we have no other authority to which we may go for instructions. The sadness of such is to notice how many lay aside His law to elevate their own personal ways, as we have already noted. We have a strong warning when we think our way is as good as God's.

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain (Psm. 127:1).

God's Design For Marriage

Having given our attention to the authority by which all things of life are regulated – The Scriptures, we note that God said that “*marriage is honorable*” (Heb. 13:4). Now we place before us the advice the apostle Paul writes in the book of Colossians.

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 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. 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. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged (Col. 3:12-21).

God has now laid out the directions for a Christian

home or marriage. May we give attention first to the phrase, "*Put on therefore.*" If marriage is to be as God has ordered, then the garments of godliness are to be in place. These matters are described as compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and over all the silken sash of love! The God approved marriage surely could have no better attire than these thus mentioned.

Secondly, we are told that the marriage must be "*forbearing one another.*" Forbearing is a wonderful virtue, rarely appreciated and slowly possessed. It has reference to our treatment of those from whom we have a right to expect something, but in whom we have been disappointed. By forbearing, each shows that he or she knows how to surrender at times and for good purposes even his or her rights. Forbearing is a greater virtue, it is viewed by many, than forgiveness. I am inclined to agree. Surely we have learned that we are to forgive when one repents; we will be called upon to forbear whether there is repentance or not, so passing over the infirmities of the other.

Our text of Colossians 3 continues to lay for us the sure foundation of a Godly, Scriptural marriage or home. "*Forgiving each other.*" To forgive is to "forthgive, to send out clean from you...To dismiss from mind and heart." Revenge is mean and little; forgiveness is Divine. To win a fight with sword and gun is not necessarily great, but to subdue your enemy after God's way, using the weapon of forgiveness, is the greatest of victories. Forgiveness is a distinctively Christian virtue. No doubt a Roman soldier would

consider himself happy who, on his deathbed could say, in reviewing his past life, that no other person had done more good to his friends than he, or done more mischief to his foes. I fear a great deal that is taken for forgiveness is just a passing over of offenses without true, meaningful, and Scriptural forgiveness. Is it a matter of fact that there is no removal of the anger and spiteful feeling that is harbored in the heart still? Where is the home or marriage as God would have it today when we see five out of every ten marriages end in divorce? Bitterness is dwelling there, and that marriage will soon be on the rocks unless a major change comes within.

This next point I wish to apply to the home. *"Teaching and admonishing one another."* I would hate to think of a home without the ability, the happiness, the delight of songs within. It carries into the home the expressions of sweetness, and helpful to the souls of that marriage. Such will help set the mood of that household, and is purely the Christian spirit to exercise this outlet of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. With such an atmosphere, it makes everyone there feel alive. Surely it will give encouragement and enhance their journey to heaven! Within the happiness of that home one does not feel that he or she must sing as some star before the public, and must use the greatest of skills and precision, with the exact time or with pleasing rhythm; but that the graces of the heart, and all its affections that remind of God is brought out. Then singing becomes a welcome part of the home, and heaven comes closer! The history of hymns and of victories they have won over the hearts of men

would make up a library filled with volumes. There are chords of music whose mystic tenderness defies all explanation. Many of our dearest memories are apt to cluster around some song. It is said that when President Garfield lay dying, he was permitted one day, feeling a little better, to sit at the window. His wife was in the next room. She began softly and plainatively to sing the old hymn, "*Guide me, O thou great Jehovah.*" As the words floated into his room, the sick President turned and said: "Quick! Open the door a little!" After listening a few moments, he exclaimed, as the tears coursed down his cheeks: "Glorious, isn't it?" We thank God for the wonderful and right institution of marriage. God has declared that marriage is for the purpose of promoting happiness for mankind. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. The godly marriage is not a relationship whereby the two partners stand with their backs to each other, each using marriage only for his or her own selfish purposes. Neither is marriage to be pictured by two persons facing each other so that they worship each other. Rather, marriage is better noted as two people standing side by side facing toward heaven with resolve to help one another to be happy in this life, and helping each other walk closer to God. Therefore, every home should be established on the foundation of God's truth—the Bible! The home is the starting place for happiness and spiritual growth and spiritual strength. Not only does the establishment of a successful home accomplish the will of God, but it also serves man's best interest. The apostle Peter stated:

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

Our attention is drawn to the definition of marriage, noting both the civil and God's definition. First, the civil definition:

Marriage is an agreement by which a man and a woman consent to live together as husband and wife for the purpose of establishing a home, mutually accepting the responsibilities which the relationship involves, and properly expecting all the rights and privileges incident thereto. Marriage is a contract, civil, spiritual, and moral, establishing a permanent union between a man and a woman, involving mutual responsibilities that cannot be terminated at the will of one or both.

Secondly, and most important, is that of God's definition of marriage.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:24).

It must be pointed out that one of the characteristics of a God ordered home is spiritual unity! Marriage is more a union of souls than of bodies. A study of some years past revealing the relationship between religion and marital success shows that the divorce rate is four times higher in non-religious homes than in homes

where considerable emphasis is placed on religion. The study further showed that children who came from homes with a devoutly religious background had a much more favorable chance for success in their own marriages. The divorce rate is also noticeably higher than normal for couples who are of differing religious beliefs. Marriage is a complete fusion of the hopes, possessions, and cares of both husband and wife. One of the parties of the marriage contract is not at liberty to pack-up at the slightest provocation and "go home to mother." It must be remembered that the marriage vow demands faithfulness in adversity as well as in prosperity. It should not be entered into with any other idea except that it is life together to the end of the journey, or unto death do us part! It is my strong belief that the God ordered home determines the character of any civilization, the power of any nation, and the salvation or damnation of mankind. Now our attention is directed to a dirty part of marriage – DIVORCE.

Divorce And Remarriage

In the book of Galatians we see how the church ran into a problem with false teachers of their day, and of which it is stated of teachers of error that they had "*bewitched*" and "*troubled*" the congregation. We continue to run into the same today. Therefore, it is now necessary to look at the "covenant passage" though held by some as it will relate to the divorce and remarriage issue.

There are those who have taught and are still teaching that Matthew 19:9 is not a passage that has universal application, rather that it is restricted only

to people who are in Christ, or only the people who have obeyed the Gospel plan of salvation and now members of the Lord's church. To give attention to this error, we will notice their efforts to uphold their view that Matthew 19:9 does not apply to the non-Christian. It is claimed by them that the law or commandments of Christ does not extend to the non-Christian. However, they will say that part of the law of Christ most certainly does extend to the non-Christian. Just part of His law. But, they also teach that the law of Christ on marriage really does extend to the non-Christian. However, they say, God will not hold violators responsible. Some claim that what Paul writes to the church at Corinth and noted in 1 Corinthians 7:10-13 corresponds with Matthew 19:9 and does not apply to those outside of Christ. We are quick to say, however, the Bible teaches that the law of Christ does extend to the people who are not Christians. In fact, all people everywhere are subject to the Divine law of Christ. If that is not the case then there would be no command for nor need of repentance. No person under any condition and in any nation can become a child of God, according to the Bible, unless that person repents. The command to repent means that there is sin to be repented of, and that is a transgression of God's law.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4).

Therefore, we conclude that it is not the case that in 1 Corinthians 7:10-13 Paul is teaching that Matthew

19:9 does not apply to the non-Christian. According to the teachings of some of these, they will contend that the “*guilty party*” of Matthew 19:9 can remarry. They have at times used the “*handcuff*” argument. The argument is as follows: If two people are handcuffed together, that it would be impossible for the handcuffs to be released from one without the other being free from them as well. Therefore, their claim is that if one person of the marriage is released from the marriage bond, so is the other. Let it be pointed out, however, that in the marriage bond there are three handcuffed together! The husband is handcuffed to God. That is to say, he is cuffed or bound to the law of God. The results of such would mean, he is also handcuffed to his mate or his wife. Meaning, the three, man, woman, and God are handcuffed together. Friends, the law given by God Almighty on marriage is to be obeyed by all people. Therefore, all people are amenable to His law on this subject.

When the wife is guilty of unfaithfulness (fornication) the husband then has the right given by the Lord God to put away or divorce his wife, and as the result of this action, takes the handcuffs off by which he was bound to the wife, and is done so by God’s law. However, it must be remembered, the husband now removed from the handcuffs binding him to the wife, is still bound to (handcuffed) to the law of God! The law of God will now allow the husband, who is the innocent party, to enter into another marriage union. However, the law of God does not allow the guilty party to put away his wife and to form another marriage union. Why? Because, she

is the guilty party and is still handcuffed or bound to the law of God, but not to the husband of whom she was once bound and sinned against.

Matthew 19:9 makes it very clear that there is a guilty party. It is also made very clear from Matthew 19:9 that the guilty person (one who has been divorced because of fornication) has no Scriptural right to form another marriage union. The Lord had it put in His Divine law that the person who has married a put away or divorced person keeps on committing adultery. If the guilty party can form another marriage union, then this passage and all other passages of God's Word means nothing at all. Does the word "except" in Matthew 19:9 mean anything? If so, what? If it does not mean "if and only if" what does it mean? In fact, the Lord Himself states that it is a truth that only the person who has a Biblical right to divorce his or her mate and to marry another is the one whose mate is guilty of the sin of fornication. Nevertheless, there are those who trouble congregations across the land by stating that it is not the case that the only person who has a right, that is to say, with God's approval, to divorce his or her mate and to remarry is the person whose mate has been guilty of fornication, for they declare, that the guilty person also has God's approval to remarry. That friends, is a perverted gospel! It is still the Lord who is declaring that the truth of the matter is that the person who marries a person who has been put away because of fornication is guilty of adultery, and keeps on committing adultery (Matt. 19:9).

The person who has put away his or her mate

because of fornication has a right to remarry. There is a question that must be raised. What about a widow and her desire to marry again? First, we must understand that she is bound by Divine law to her husband so long as her husband is alive, and there is no need to put him away. However, she is free from her husband upon his death. Then she is at liberty to marry again, and to whom she will, but only to the one who is eligible for marriage. She has that freedom so long as she marries in harmony with the Lord's will. She is not under commandment of Divine law to form another marriage if she chooses to remain unmarried.

Conclusion

Home, what a word of honor, beauty, peace, and happiness. I am now home in this body, but I am promised an eternal home upon that great and promised day when this earth is no more. Paul said,

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. 5:1).

Surely a piece of heaven here on earth must be the home as God would have it. However, this will be the case when the mates are chosen because of their love for each other. When that is the case and remains the case, it will answer the question of "How shall we live?" With that type of love established, there will be little to no trouble of "*leaving father and mother, and cleaving unto each other.*" There also must be the

consideration of children coming to that home. It is one of the purposes for marriage. God said, "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Thus, sex that is to be enjoyed is to be in marriage only, and is holy and sacred, and not something to be laughed at, sneered at, or whispered about in some dark corner. We have a need to be taught about it as God has revealed in His Word. Therefore, in thinking about marriage, we need to understand, and be impressed with the truth that the one I marry will be the mother or father of our children. A failure to give serious thought to this will fail our God given responsibility, not only as Christians, but as adults.

Friends, as children of God, we need to ask each day if we are meeting these responsibilities God places upon all members of the home. In view of the deplorable condition of the homes found in America, where we hear too often "I love you no more, and I want out," and in the hope that we may be awakened from our sleep of indifference, and show appreciation for the instructions found in the law of Christ, and the opportunities that are on-going that He forever gives, we must cry aloud out of humility and deep concern the message of Christ on this and all other subjects. We know well the warning of God:

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God (Psm. 9:17).

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Chapter 18

The Threat Of Homosexuality

Dave Miller



A native of Arizona, Dave is the Chairman of the Department of New Testament Studies at Apologetics Press • His formal education includes 3 masters degrees and a Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University. His book, *Piloting the Strait*, deals with the changes affecting churches of Christ. His seminars on **Islam** and **The Silencing Of God** are superb. Deborah and Dave have 4 grown children, 3 grandchildren and reside in Montgomery, Alabama.

The “gay rights” movement in America has been steadily working since the 1960s to gain social and legal sanction. I am so very deeply saddened to report to you that they have achieved their objective. As early as 1973, they succeeded in convincing the foremost mental health organization in the world, the American Psychiatric Association, to remove homosexuality from their *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM)—the Bible of the psychiatric profession—a behavior that had always been listed as abnormal.¹ Every major mental health organization in the country quickly conformed to the party line, beginning with the American Psychological Association in 1975.² Same sex relations have been illegal, and considered to be morally and spiritually

deplorable, from the very beginning of our national existence, with sodomy laws in place in every single state. Yet, two years ago the current sitting United States Supreme Court handed down their historically and constitutionally unprecedented decision in the case *Lawrence v. Texas* striking down sodomy laws for all of the fifty States. This unbelievable decision was a reversal of the court's own 1986 decision that upheld State sodomy laws and reinforced the historic stance that homosexuality is not a constitutional right.

You and I live in such a radically different moral environment than the one that characterized our country for the first 180 years that you probably will be shocked by what I am about to tell you. Not only has homosexuality been treated as a criminal offense in all of the original thirteen colonies, and eventually in every one of the fifty States,³ several of the states **actually had the death penalty for homosexuality!** These included New York, Vermont, Connecticut, and South Carolina.⁴ In fact, you also may not believe me when I tell you that Thomas Jefferson actually advocated dismemberment as the penalty for homosexuality in his home state of Virginia, and even authored a bill to that effect.⁵

Those of you who are old enough to remember are aware of the fact that in the 1950s and 1960s, Christians argued against illicit divorce and remarriage by comparing it to the sin of homosexuality, making the point that to accept relaxed standards for divorce is logically equivalent to accepting same-sex marriage. We never really seriously entertained the thought that same-sex relations would become acceptable to our

nation. But for all practical purposes, **we are there!** Please listen carefully: if same-sex relations are to be accepted into our society as legally, morally, and socially appropriate, it follows that sex with animals ought to be legalized as well. My friends, mark it down, it too is just around the corner for our society. The insane devotion that so many people give to their pets (look at the mega superstores devoted to pets) is another sign of the cockeyed, misplaced values and the displacement of God's perspective in daily life. Do you realize that in the greater scheme of human history, as nations commence their downward spiral into the quagmire of moral and spiritual degradation, homosexuality and bestiality are among the final indicators of imminent collapse?

Did you ever even conceive of the day when within churches of Christ men and women would arise who would take issue with the Bible stance on homosexuality? Would you have ever imagined that New Testament Christians would allow their thinking to be so infected with political correctness, and so thoroughly given over to the "grip of grace" misconception, that they would become upset with anyone who would speak out and defend God's view of homosexuality? Believe it or not, five years ago, in November of 2000, ACU history professor Arlie Hoover wrote an article for the *Abilene Reporter-News* stating the biblical position on same sex relations. The article was forthright about the matter, but hardly harsh or unnecessarily offensive. Yet, within days of that article, another article appeared in the same newspaper in the "Letters to the Editor" section,

reprimanding Hoover for his alleged “intemperate remarks” that the critic deemed may possibly insult, demean, or injure those “struggling with same-sex attraction.” This opposing article was penned by Darryl Tippens, who claimed to be joined in his sentiments by three additional individuals, all four of whom are Abilene Christian University professors!⁶⁶ Yes, beloved brethren, it is later than we thought.

The Bible teaches that we are to hate and abhor sin, but love the sinner. Christians ought to treat every other human being with kindness and respect, possessing a genuine love deep in our souls for those who choose to disobey God. However, we must step forward in these perilous times and vigorously defend God’s Word (Rom. 1:24-31; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10) regarding critical cultural issues that will eventually destroy our nation. Homosexuality is one of those issues.

Endnotes

1 “Gay and Lesbian Issues,” (2002), **American Psychiatric Association Public Information**, [On-line], URL: http://www.psych.org/public_infor/homose-1.cfm

2 Gregory Herek (2002), “Facts About Homosexuality and Mental Health,” [On-line], URL: http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_mental_health.html

3 “Sodomy Laws in the United States” (2003), [On-line], URL: <http://www.sodomylaws.org/usa.htm>

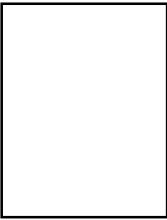
4 David Barton (2000), **Original Intent** (Aledo, TX: Wallbuilder Press), third edition, pp. 306, 482.

5 Thomas Jefferson (1903), **Writings of Thomas Jefferson**, ed. Albert Bergh (Washington, DC: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association).

Chapter 19

The Threat Of Abortion And Euthanasia

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.



Keith A

“On January 22, 1973, the United States Supreme Court issued a ruling that made the right to life no longer ‘unalienable’ for all.”¹ Thomas Jefferson’s statement in the **Declaration of Independence** that “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” had been abrogated for every unborn human and perhaps for some already born who were a nuisance to society such as the infirm and the mentally challenged.² Sound incredible? Well, what did the 1973 Supreme Court **really** say about abortion? Note the following from a Tennessee Volunteers for Life pamphlet³ stating that the Court ruled that:

...human offspring are not persons "in the whole sense" at anytime before birth....that during the first three months of pregnancy, a state may make no laws regulating abortion except that a state may provide laws that abortions must be done by licensed physicians....that after three months and until "viability" (not precisely defined, K.M.) states could make only abortion laws aimed at safeguarding the health of the mothers....that from viability until the end of pregnancy, states cannot prevent an abortion if it is performed "to preserve the life or health of the mother." (Which statement has been interpreted to mean, "If she does not want it," K.M.). The Court defined "health" to include "all factors, physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age relevant to the well-being of the patient."

On July 1, 1976, the Supreme Court extended its original decision and ruled that "abortions may be performed on minor daughters without the consent of their parents" and that "women (whether married or unmarried) may obtain abortions without the knowledge or consent of the baby's father."⁴

Is that in the mother's womb her property or is it **another** human? What does God say about the unborn? What needs to be done about such a law and is abortion murder? And, if a state is willing to authorize the killing of the **unwanted** unborn, what about the unwanted aged and infirm who are not "viable" in their environment. What about **abortion** and **euthanasia** and the Christian response?

The Supreme Court Was Wrong

Abortion is **not** just a private matter for the mother. Abortion directly destroys another human life and disrupts basic human relationships. Furthermore, a law based on the concept of personal privacy that is nearly absolute encourages irresponsibility for society and for individuals. No one need pay any particular attention to the problems of a pregnant woman and her unborn child, for if the child is a problem—kill it.

A renowned research professor of fetal (the unborn) physiology has written:

...Biologically, at no stage can we subscribe to the view that the fetus is a mere appendage of the mother. Genetically, mother and baby are separate individuals from conception.... On reaching the uterus, this young individual implants in the spongy lining and with a display of physiological power, suppresses his mother's menstrual period. This is his home for the next 270 days and to make it hospitable the embryo develops a placenta and a protective capsule of fluid for himself.... By 25 days the developing heart starts beating, the first strokes of a pump that will beat 3,000 million beats in a lifetime. By 30 days and just two weeks past mother's first missed period, the baby, a quarter inch long, has a brain of unmistakable human proportions, eyes, ears, mouth, kidneys, liver, an umbilical cord and a heart pumping blood he has made himself.... By 45 days, when brain waves can be measured on an EEG, the baby's skeleton is complete, in cartilage not bone, the buds of the milk teeth appear and he makes the first movements of his body and new grown limbs,

although it will be another 12 weeks before mother notices movements. By 63 days he will grasp an object placed in his palm and can make a fist.... This is the fetus whose existence and identity must be so callously ignored or energetically denied by advocates of abortion.⁵

From the above (and all other **scientific** information) one can easily understand that there is **no** essential difference between the fertilized ovum all humans once were, the embryo, fetus, infant, adolescent, and adult. All are just stages in the development of the **same** person. The fetus is **not a potential** human, it **is** that human before and after birth. In the context of **human** rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America it appears irrational that the human fetus, the most helpless of all persons, is denied the one freedom vital to his survival—the right to life!

What Is The Data Now On Abortion?

An agency of the federal government, the Division of Reproductive Health of the National Center for Chronic Disease and Health Promotions has collected legal abortion data since **1969**, four years prior to Roe versus Wade in 1973 (the Supreme Court case concerning abortion). The report from 52 areas (50 states, Washington D.C. and New York City) is known as the **Abortion Surveillance** report.⁶ This **CDC** agency defines abortion as “a procedure, performed by a licensed physician or someone acting under the supervision of a licensed physician, that was intended to terminate a suspected or known intrauterine pregnancy and to produce a nonviable

fetus at any gestational age.”⁷ (In other words kill it up to the moment all but a portion of the baby is out of the womb, K.M.)

The highest abortion rate, per the CDC is in California where 39 are performed every year for every 1000 women ages 15 to 44. New York’s rate is 37 per 1000 population followed by Florida (27), Delaware (26) and Rhode Island (24). (The lowest was Wyoming with 2.)⁸ Ninety-two percent of abortions (up to 2001) have been performed in the woman’s state of residence although some women travel because of the toughness of their state laws (e.g. Wyoming).⁹ Worldwide, about 46 million women have abortions each year which number represents 22 percent of the 210 million pregnancies that occur yearly.¹⁰

It is of some interest to note that those who advocate abortion speak of being “pro-choice” and that those who oppose abortion are said to be “pro-life.” A better description of the abortion promoter would be “pro-death” or perhaps, “pro-murder” since abortion is anti-life and anti-God.

God Has Spoken On The Baby In The Womb

The record of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:
When as his mother Mary was espoused to
Joseph, before they came together, she was
found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph
her husband, being a just man, and not willing
to make her a publick example, was minded to

put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS (Matt. 1:18-25).

Note especially verse eighteen from the above passage: "When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found **with child of the Holy Ghost**" (emphasis added, K.M.).¹¹ Was the **child**, conceived miraculously in Mary's womb just "tissue" or a "bit of protoplasm?" What if Mary, at the insistence of Joseph had obtained an abortion? After all, that family's "well-being" in society was at stake. Would an abortion of the child in Mary's womb be merely the termination of a fetus? Or, would the Savior have been murdered?

Later during Mary's pregnancy she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth:

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; And entered into the house of Zacharias, and

saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb. And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy (Luke 1:39-44).

Elizabeth was already six months pregnant and note from verse 41 above that when Mary approached Elizabeth that the **BABE** “leaped in her womb.” God said a **baby** leaped and Elizabeth acknowledged that the **BABE** “leaped in my womb for joy” (Luke 1:44). Just exactly what leaped—a piece of meat, the “product of pregnancy,” a non-viable nothing that God said felt great joy? God said that a baby, a developing human inhabited Elizabeth’s womb.

By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke used the term **brephos** in the Luke 1:39-44 passage and then used the **same** word, **brephos** in the following: “and they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the BABE lying in the manger” (Luke 2:16). The life in the womb **and** in the manger, according to God, is a **brephos**—a baby. (The term, **brephos**, is translated **babe** also in Luke 2:12 and in 1 Peter 2:2). In the latter passage it is an analogy for the desire to enjoy the spiritual way “new born **babes**” desire milk. In 2 Timothy 3:15 **brephos** is translated **child**; at Luke 18:15 it is **infant**; and in Acts 7:19 the English text as **young child**. The biblical language shows **no** distinction

between a child in the womb and one out of the womb.

Note what David said about **his** life in the womb:

For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them (Psm. 139:13-16).

David insisted that God knew **him** in the womb. Was David merely a growth on the wall of his mother's womb or a living soul? Was David **alive** in the womb? If so, he was a living soul. "For ... the body without the spirit is dead" (James 2:26a). David was **alive** in the womb, therefore his soul was in the fetus. And, if that fetus is **not** alive, why do they have to kill it to abort it? Every part of David's "unformed substance" was written in God's book **before** David was born!

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet of Judah, insisted that God knew him **before** he was formed in the womb. "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). God did **not** view Jeremiah as just a part of his mother before conception and birth but as a separate, living soul. (Isaiah would use the reality of human life in the womb as a figure for the

“birth of Israel” [Isa. 44:2]. Bible students know that for there to be a figure there must be a reality.)

Note very carefully that there are great consequences for society when life at any stage is not held to be sacred. Many, in fact, see parallels between the 46 million annual murders of life in the womb and the “holocaust” that was perpetrated by Nazi Germany during World War II.¹² For example, the Nazi penal code stated that a pregnancy could be terminated when “an unborn child is likely to present hereditary and transmissible defects” (Hamburg Eugenics Court, 1933). The American Supreme Court ruled that: “a pregnancy may be terminated if—the mental health or social well-being of the mother is impaired.” The Reich Citizenship Law of 1933 stated that only persons of “German blood can be citizens excluding Jews.” The decision of *Roe versus Wade*, U.S. Supreme Court, 1973 was: “the word, person, does not include the unborn.” In September 1939, Adolph Hitler issued a euthanasia order that stated: “The authority of physicians is enlarged to include the responsibility for according a mercy death to incurables.” The U. S. Supreme Court (*Roe versus Wade*, 1973) ordered that “the abortion decision in all its aspects is inherently and primarily a medical decision and basic responsibility for it must rest with the physician.” Doctors in Germany who were tried for “war crimes” argued: “The accused did not act wrongly because they were covered by law and were carrying out the laws of the land” (*Hadamar Euthanasia Hospital Trial*, 1945). Several U. S. Physicians have stated something similar. One, Doctor

Bernard N. Nathanson, wrote in 1974 that "the physician is only the instrument of **her** (the mother's, K.M.) decision."

Were the Nazi crimes against **all** humanity and against God? The Nazis said that all communists were "subhuman, and repulsive" (Doctor August Hirt, 1942). An American Ph.D., Amitai Etzioni, wrote in 1976 that "For the first four and one-half months the fetus is subhuman and relatively close to a piece of tissue." And, in 1895, an anti-Semitic speech was made in the Reichstag where a German politician noted that "If it is now pointed out that the Jew is human, I reject that totally." Dr. Michael Tooley wrote in America in 1972, "It is a wild contention that newborn babies are persons."

God created life (Gen. 1:26-27).¹³ Are not abortionists, by definition, against God and **all** humanity? The blood of a fetus is his **own**, not the mother's and the "life is in the blood" (Gen. 9:4); God has said that He **hates** the shedding of innocent blood. For example: "The innocent and righteous slay thou not" (Exod. 23:7). Moses further instructed Israel not to shed innocent blood in its land (Deut. 19:10; c.f. Deut. 27:24 and 1 Sam. 19:4). The Israelite king, Manasseh, sinned because he "shed innocent blood very much" (2 Kings 21:16) and the psalmist rebuked those who "condemn the innocent blood" (Psm. 94:21). God despises "hands that shed innocent blood" (Prov. 6:17; cf. Isa. 59:7; Jer. 7:6; 22:3 and Prov. 1:11,16).

Sometimes the question is asked, "should a woman who is pregnant and then contracts some disease such as German measles thus endangering the

baby who may be deformed, get an abortion?" The answer is that the Bible does not change just because a child may be born with a handicap and, why not just wait until the child is born and, if defective, kill it then? What is the difference since abortionists argue that newborns aren't really persons even yet? If society decides to eliminate the unperfect, two questions arise: (1) Just **how** perfect does one need to be before he is allowed to live? (2) Who has the authority to judge such perfection? Should anyone "play God?"

A second question intended to circumvent God's Word about slaying the innocent concerns rape and its consequences. First of all, rape practically never results in pregnancy, but if a baby is conceived, murdering the baby does not absolve the horrible criminal act of the father. The mother needs loving support. What if you, dear reader, were to find out you were the result of a rape. Would you desire that your mother had aborted you? It is amazing that those who are pro-abortion **are already born!**

Others who opt for abortion often argue that unwanted children end up being battered and abused later in life so it would be "better" to kill them in the womb. This idea about such children ending up abused is a totally false notion. Doctor Edward Lenoski, professor of pediatrics at the University of Southern California reported in a recent study of 674 battered children that 91% had been **planned** pregnancies and 90% were born legitimately.¹⁴

A scripturally engendered question concerns birth-control. Some forms of birth control are abortions where the device or medicine kills the already

fertilized ovum. The inter-uterine (IUD) device; the morning after pill, and the mini-pill types of birth control abort the fetus.

One patent lie, perpetrated by the pro-abortionist is that prior to Roe versus Wade (1973) five to ten thousand women died every year getting illegal abortions. Green says:

Dr. Bernard Nathanson said that this figure is totally false, and he should know since he was one of the several pro-abortionists who circulated this figure before the 1973 Supreme Court hearings. He now says the figure was closer to 500, and in 1972 (the year before abortion was made legal) only 39 such deaths were recorded. However, after presiding over 75,000 deaths (of babies, K.M.) as the head of the world's largest abortion clinic, Dr. Nathanson came to believe that such infants were little people and that he was murdering them. He has written the best seller, **Aborting America**, and although he remains an atheist, he says that even while involved in abortions, he could not understand how Christian clergyman could allow abortions when Christianity insists on protection for the weak.¹⁵

Another statement often made by pro-abortionists is that if abortion is made illegal they will still occur and is it not better that they are legal so that everyone gets good, clean medical care. Well, illegal abortions occur, and rape also "goes on;" shall society, make rape legal and provide clean motel rooms for the rapist to commit his crime? Perhaps all pro-abortions should be made to see what a Florida nurse reported:

I'm a housewife and a registered nurse from Jacksonville. I worked the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift, and when we weren't busy, I'd go out to help with the newborns. One night I saw a bassinet outside the nursery. There was a baby in this bassinet - a crying, perfectly formed baby - but there was a difference in this child. She had been scalded. She was the child of a saline abortion.

This little girl looked as if she had been put in a pot of boiling water. No doctor, no nurse, no parent, to comfort this hurt, burned child. She was left alone to die in pain. They wouldn't let her in the nursery—they didn't even bother to cover her.

I was ashamed of my profession that night! It's hard to believe this can happen in our modern hospitals, but it does. It happens all the time. I thought a hospital was a place to heal the sick—not a place to kill.

I asked a nurse at another hospital what they do with their babies that are aborted by saline. Unlike my hospital, where the baby was left alone struggling for breath, their hospital puts the infant in a bucket and puts the lid on. Suffocation! Death by suffocation!

Another nurse said she had to stop helping with abortions. The little severed arms and legs from suction abortions were just too much for her to look at.

Aren't you happy our moms weren't born in this generation? It could have been one of us in that lonely bassinet—or that ugly bucket.¹⁶

Abortion Techniques¹⁷

Some babies are aborted by Cesarean Section (Hysterectomy) which method is a "C- section" until after the umbilical cord is cut. In a C-section, the baby's

phlegm is sucked out, and he or she is taken to the post-natal intensive care. A baby to be aborted is cut free from the cord and dropped in a bucket to die. A 24-week baby will move, breath, and some even cry. Note, such babies **are** born alive and left to die. Four-thousand such murders occurred in New York state in 1981.

A second abortion technique is saline (salt-poisoning). The dead baby is called the "product of pregnancy" by the abortionists. This method is done only after at least sixteen weeks of gestation when there is **enough** fluid in the sac surrounding the infant. A long needle is inserted through the mother's abdomen into the baby's sac and a solution of concentrated salt is injected. The baby breaths in, swallows the salt, and is poisoned. The outer layer of the baby's skin is completely burned away with the extremely painful death taking nearly an hour to occur. If the mother is fortunate, she will deliver the flayed, dead baby one day later. (See one nurse's report above. Some of these babies survive a while **after** delivery!)

A third abortion technique is called a "D and C." Such killings are performed between seven and twelve weeks and the method involves a sharp, loop-shaped, steel knife. The uterus is entered and the surgeon cuts the tiny body to pieces along with removing the placenta. Bleeding is usually profuse and one of the jobs of the operating room nurse is to assemble the body parts to insure that the uterus is empty. Otherwise the bleeding may continue and/or infection may occur.

A fourth method is often used at the tenth week

of pregnancy and nearly seventy-five percent of the abortions in the United States and Canada use it—suction. Instead of a steel knife, a powerful suction tube is inserted and the baby's body is torn apart and the "product of pregnancy" is sucked into a jar. Small body parts are still quite recognizable even after the horrendous deed is done.

Perhaps the most murderous of all abortion techniques is the partial-birth method.¹⁸ Guided by ultrasound, the abortionist grabs the fully-developed baby by the legs using forceps. The baby's legs are pulled out into the birth canal and the baby is delivered—except for the head. The abortionist then rams scissors into the back of the baby's skull and then opens the scissors to enlarge the hole. A suction tube is inserted into the hole and the child's brains are sucked out causing the skull to collapse. The dead child is then removed.

October 5 — Today my life began. My parents do not know it yet. I am as small as the seed of an apple, but it is I already. And I am to be a girl. I shall have blonde hair and blue eyes. Just about everything is settled though, even the fact that I shall love flowers....October 19 — Some say that I am not a real person yet, that only my mother exists. But I am a real person, just as a small crumb of bread is yet truly bread. My mother is, and I am... October 23 — My heart began to beat today all by itself. From now on it shall gently beat for the rest of my life without ever stopping to rest. And after many years it will tire. It will stop, and then I shall die.... November 2 — I am growing a bit every day. My arms and legs are beginning to take shape.

But I have to wait a long time yet until those legs will raise me to my mother's arms; before these little arms will gather flowers and embrace my father.... November 12 – Tiny fingers are beginning to form on my hands. Funny how small they are! I'll be able to stroke my mother's hair with them.... November 20 – Today the doctor told my mom that I am living here under her heart. Oh, how happy she must be! Are you happy, mom?. . . November 25 – My mom and dad are probably thinking of a name for me, but they do not know whether I am a girl or boy yet.... December 2 – Today my mother killed me. (Diary of an unborn child, author unknown.)

First society allows the murder of the non-viable unborn. What about the next step, euthanasia?

Euthanasia

What is euthanasia? The term means "good death." Euthanasia is an act directly causing death in order to end the suffering of the victims of incurable diseases such as lingering illness or old age. Paulson wrote "How long shall life be preserved when there is no redeeming social value? If life has no apparent purpose, perhaps it is to the benefit of others that such lives not be salvaged."¹⁹ Another doctor (?) wrote:

There are various levels at which one can consider the indication for euthanasia: (a) a group of individuals who soon will be encountering death: (b) a group with such severe mental damage as to be unable to express proper judgment with respect to termination of life. (c) a group with varying degrees of cognizance, but

with disabilities so incapacitating and so common as to produce great hardship on society.²⁰

There are **two** kinds of euthanasia, active and passive. The former **takes** life to avoid suffering, and the latter simply does nothing to help the person stay alive. Also, euthanasia can be voluntary (c.f. Jack Kevorkian) or involuntary. The latter patient does not consent to his death. A self-caused act is suicide while assisted death is homicide, or so the courts have ruled to this point.²¹ Those who want the right to say when death shall occur make seven basic "arguments."²²

In the first place it is argued that everyone has a **right** to die with dignity and that anything else is inhuman. A slow, painful, merciless death is not dignified, but is rather dehumanizing and one is actually dying as an animal might.

A second argument for euthanasia is actually an extension of the one used by the Supreme Court of the United States to justify abortion. The Court contended that the U. S. Constitution guaranteed a woman's "right to privacy" and that she could have a part of **her** body removed. By extension, therefore, proponents of euthanasia insist that the "almost dead" have the Constitutional guarantee to a private decision about death.

In the third place those who want the freedom to "die with dignity" argue that euthanasia is an act of mercy for the sufferer. Horses trapped in burning barns are shot so they will not suffer so why must human misery be prolonged? It is not kind to allow

endless pain and the most effective way to end the suffering is to give the person a good death.

In the fourth place, those wanting the right to "die with dignity" feel that the patient is not the only one suffering but so also is the family of the patient. Hastening an inevitable death would relieve untold suffering for the patient and remove the incalculable burden on the family. (Families who have been told the patient **is** already brain dead are **not** included in the discussion here, K.M.). (One such case concerning a feeding tube for a young woman has made recent national headlines. There seems to be some question about the husband's desire for her death and the parents desire for her to live. The parents do **not** think she is "vegetative.")

A fifth, congruent argument to number four above is that the family would be relieved of the heavy financial load. Severe illness can erase a lifetime of savings in a very short time. Euthansia is a financial blessing.

The sixth argument is that society is relieved of a huge social burden. As medical costs soar, the tax burden of caring for the suffering increases. (Richard Lamm, governor of Colorado, 1984 said that the elderly "have a duty to die and get out of the way.")²³

The seventh argument is comprehensive of the above six, for those who support euthanasia insist that this is **the** human thing to do. Geisler notes that:

Before a presidential commission appointed to study biomedical issues (1982), philosopher Mary Anne Warren compared a severely disabled newborn child to a horse with a broken

leg that should be killed to spare it from the agony of a slow and painful death.²⁴

Singer insists that “the life of the fetus is of no greater value than the life of a nonhuman animal,” therefore, “the life of a newborn baby is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee.”²⁵

An evaluation of the above seven “arguments” is most needed for, in the first place, there is no moral right to die with or without “dignity.” God said, “Thou shalt do no murder” (emphasis added, K.M.; Exod. 20:13, Heb.). Man is **not** sovereign over human life; God is (Deut. 32:39). Euthanasia’s basic fallacy is that the act presumes to play God.

Second, the U. S. Constitution gives no one the **right** to murder. The “right to privacy” is implied but the fifth and fourteenth amendments guarantee life not death. The right to life is “inalienable” according to the Declaration of Independence. One cannot rape, murder, and abuse children nor kill the elderly just because it is done “privately.”

Third, it is **not** merciful to murder a sufferer. (Abortion does not eliminate child abuse, it **is** child abuse.) Killing inflicts the misery of death and besides, God never allows a thing because “the end justifies the means” (Exod. 20:13; Rom. 3:1-8).

Fourth, suffering is a teacher of family members and there is much to learn (James 1:2-3). Paul knew that suffering taught perseverance, character, and hope (Rom. 5:3-4). (See Job 23:10; James 5:11; and Heb. 12:11.)

Fifth, there is **no** price tag on human life. (I would be willing to sell all I have if Dorothy could be

cured of her cancer, K.M.). The pro-euthanasia group worries more about money than life, but one life is worth more than the world (Matt. 6:26). (The sixth argument concerning the financial burden on society is answered here.)

And, seventh, humans are **not** animals (Gen. 1:26-27). Remember that the Nazis viewed the Jews as non-human (see above) and a doctor Tooley said, "It is a wild contention that newborn babies are persons" (see above). If human life is only animal life, then society should just murder everybody who is not "perfect." The question is, are you "perfect" dear reader?

Conclusion

Abortion and euthanasia are murder. And if the abortionist and pro-euthanasia advocates have their way more Peter Adams will be known. Do you know what Dr. Adams did? Adams was a professor at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. In his experiments at the University of Helsinki, Finland as a visiting professor, Dr. Adams delivered babies twelve to twenty weeks old (by Caesarian section). Their heads were then cut off and attached to a machine which pumped various chemicals through the brain to watch the circulation taking place inside their severed heads.²⁶ It is way past time for Christians to shout "bloody murder" at the courts and legislators.

Endnotes

¹ From a pamphlet of the 1976 Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 2005.

² Ibid.

³ Memphis chapter, P.O. Box 171182, Memphis, TN., 38117.

⁴ Ibid. The pamphlet put out by the Memphis Chapter had originally been published by MCCL (Minnesota Citizens Concern for Life) 4803 N. Collet Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55409.

⁵ A. W. Liley, **A Case Against Abortion** (Auckland, New Zealand: Hayes Publishing Company, 1971) quoted in **Handbook on Abortion**, 1975, p. 26.

⁶ <http://www.religious.tolerance.org>.

⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid. The religious tolerance website did not have the statistics for 2004, but only through 2003.

¹¹ **The Holy Bible, King James Version** (World Bible Publisher). All scripture references are to this version.

¹² MCCL, compiled by William Brennan, Ph.D.

¹³ It is outside the scope of this essay to discuss the effect evolutionary "science" has had on the abortion and euthanasia debate. To get a detailed overview of this horrible effect see Marvin L. Lubenow, **Bones of Contention: A Creationist Assessment of Human Fossiles** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004).

¹⁴ Melody Green, "The Questions Most People Ask About Abortions" **The Last Days Magazine** (1983) pp. 10-85.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. The nurse is Kathleen Malloy of Jacksonville, Florida.

¹⁷ J. C. Wilke (Doctor and Mrs.)

Pro-Life Materials (Cincinnati, OH: Hiltz and Hayes Publishing Company, Inc., 1976).

¹⁸ Rick Reeder, **Innocent Blood, Guilty Hands: The Truth About Partial Birth Abortion** (Mayfield, KY: Northside Baptist Church, revised 1996), p. 16.

¹⁹ George Paulson, "Who Would Live?" **Geriatrics** (28 March 1973): pp. 136-138. Efforts in 2004 are underway to redefine when "life begins" which will lead to redefining when

it should end (Mark McWhorter, "When Does Life Begin," **Contending for the Faith** 33 (September 2002), p. 17.

²⁰ Robert H. Williams (professor Washington State Medical School). "Our Role in the Generation, Modification, and Termination of Life," **Journal of the American Medical Association** 209 (11 August 1990): pp. 914-917.

²¹ Norman L. Geisler, **Christian Ethics: Options and Issues** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), p. 157.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 158-160.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 160. Geisler is quoting from William Brennan, **The Abortion Holocaust** (St. Louis, MO: Landmark, 1983), p. 83.

²⁵ Peter Singer, **Practical Ethics** (Cambridge: University Press, 1979), pp. 122-123.

²⁶ **Medical World News** (8 June 1973), p. 21.

Chapter 20

The Threat Of The Media In Our Lives

David B. Jones



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Mankind is embarked upon a journey while living upon earth. Many live their lives under the idea that this life is the ultimate journey, and so they set their priorities on the things relating to the flesh. Those who live as such, live in this life unto death in the next world.

The apostle Paul reminded the Ephesians of this very point:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of

the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others (Eph. 2:1-3).

Notice they walked according to the lusts of the flesh, and they were dead in their sins. How sad it is today to see so many who walk the same way.

On the other hand, the apostle Peter exhorts Christians to abstain from this thinking: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;" (1 Peter 2:11). We should consider the fact we are just sojourners upon this earth and live accordingly. Our ultimate home is heaven, and we need to live in such a way as to be rewarded it on judgment day. The Hebrews writer exhorted his readers by reminding them of their reward in heaven:

For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise (Heb. 10:34-36).

We as Christians should long for that day as did Paul:

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven (2 Cor. 5:1-2).

God has given us a taste of that heavenly home while we are on earth, if we will follow His directions.

God originated the home in the garden of Eden, creating Adam and Eve, bringing Eve unto Adam and giving her to him for his wife. God intended the home on earth to be the closest thing to heaven on earth. Homes can be like the heavenly home if they are filled with certain things. However, there are also negative influences which can come against the home and instead of being a foretaste of heaven, they can become a furnace of hell upon earth. We will examine the positive things and then notice some of the negative forces which can attack the home.

POSITIVE INFLUENCES WHICH MAKE HOMES A FORETASTE OF HEAVEN

Being Filled With God Will Make Them A Foretaste

The Bible reveals the fact heaven will be filled with God. John writes:

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God (Rev. 21:3).

One of the great blessings of being in heaven will be open and direct fellowship with God Himself. Man once enjoyed this privilege (Adam and Eve before they chose to sin), and now we have the promise of regaining this privilege in heaven. What a blessing it will be, when we have crossed over the river of death and have passed judgment, to be granted the honor

and privilege of having the Creator of the universe to wipe away all our tears:

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away (Rev. 21:4).

Heaven will truly be worth all the struggle simply, because it will be filled with God.

Our homes on earth must also be filled with God if we desire the reward of the redeemed. In order to fill them with God, we must hide the word of God in our hearts: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psm. 119:11). God is pure and holy and if we desire to fill our homes with Him, we must refrain from the impurities of the day. Treating each member of the family with the respect they deserve and heaven desires is one way of filling our homes with God. Since God had so much respect for mankind, He sent His Son to redeem us from a devil's hell. Husbands who treat their wives with respect demonstrate hearts filled with God's word. Wives who submit to their husbands, likewise, manifest a godly spirit. Parents who train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord portray a godly attitude. Children who obey their parents truly show God rules in their lives.

Being Filled With Purity Will Make Them A Foretaste

The Bible teaches the fact that God is pure and

not defiled with sin: "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Psm. 12:6). Again the writer of Psalms says:

The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes (Psm. 19:8).

As His word is pure and holy, He also is the same. John affirms this: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). Since heaven will be filled with God and He is pure, heaven will be pure.

Our earthly homes can be a foretaste of heaven if they are filled with purity. First and foremost, homes need to be comprised by those who are pure in heart: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). No one with an impure heart will "see" God, but rather, they will "see" things pertaining to fleshly lusts and pleasures. From the heart comes all the issues of life: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Thoughts generate in the heart and from thoughts come words and from words, actions arise. If we desire our actions to be pure, our hearts must first be pure. We will refrain from music, TV shows, movies, etc., which promote evil and sinful thoughts. We will fill our hearts with the pure word of God, thus filling our homes with purity:

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).

Our homes can be a foretaste if they are pure.

Being Filled With Love Will Make Them A Foretaste

John, the apostle of love, writes: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8). Since heaven will be filled with God and God is love, heaven will be filled with love. Would it not be nice to live in a place where everyone loved one another?

The world in which we live is filled with violence and hatred. Doors must be locked and alarm systems activated in efforts to feel safe. Life is viewed as cheap. Without love the world is a cold, cold place. However, our homes ought to be forts against the horrors of hatred and fountains spewing forth love whose origin is from above. Husbands and wives should find refuge and rest in each other's arms of love. Children should feel safe and secure wrapped by their parents loving arms. Homes filled with love will be just a foretaste of the ultimate home filled with God and His love.

Being Filled With Responsibilities Will Make Them A Foretaste

It is simply amazing at the number of people who are seeking to go to heaven, but who murmur and complain at every turn about having to do anything for the Lord. The Bible reveals an interesting fact in the book of Revelation about those pictured

around the throne: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (Rev. 7:15). Notice they are pictured as serving the Lord day and night. While we do not know in detail what type of service will be rendered in heaven, we are given insight into the fact those there will have responsibilities in serving.

Homes should be marked by their members fulfilling responsibilities laid down by the word of God. Fathers are to provide for their own:

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:8).

Fathers are also to rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord:

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

Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). Mothers are to be keepers of the home:

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 2:4-5).

Husbands and wives have responsibilities to each other. Each has responsibilities to the Lord, to children, etc.

On and on the list could go, but the point remains, heaven will be filled with responsibilities. Therefore, we had better learn here and now how to fulfill them, so we will enjoy being in heaven!

Being Filled With Joy Will Make Them A Foretaste

Heaven will be filled with joy, seeing those who are ushered there will have overcome and we will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb:

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints (Rev. 15:3).

Victory is always a time of joy, and there can be no greater victory than to overcome this world and to live with the King!

Homes should be places of joy. Happiness is a sentiment which is based on external circumstances. A person is only "happy" when all things can go well. "Joy" is an internal sentiment originating in the heart and is not dependant upon external situations. Christians should be joyful people no matter the circumstance. Paul said:

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which

strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:11-13).

Joy comes from knowing we are going “home.” Joy comes from knowing the source of all joy – the Lord. Joy comes from the peace of mind gained through the victory over sin and its consequences. Homes should be filled with this joy. In order to do so, they must be founded on the rock.

NEGATIVE INFLUENCES THE MEDIA PLAYS IN MAKING OUR HOMES A FURNACE OF HELL

Media Attacks God, His Word And His Credibility

Whereas the Bible upholds, respects, and reveres God, the majority of the media’s avenues attack and try to alienate God in our homes. Television shows are broadcast which depict God as a figment of the imagination. Some of these shows are aimed at conservative scholarship which defends the existence of God based on evidence. Television programs such as sitcoms depict a hedonistic lifestyle, making glamorous the same. Humanism is promoted on these same type programs, suggesting that subjectivism is the safest way to find truth. Man’s views are exalted and God’s ridiculed and lowered. When we allow the media to take away our respect for God, our homes turn into a furnace for the devil and his abode here on this earth.

This is not accomplished only through television. The radio pipes in the music of the day. Much of the

music is geared toward rebellion or is preaching a message of tolerance for any and everyone despite what that person does or believes. Obviously, we have the ability to turn it off, but often our children and grand children are victimized due to ignorance, peer pressure and pure innocence on their part. Often the influence exerted on our children is to break from the establishment and its ways. An air of permissiveness and promiscuity is taught through the lyrics which are embedded into the minds and hearts of the listeners. The “catchy” tunes make the lyrics easier to remember. Vices such as drinking and other drugs are promoted through much of the music. This lifestyle is glorified and glamorized during much of the music.

Media Attacks The Purity Of The Home

The influence which media has on the home attacks the purity of the home. Vulgar, suggestive, impure, and soul-damaging words are pumped right into the hearts and minds of our homes. The longer they are heard as if they are nothing, the less we tend to think about the damage they do. The more accustomed we become to it until we reach the point which we are not affected by what we hear. Our once-trained consciences are desensitized, and we accept them, allowing them to even dwell in our heads. Too often the case is they lodge there, and we begin to think them, because they have made a home in our heads, we begin to speak them to our shame! Paul spoke as to how to avoid such disgrace:

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).

We must filter our minds from the filth of media. Not all media is of that filthy nature, but the devil has made haste to use this tool to destroy the fabric of societies – the family.

Media Attacks Love In The Home

Along with attacking God and purity, media also attacks love. The very nature of love is attacked by the media. Love is defined by the majority of television shows and movies as something we feel and that which is cheap and commercialized. Having premarital sex is defined many times as the way one is to show his or her love for the other. Love is disgraced and demonstrated by the base and immoral acts of this life. Not only is the marital love defined incorrectly, but the love we ought to have for brethren in the home and other brethren is as well. The way we treat each other is a badge of our love according to Jesus:

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).

However, the kind of love Jesus spoke of here is an action, not just a feeling. We see this as we notice two other verses of Scripture: “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).

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16).

When we are commanded to show our love for the brethren, we are commanded to "do" something. The media would have us believe love is just an emotion.

Media Attacks The Responsibilities Of The Home

The media attacks our responsibilities we have before God in various ways. First, it would replace the authority of God in the home and make each human his own god. Second, it seeks to take away the husband's and father's role in the home and combine with the wife and mother, making no difference in the two. The Lord clearly said:

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. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:23-25).

There are many females in this age who hate these words, even accusing Paul of writing as the culture dictated. They say since our culture has changed, these verses have no bearing on us. However, every word which Jesus has said and has written will judge us one day (John 12:48). The media may downplay the roles of men and women, but the Bible still holds men

and women accountable. We have responsibilities, and we must heed them.

Third, the media attacks our responsibilities by lying to men and women about marriage, the permanency of it, and the need for it in general. More and more well-known people are living together without being married, and these facts are made available for all to see more and more readily. Many of our young people idolize these entertainers and thus try and follow them, because they have seen their lives broadcast right into their living rooms. It is time once again for parents to take charge of their homes and once again enforce the responsibilities each has - including themselves.

Media Attacks The Joy In Our Homes

Joy is an inward emotion and one which is not dependant upon outward forces. True joy comes thru and in Christ. True joy is knowing sins are forgiven and that we are headed to heaven. However, the media helps us to keep our minds focused on the here and now, causing us to lose our joy and base our emotions on outward forces and situations. Programs are aimed at making us concentrate on the physical things of life, including ourselves. It glamorizes the thin, the beautiful, and the rich - all in the physical sense. So if we sit and watch television, not filtering out the negative influences, we will rise up thinking that all of life is consumed here on earth, and this will remove the joy from our hearts. Jesus is the perfect example in all things and in this as well. The Hebrews writer said of Jesus:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:1-2).

The outside circumstances of Jesus' scourging and crucifixion were not comfortable; but because He focused on the good which would be done at the cross, Jesus viewed that with joy. He knew others (all men) would have access to His blood through obedience to the gospel. This fact and the fact He was obeying His Father caused Him to have joy in His heart, although it was a very painful set of events. The media would take away that joy through its negative influences.

Conclusion

Is your home founded on the Rock of Ages? Will your anchor hold in the storms of life? Is your home a foretaste of heaven to come? If not, why not obey the gospel and be faithful to the Lord till death? If you have obeyed the gospel and are not walking in the light, will you turn before it is too late? You can make your home be what God wants, if you will let Him direct its course.

Chapter 21

The Threat Of The Women's Movement

Bobby Liddell



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Introduction

How does the “Women’s Movement” impact our lives, and is the threat, about which we shall study, real or not? None, who has lived through the last half of the twentieth century can successfully refute the truth that, in this time, the culture in the United States has changed in dramatic and, too often, dreadful ways.

One of the driving forces in these cultural changes has been what is called the “Women’s Movement.” It is this movement that we shall study.

Historically, some of the objectives and victories of the Women’s Movement have been commendable; such as, protection for battered women, support for rape victims, and good and proper advancements in

opportunities for women (such as the ability to vote). It is lamentable that true abuses were not addressed without the outcry of united women.

However, the Women's Movement, in the United States in the last few decades, has been known more for radical, liberal political agendas and cunning legal maneuverings which have resulted in the advancement of anti-scriptural positions and the implementation of socially destructive conclusions; such as, pushing for abortion "rights," support for lesbianism, and working for the passage of anti-family legislation.

A Brief Look At The History Of The Women's Movement

Highlights of the Women's Movement (which are applicable to our study) follow. Among the dates and events listed in **The Timeline of Key Events in the Women's Rights Movement** are these.

Some date the beginning of the Women's Movement to 1848, when a convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, which resulted in a Declaration of Sentiments which called for equal treatment of women and men under the law, and which called for voting rights for women.

The first National Women's Rights Convention took place in 1850, in Worcester, Massachusetts, with over 1,000 participants.

In 1869, Susan B. Anthony leads the fight for women's suffrage, and Wyoming becomes the first state to pass a women's suffrage law.

In 1890, the National American Women's

Suffrage Association began a state-by-state battle to obtain voting rights for women.

Colorado became the first state to allow women to vote (1893), and several other states followed over the next few years.

In 1913, Alice Paul leads the Congressional Union (later, the National Women's Party), to practice civil disobedience and picket the White House seeking passage of a Constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote.

In 1916, Margaret Sanger opened the first birth control clinic, in the United States, in Brooklyn, New York.

August 25, 1920, was the date for the signing into law of the Nineteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, granting women the right to vote.

In 1921, Margaret Sanger began the American Birth Control League which became the Planned Parenthood Federation of America in 1941.

In 1936, birth control information, sent through the mail, was classified as no longer obscene.

1955 saw the founding of the Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian social organization which became a political organization advocating rights for lesbians.

In 1963, Betty Friedan's book, **The Feminine Mystique**, which detailed the dissatisfaction of middle-class American housewives with "the narrow role imposed upon them by society," became a best seller, and "galvanizes the modern women's rights movement."

In 1966, Betty Friedan helped found NOW, the

National Organization for Women.

In 1969, California became the first state to allow "no-fault" divorce; that is, divorce by mutual consent.

In 1971, Gloria Steinham, co-founds and edits Ms. Magazine, and she becomes a symbol of the women's movement.

On March 22, 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification (but died when it failed to be ratified by a sufficient number of states by 1982).

On June 23, 1972,

Title IX of the Education Amendments bans sex discrimination in schools. It states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." As a result of Title IX, the enrollment of women in athletics programs and professional schools increases dramatically.

In 1973, in *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court allows abortion, and, in so doing, overturns the separate states' anti-abortion laws.

In 1984, a fund is set up (EMILY's List) for pro-choice Democratic women candidates running for national office. (The above historical information came from **Timeline of Key Events in the American Women's Rights Movement.**)

From **The Feminist Chronicles**, comes the following, additional information.

Women's liberation is a term which was first used by the feminist Simone De Beauvoir, in the book, **The**

Second Sex, in 1953.

On January 23, 1955, the U. S. Presbyterian Church voted to allow women to be ministers.

From June, 1965:

A survey of women graduates at Stanford University (CA) found that 70% planned not to work at all when their children were under age 6, and only 43% intended to work full time even after their children were over 12. A survey of 1972 graduates would show a considerable change in views.

In 1968, "Women's Liberation" groups are formed across the nation.

In 1968, Shirley Chisholm, member of NOW, became the first Black woman elected to the House of Representatives.

The Los Angeles chapter of NOW declared lesbianism a "legitimate concern of feminism" (1971).

From June, 1972:

Fewer than one out of every 25 women graduating from Stanford University (CA) in June, 1972, expected to be a full-time homemaker in 1977, according to a survey released by the university. This contrasted sharply with a survey from 1965 when 70% of Stanford women planned not to work at all when their children were under six, and only 43% intended to work full time when their children were over 12. Only 3% of the 1972 grads planned to stop working when their husband finished school, and only 7% said they would stop work to raise children. Only 18.5% of the women mentioned the role of wife and mother as part of their main activities in the next five years.

In 1972, a U.S. District Court in Pennsylvania ruled a fetus is not a "person" or "citizen," and therefore not entitled to legal rights and protections.

The NOW Task Force on Sexuality and Lesbianism was established two years after the NOW membership, at its national conference in Los Angeles, adopted a resolution stating that "a woman's right to her own person includes the right to define and express her own sexuality and to choose her own lifestyle" (1973).

On June 30, 1976,

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states cannot require a woman seeking an abortion to get consent from her husband or force all single girls under 18 desiring an abortion to get permission from a parent. The decision struck down a 1974 Missouri law, but upheld a provision requiring a woman to give her written consent before the operation can be performed. The vote on the spousal consent requirement was 6-3 (Burger, White and Rehnquist voted with the anti-choice minority). The vote on the parental consent requirement was 5-4 with Stevens joining the three opposed to abortion.

On September 16, 1976,

The Episcopal Church, meeting in Minneapolis/St. Paul, officially recognized ordination of 15 women as priests, including the very first, Jacqueline Means, and Rev. Betty Bone Schiess, a Syracuse, NY, NOW member, who had formed a feminist parish.

On October 14, 1979,

The National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights attracted over 100,000 marchers to Washington,

D.C. It was the first national march for gay rights. Experienced march organizers were assigned by NOW President Eleanor Smeal to help stage the event.

On March 1, 1981,

Rocky Mountain, Arapahoe, and Ft. Collins (CO) NOW chapters were instrumental in defeating two state legislature bills that sought to define a fetus as a person, one of which would have changed the definition of "child" to "a person from the time of conception to 18 years of age." The chapters inundated the Colorado House Judiciary Committee with POMs, phone calls and letters, held a "Never Again" demonstration on the capitol steps, packed the hearing room with NOW members, and identified all pro-choice people with "Never Again" stickers. In addition, NOW members presented testimony against the bills. The victory was especially significant since it represented one of the first defeats for a "redefinition" bill.

In 1983,

NOW activists defeated almost all of the anti-abortion bills introduced in state legislatures this year. In the 1983 legislative sessions nearly 100 bills were introduced but fewer than 20 passed.

In February, 1985,

NOW's "Lesbian and Gay Rights '85" project broadened its focus to include efforts to pass lesbian and gay rights legislation in New York state as well as in New Jersey.

From March 31, 1986,

A Newsweek poll showed 56% of all women considered themselves feminists; 71% believed the movement had helped them; only 4% considered themselves anti-feminist.

What can we learn from the above historical information? Obviously, the Women's Movement, which started, no doubt, with some lofty goals and worthy ideals (at least in part), evolved into a radical movement advancing the ungodly positions of supporting abortion and lesbianism, and inciting women to remove themselves from the role given them—not by the church, nor by the state, nor by society, but by God.

Not surprisingly, the result has been that we now stand at a point in our history where the threat of such women's activism turned into the modern liberal Women's Movement is real. It is not a threat to staid, traditional male chauvinism, but to the eternal destiny of women and men who are swayed, adversely influenced, or who are misled into thinking and acting in ways contrary to the will of God (Judg. 21:25; Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12).

What Has Been The Impact Of The Women's Movement?

The Women's Movement has impacted our lives in a number of ways, and, sadly, some of these have become threats to the welfare of souls. For example, consider the impact of the Women's Movement in:

- The attack upon biblical, and formerly understood and accepted, sexual roles of men and women.

- The anti-family, anti-scriptural agenda to remove women from the role of mother and homemaker.

- The concerted, well-planned, and often craftily presented efforts to remove children from the care and training of parents in order to bring them up in the way NOW would have them to go.

- The murder of millions of innocent babies by abortion. The passage of laws and the implementation of court decisions in order to hinder opposition to their plans, and in order to use the government as a tool in reaching their objectives.

Who can, in view of God's divinely given and revealed plan for man and woman (in the Word of God), truthfully state we are better off in America—in any area, society, government, church, or home—than we were before these destructive changes, brought about by the Women's Movement?

Is it better for women to be men-hating lesbians?

Is it better that women consider being wives and homemakers a demeaning, despised role of servitude?

Is it better that multiplied millions of innocent lives have been cruelly taken by abortion?

Is it better that our families are dysfunctional, and that our homes are crumbling at an alarming and ever increasing rate?

Is it better that our nation stands on the brink of collapse as a result?

Is the modern liberated woman, created in the image of the Women's Movement, happier, more "fulfilled," in a better position, more godly, more lovely (in the real measure of love), or better equipped

or motivated to be all she can be (and all God created her to be)?

Is the position of today's liberated woman elevated, or has she devolved to a level far below where she should be and where she would be by following God's divinely given commands?

What has been the impact on the eternal welfare of liberated women? Is any supposed "advancement" worth the loss of one's soul (Matt. 16:26)?

The Impact Of The Women's Movement On The Role Of Women In The Home

As noted above, the Women's Movement which has claimed to have worked to advance the cause of women has also determined to remove women from the "traditional role" of wife and homemaker.

In the beginning, God created man and woman, and gave Eve, the first woman, the role as the wife of Adam (Gen. 1:26ff; 2:18-25). Later, she was given the role of childbearing, and her part in child rearing, and this in submission to her husband.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee (Gen. 3:16).

In Paul's inspired writing, he unmistakably demonstrated and plainly commanded that we follow God's plan for woman (and man), in spite of all assaults against it by Satan and his followers. In charging that we are to speak the things which become sound doctrine, Paul wrote:

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 2:2-5).

From God's Word, the instruction is that women are to love their husbands—not participate in an endless number of one night stands to celebrate their sexual liberation. Women are to love their husbands, not to become the “life partner” of some other woman (which is perverted, ungodly, and sickening to the faithful).

Women, according to their Creator and the Sustainer of life, are to love their children, not kill them, nor abandon them, nor consign them to someone else in order for the mothers to live their lives as they wish without the entangling bother of motherhood.

Women, even in 2005, are to be keepers at home. As well, God's women are to be good. The “fairer sex” is commanded, by God, to be “obedient to their own husbands.” These very thoughts enrage the advocates of the Women's Movement, but refusal to hear God will enslave the disobedient in sin, and rob them of Heaven (John 8:24; 14:15; Rom. 6:16-18).

Note: the characteristics of conduct and submission taught in Titus 2:2-5 are to be observed

and practiced in order that "the word of God be not blasphemed."

The Impact Of The Women's Movement On The Church

Any astute observer knows the conditions of culture work to bring changes in the church. These changes may be subtle and gradual, and their imposition upon the divine pattern for the church may not be recognized by some as being contrary to God's plan. Why would anyone push women to be deacons (or deaconesses), elders, or preachers were it not for cultural pressure (sometimes exerted through "liberated" sisters)? Why would seemingly intelligent, biblically knowledgeable, and formerly faithful (as far as man could determine—but God knows the heart) brethren want to have women usurp authority over men in teaching roles God has prohibited, or put women in positions of leadership in worship (waiting on the table, leading singing, leading in prayer, etc.) which God has reserved for the male?

Paul wrote to Timothy encouraging him in his work as a Gospel preacher and instructing him concerning the conduct of the church (1 Tim. 2). His inspired writing has been the subject of much discussion and of no little disagreement (vs. 8-15). However, if we, as accountable men and women, will approach this passage with a genuine desire to hear what God would have us to know, we can learn the Truth and can put it into practice (cf. Eph. 3:2-4).

Paul began with directions concerning prayer, a vital part of daily Christian life and of Christian

worship. The setting of which Paul writes in his apostolic authority is "every where" and certainly includes, and is in fact, a specific reference to, the public assembly of the church (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15). Thus, Paul is writing to regulate activity in the worship assembly, to show men and women how to behave properly when worshipping God.

Paul wrote: "I will therefore that men pray every where" (1 Tim. 2:8). The word selected by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Thess. 2:13), which corresponds to the English word men, means males. It is not the Greek word for mankind in general, but specifies males, and with the definite article, the males. Thus, men, not women, are to lead prayer in the public assembly.

Whether from ignorance or rebellion, some modern day women libbers declare the divinely given command for men alone to lead in public prayer is too restrictive. Some years ago, I baptized a young lady who later left the Lord and the Truth and joined the Baptist denomination. When I inquired as to why, she replied, in a tone that indicated her strong emotions, that she wanted to go where she could use her talents and take part in leading the worship. She angrily informed me that they would let her "lead" in the Baptist church, but she was not allowed to do so in the Lord's church. The idea that only men may lead prayer is not in harmony with the wills of many — but God's Word is still the true standard of authority, and by it we will be judged (John 12:48).

Please note these points in consideration of the intent of God for our behavior in the worship

assembly. (1) If the instructions given by Paul were concerning the literal raising of one's hands, males ONLY are the ones to be "lifting up holy hands." Thus, no female, in or out of the church, has been authorized by God to lift up her hands in public worship. This should be enough reason for every godly woman to refrain from so doing. (2) "Lifting up holy hands" is not to be taken literally, anyway. The emphasis is not on lifting up hands, but is on the holiness of the one who prays. The holiness is to be "without wrath and doubting"; that is, the males who pray in public are to be men of holy words and deeds which come from holy hearts. (3) God, through Paul, does not denote a prescribed physical posture in prayer. Rather, he emphasizes a spiritual condition of purity in approaching the exalted throne of the God of the universe. (4) These directions are not cultural or circumstantial, but scriptural and are the expression of God's continuing will through His inspired servant. (5) Women may pray in worship and should do so, but God does not allow them to *lead* prayer in worship. Like men, their prayers should be offered from lives of purity and holiness.

Paul penned:

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array (1 Tim. 2:9).

Women are to adorn themselves, but not as the worldly whose desire is to attract attention to themselves. The word adorn means to beautify or

make attractive and the intent is spiritual beauty not physical. In keeping with the desire to make oneself spiritually beautiful, the attire of a godly woman is modest (proper, orderly, decent). Were we to have no other source of information, common sense would tell us that attire that attracts undue attention by being elaborate, overly expensive, provocative or revealing is not modest. Likewise, one might, by choices of accessories, jewelry, makeup or hairdo, make herself immodest. On the one extreme are those who would do anything and wear anything (or nothing!) in order to make themselves "beautiful" to draw attention to themselves (cf. Jer. 6:15; 2 Kings 9:30). Such displays are prominent in our society, are loudly applauded by the ungodly, and are becoming more accepted as normal.

On the other extreme are those who would refuse to wear any jewelry or makeup, dress in old drab clothing and unbecoming hairstyle and condemn all who do not do as they do. The Christian woman can adorn herself properly while avoiding both extremes. God does not prohibit the wearing of all jewelry nor does He condemn the styling of one's hair—any more than He prohibits the wearing of apparel! He does regulate the use of these to that which is decent and in keeping with godliness.

"But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Tim. 2:10). Godly women will, on all occasions, conduct themselves in a way that is becoming one professing godliness. As Paul writes, the true adorning of a beautiful woman is not the dressing up of the outward person, but the

beautifying of the inner person.

Peter put it this way:

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price (1 Peter 3:3-4).

A Christian woman should be known for her good works, not for her outward attire. A Christian woman is shamefast and sober, with the proper attitude which will prevent her doing that which is shameful. Rather, she will humbly, sanely, and properly conduct herself and keep herself under control at all times. In other words, she will look and act like a true follower of Christ whose affections are set on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2).

Now, how does that compare with the picketing, shouting, swearing, sign waving, protesting feminist? Is there not a difference?

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection” (1 Tim. 2:11). God requires women to be in submission (subjection) and silence which is not absolute silence in this case, but quietness (a quiet spirit). Why should this requirement of subordination be a thing to be disdained as if God were mistreating women? Should not men and women rejoice in accepting the roles God has given to us and seek with all our being to fulfill His will in our lives?

The woman is different from man, but not

inferior (1 Cor. 11:3). She should recognize that she has, by nature, abilities and opportunities which are different from the man and which man will never have. In the assembly, the woman is to learn in silence with all subjection—according to our Creator. She is not permitted (suffered) to exercise dominion, to usurp authority, in teaching over the man. In the worship of the church, where men are present, God does not allow her to take the lead.

“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” Therefore, women cannot, with God’s approval, preach in an assembly with men present, teach a Bible class (such as the Sunday or Wednesday classes) with men present, have authority over men as in the office of elder, serving as deacon, or leading in the worship as song leader, leading prayer, or serving at the Lord’s table.

The cry of “Unfair!” from liberated women holds no sway with God. The changes of culture do not change His plan for the church’s work and worship, nor for the relationship of man and woman. As long as this world stands, women are not “to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man.” Even if “elders” or others “delegate authority” in order to allow her to do so, God does not.

This does not mean women are less important or less able than men. Nor, should it mean women refuse to do what God has given them to do because, in their eyes, it is “not some great thing” (cf. 2 Kings 5:13).

Does this mean a woman can never, in any

situation, teach another? No, for God commands women to teach in some situations (cf. Titus 2:3-4), and women may teach as long as they do not violate the limitations set forth here. Even in the assembly, women teach when they obey the command to sing (Eph. 5:19).

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).

Obviously, Timothy's grandmother Lois and mother Eunice taught him, and they were praised for doing so (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Aquila and Priscilla (husband and wife) taught Apollos "the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26). So, there are some situations in which women may teach, but she may not "exercise dominion" over the man by teaching. Any situation in which she does is an unscriptural and sinful situation.

Why does God prohibit the woman from leadership roles? Let us go to God's Word for the answer. First, because of the creation of man before woman (1 Tim. 2:13). Woman came out of man, thus man is before woman and her head (1 Cor. 11:3). Take note of Paul's reference to the inspired record of creation as true and without question. He does not cite it as myth, nor as borrowed from some pagan fairy tale. He simply presents it as the truth.

Second, because of the succumbing of Eve to deception when she took upon herself a position of

leadership which was not hers (1 Tim. 2:14; Gen. 3:16). Was Eve's sin more grievous than Adam's? No, but it was of a different nature. Eve was deceived, but Adam was not. Both transgressed.

Notice these God-given reasons for woman's subjection are not cultural, nor are they bounded by time or dispensation.

"Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (1 Tim. 2:15).

Obviously, woman shall be saved from sin by obedience to God in fulfilling her role with faith, love, holiness and sobriety. Many today have castigated what they call a male dominated society and have cast off the "shackles" of being a wife and mother—a keeper at home (Titus 2:5). While one may be saved without marrying and having children, neither woman or man will be saved in rebellion to God. Women who deny their God-given roles and reject His will for them, and who would usurp the authority given to man, are in rebellion to God. Nothing and no one in the world will change this truth.

Men are given certain leadership roles by God. Likewise, women are prohibited from taking the authority which God has given to man. Yet, what is more worthy of praise or more beautiful than a Christian woman professing godliness in harmony with the will of God?

Changes, called for by women libbers, would not be seriously considered were there not calls for equality for women in *every* area. The truth is man and woman are different—because God created them

that way (See Liddell, "Respective Duties and Roles for Men and Women.")

The Impact Of The Women's Movement On Gender Roles

God has blessed Joan and me with three grandchildren (so far); two girls and a boy. Ethan (five years old) is well behaved, with a wonderful disposition, but he is also all boy. He enjoys and excels at doing things which traditionally have been associated with the male gender. Abbey (two years old) is also well behaved, and is a delight to be around, but she is also all girl. She does "little girl" things in "little girl" ways. Mia (four months old), though very young, is already showing her femininity.

Should we be trying to get Ethan to be more feminine? And, should we be working to make sure Abbey and Mia are more like males? Should we be concerned that Ethan acts like a boy, and Abbey and Mia act like girls? While it may be politically incorrect, is it wrong for us to allow them to grow up realizing there is a difference between male and female?

Absolutely not!

Brother Curtis Cates very well described God's plan for man and woman, and the differences in male and female.

The very first chapter in the Bible affirms that we are sexual beings. "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). And, He stated that we would have sexual feelings. "And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and

replenish [fill –CAC] the earth” (1:28). He pronounced that man’s maleness and femaleness, as well as everything else He had created, “was very good” (1:31). The sex drive is one of the most powerful drives with which God created human beings, along with the drive of self-preservation. As will be noted, when practiced within the boundaries laid down by our Creator, human sexuality is very beautiful and can be a source of tremendous happiness; outside of those boundaries it brings tremendous pain and sorrow. Marriage and the home is the oldest of God’s three institutions: the home, the government, and the church. The home is the very foundation of society. When God formed the first man, Adam, from the “dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (2:7), He said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (2:18). None of the other creation was a complement to the man. Thus, God completed His marvelous creation by creating the woman, Eve. When she was created, God had marriage in mind. Very clear to all is that God did not create another male for Adam, nor would another male complete the first man! Nor did God create two females or another male and a female. Christ asked, “Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female?” (Matt. 19:4).

And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she

shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:21-24).

Again, from brother Cates:

Floyd observed further—and alarmingly,

Those pushing the Gay Agenda do not have the right to impose their chosen lifestyle on the rest of society. If left unopposed, their efforts to mainstream the lifestyle will annihilate the family as we know it.

I feel a great burden to issue a warning to proponents of traditional marriage: the Gay Agenda is dividing families. It is dividing an entire nation. And it is beginning to win some major battles.

...According to **USA Today**, five of the major denominations in America are openly ordaining gay clergy and blessing same-sex unions.

Additionally he warned,

The Gay Agenda is finding a place throughout our schools, textbooks, and media, straight into the hearts of children and young people. Beware, administrators, teachers, students, and parents! The gay lifestyle is being actively promoted in books, by speakers, in seminar themes...in fact, it's everywhere. And struggling to figure it all out is that oldest of human institutions, the family.

Still further, he urged,

Parents, be warned: in our culture, moral relativism is king. "Truth" is whatever one wishes it to be. As a result, your children have

become vulnerable to world views that can do them great harm.

In view of the above, what a contrast is the God-breathed, settled, authoritative, absolute Truth of the Holy Scriptures! "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). What are the words that proceed out of the mouth of God on homosexuality?

1. In homosexuality, the natural sexual relationship between a man and a woman is exchanged for that which is "against nature." "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 with another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due" (Rom. 1:26-27). In marriage as God created it, the glory of God is seen (1:20); in its perversion, distortion and severe consequences are seen (1:23-31).

2. The Sodomites were guilty of "very grievous" sin, Jehovah said, and it led even to trying to rape the visitors to the city (Gen. 18:20; 19:5-11; cf. Jud. 19:22-26). [The quibble that this grievous sin was a lack of hospitality does not follow, since Lot offered his daughters to know them sexually.]

3. God rained down fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah, because they had "gone after strange flesh" (Jude 7; 2 Peter 2:6-10).

4. God's prohibition to Israel was: "There shall be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a Sodomite of the sons of

Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow: for even both these are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God" (Deut. 23:17-18).

5. The attitude of God toward sodomy is very clear: "Thou shall not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is abomination" (Lev. 18:22); "And if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed abomination" (20:13); the penalty in the law of Moses was death. The prohibition involved those males "who lie with a male."

6. Though homosexuality is a perverted grievous, unnatural, abomination to God which will keep one out of the eternal, glorified kingdom of heaven, through God's grace one can extricate oneself from this sin.

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. And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

One cannot be scripturally baptized without repentance, which demands the ceasing of one's sinful actions, relationships, and lifestyle (Matt. 12:41; John 3:8-10; et al.). In God's family, the church, God does not give blessing and sanction to a sinful lifestyle but rather bestows freedom

and healing from that sinful condition and lifestyle. Christ told the woman taken in sexual sin, "...go thy way; from henceforth sin no more" (John 8:11); in other words, Quit your sinning (cf. Rom. 6:1-4). Christ is the Great Physician, but He can bring spiritual healing only to those who abandon their sins and comply with Christ's loving offer of forgiveness upon the obedience of faith (Curtis A. Cates, "God Created Male And Female--A Study of Human Sexuality").

Conclusion

The Women's Movement threatens the society in which we live, the sanctity of life for the unborn, the sexuality of male and female, and the very souls of men and women. The threat is real. It is not just a danger to men, but it is an affront to God, and a rejection of God's way. Those who follow it will not go unpunished (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 21:8).

If we all, men and women, will follow God's direction and fulfill the roles God intended for us, we will find happiness and abundant living--now and eternally (John 10:10). Let us be busy learning, living, and teaching the way that is good and right, and the way which cannot be wrong.

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Chapter 22

What Is Marriage (Home)?

Perry B. Cotham



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The oldest institution is the home. Marriage, or the home, is of divine origin. God created the home in the beginning of time. On the sixth day of the week of creation, when all else had been created, Jehovah God created “man in his own image...male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:27, KJV).

First, God “put the man whom he had formed” in the beautiful Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8), but later, the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18).

In the Paradise on the earth there was not found a helper, a suitable companion for the man, the kind of help the man needed. The animals had their mates but not the man, and none of the animals were suited

for Adam, the man. Then God put Adam to sleep and took a rib from his side and created Eve, the first woman, and gave her to him as his companion (Gen. 2:15-23). It was not Adam and Steve and Eve and Mary. He did not create a threesome of Adam and Eve and Steve. Once again we read "*male and female created he them.*" And that is how it was always intended to be. And in the eyes of God, it will continue to be this way until the end of time.

The creation of the woman as a help meet for Adam completed his happiness and established the home as the foundational unit of all society.

God's Law Of Marriage

Then later God gave the law of marriage, saying,

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:24).

The original home as God created it, was a marriage between one man and one woman, male and female, for their lifetime. In addition to the physical union, it was also a spiritual union.

We are now living in an age when many people – especially young people – do not understand the true Biblical meaning of marriage. Marriage is a contract (covenant) between one man and one woman (male and female) that establishes the home. Marriage is more than a civil contract recognized by earthly courts. It is a divine covenant established by the authority of God Himself.

Some today want to accept homosexuality and

the other forms of fornication as “alternate lifestyles.” God never did intend a man to be “married” to another man or a woman to be “married” to another woman. Homosexuality is sinful, and such conditions of living together, as though they were man and woman, are condemned in the Word of God. With mankind, as with womankind, such an arrangement is “abomination.” In the long ago God said through Moses, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination” (Lev. 18:22). Again, “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death...” (Lev. 20:13). Same sex “marriages” have always been wrong (cf. Rom. 1:24-32; Jude 7). God’s law concerning marriage is universal. It applies to all men everywhere for all time, and homosexuality is not a part of God’s plan or His law for marriage.

Marriage is where one man and one woman, of age, join themselves to live together in holy wedlock as husband and wife. Scripture is clear about God’s plan for human sexuality: abstinence until marriage, fidelity within marriage, and one man married to one woman.

God’s law has always been: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exod. 20:14; Rom. 13:9). Just as God did not intend for a man to marry a man, He also did not intend, plan or authorize for a man to have more than one sexual partner, his wife, and vice versa. The only exceptions to this rule would be death (1 Cor. 7:39) and also adultery (Matt. 19:9).

Today individuals practicing homosexuality are

commonly referred to as “gays” or “lesbians,” but such relationships are wrong in God’s sight. Two people of the same sex cannot “marry.” God united the first man and woman. This is surely the teaching of the Lord in His word what a true marriage, or home, should be. Homosexuality is not an alternative “lifestyle.” Some want to have “homes” and adopt children where there are two “daddies” or two “mommies.” Some even go so far as to speak against those who teach against such sinful perversions. God’s word must be taught.

One of the crying needs of the present age is a good, Christian home. People need help with their homes and families. We need to minister to the needs of people, both parents and children, because our hope for the future of the church and our nation lies in our ability to have good Christian marriages and good Christian homes. By this, we mean that both the father and the mother, as parents, are faithful members of the Lord’s church, and their children, if old enough to obey the gospel, are also faithful children of God. As the home goes, so goes the nation. The need is great for good spiritual homes and for parents to rear God-loving and God-obeying children.

Many are marrying, divorcing, and remarrying who have no scriptural cause for a divorce and remarriage. They view marriage as a trial and error approach, and some Christians cannot see anything wrong with it, or even sex before marriage. True, man is a free moral agent, but to violate God’s will is sin: “Whosoever commiteth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).

Jesus gave the cause for a divorce and remarriage.

He said:

But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery (Matt. 5:32).

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).

The Bible plainly teaches that the sin of adultery, unless repented of and forgiven, will keep a person out of heaven (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; 22:15). "Marriage is honourable in all, the bed undefiled: but whoremongers [fornicators, NKJV] and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Jesus, in His statements, confirms God's law, which was true from the beginning, and He added, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6). The Lord's law on divorce and remarriage is clear. Man may despise and reject the teaching, but he cannot change God's eternal word.

"Winds Of Change"

But the "winds of change" are attacking our marriages; homes are being destroyed. Much teaching needs to be done all over the world in this regard. We know about many homes and what has happened to multiplied hundreds of them, inside and outside of the church. We know that the conditions are not what they should be; God hates "putting away" (Mal. 2:16).

We need to teach and help our young people to have and maintain a good, faithful, devoted Christian home where there is love for God and love for our fellowman dwelling in their hearts.

With the population growth in the world, there is an increase of marriages and of divorces. According to newspaper and magazine articles now being published, in our nation alone there are:

- Over six million children who are living without their parents (parents who are either unwilling or unable to meet their children's needs).

- One out of every four children presently lives with a single parent.

- Each year 70,000 children are physically abused by their parents.

- Also over 450,000 children are brought before juvenile courts, with over 100,000 of them confined behind bars.

- Out of every three children born in the United States, one is born to an unmarried woman.

- There are over three million children in our nation today who were born out of wedlock.

- Presently there are as many as one million divorces per year, with 85% of our teenage marriages ending in divorce.

Truly, there is a moral crisis in the land. Our nation cannot endure when regard for the sacredness of the marriage vows has been replaced with such a casual attitude towards marriage and divorce. Within recent years, divorces and remarriages have even become socially acceptable. There are far too many that are living together without being married.

The Lord gives only one reason, as noted, for the putting away (divorce) and remarriage — fornication. The innocent party (who did not commit adultery) may put away the guilty party (who did commit adultery) on the grounds of fornication and then have a right to remarry. This makes it clear that any divorce and remarriage not fitting this criteria, although legal from a civil standpoint, is not right in the sight of God. It is immoral and sinful (cf. Matt. 14:3-23; Mark 6:17-18). Of course, if a partner became deceased, the remaining person may remarry (1 Cor. 7:39).

Abortion Is Sinful

Another evil that is destroying the home today is abortion. It is on the increase. Sometimes when young couples live together without first getting married, and the woman gets pregnant, she will go the doctor and get an abortion. This is not right, but some want to justify this act by calling it “a mother’s choice with her body.” But murdering the unborn child **in** the body is not doing something **to** her body. She is killing, with the aid of a physician, another person made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). God hates those who “shed innocent blood” (Prov. 6:17).

Morality cannot be decided by popular vote. In the long ago, God’s Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah, wrote: “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). So a woman, married or unmarried, cannot kill the baby in her womb without sinning in doing so. It is never right to do wrong, and it is never wrong to do right. Life begins at conception, and

killing an unborn child is wrong. Abortion has often been called "America's Holocaust." Since that fateful day, January 22, 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the killing of an unborn baby is an act protected by the Constitution of the United States, over 44.6 million babies have been killed in America alone. In the year 2000 there were 306 children killed by abortion out of every 1000 who were born alive. Hitler's slaughter of six million Jews in the 30's and 40's was but a drop in the bucket compared to this.¹

Methods Of Abortion

We mention briefly a few methods that some doctors use for killing little babies:

(1) Suction Aspiration: probably the most common procedure performed in the first trimester. It involves a suction tube and sharp cutting edge that dissects the baby and then suctions the body parts, blood, and fluid out into a collection bottle.

(2) Dilation and Curettage (a.k.a D & C): This involves a loop shaped steel knife where the baby's body is cut in pieces and the inside of the womb is scraped to clean it from all the different body parts. Then the parts are destroyed.

(3) RU 486: a drug used when the baby is 5-9 weeks old. It starves the child, which induces its early death. Once this has occurred, another drug is used which causes the mother's body to expel the dead baby. Sometimes surgery is necessary to expel the dead baby. There can be serious side effects of this method to the mother, even up to and including death.

(4) **Saline Amniocentesis:** After the sixteenth week, a needle is inserted into the womb injecting a solution of concentrated salt. The baby breathes in, swallows the salt and is poisoned. This causes severe burning and deterioration of the skin. Then some thirty-five hours later, the child is delivered, dead with a burned shriveled body.

(5) **Partial Birth Abortion:** This procedure is performed in the later months where the doctor pulls the baby out feet first while still alive. The entire body of the baby is exposed outside of the womb, except the head, which is kept inside. Scissors are then shoved into the back of the baby's skull and its brains are sucked out through a tube. The child's head can then be delivered and its entire body thrown in the trash.

How can men (and women – especially the mothers of the unborn) be so cruel to these innocent and helpless, unborn children?

These methods, and many others are all in a day's work for many doctors, nurses, and clinics all across America and around the world. From an economic standpoint, it is big business, but from a Biblical standpoint, it is eternally damning to the soul. Many doctors refuse to do it.

The Bible teaches that human life is a sacred gift from God. Paul stated to the Athenians on Mars' hill that God "giveth life, and breath, and all things,... we are the offspring of God" (Acts 17:25, 29); and many passages of Scripture teach that life in the womb is an innocent human being. God said to the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, "Before I formed **thee** in the belly I knew **thee**; and before thou camest forth out of the

womb I sanctified **thee**, and I ordained **thee** a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5, emphasis added, PCB). Does this sound like Jeremiah was a “lifeless piece of flesh” in his mother’s womb, or “a fetal tissue?” (cf. Gen. 1:26).

When Mary, the mother of Jesus, had conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit to bring Christ into the world, the Bible says that “she was found with **child**” (Matt. 1:18, emphasis added, PBC). When Mary learned that Elisabeth, her cousin, was to have a child, she made a journey to her house in Judea, and Luke stated that Mary “entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the situation of Mary, the **babe** leaped in her womb” (Luke 1:40-41, emphasis added, PBC). Though yet unborn, John was not just a “growth” in Elisabeth’s womb; he was a living human being, capable of expressing joy and leaping.

The night Christ was born the angels said to the shepherds, “Ye shall find the **babe** wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12, emphasis added, PBC). The same word used to speak of John while yet unborn is the identical word used to speak of the newborn Christ in the manger.

Whether married or unmarried, how much better it would be for mothers to go ahead and have their unborn children rather than to have it murdered, then love and care for the child as a mother should.

Truly “righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). America needs to make our marriages and homes as they should be.

Some pregnancies do not result in an abortion.

Occasionally an unmarried couple causes a pregnancy during their courtship. They will decide to get married to "give the child a name." Several months or maybe years later they will then get a divorce, and both parents will remarry. This is not the way to begin a good Christian marriage.

Furthermore, the second marriages could be adulterous. If there is no adultery involved, then both parties will have sinned by divorcing and remarrying. Unfortunately this is becoming a common practice among many young people today.

In some cases where an unmarried couple causes a pregnancy, the couple decides to marry after having acknowledged the wrong, either before or after the child is born, and continues then to faithfully live together until the end of life's journey.

If husbands and wives would live together as God teaches them to do, no homes would be broken up by divorces. The great evil of divorce, which threatens the stability of our society, can be corrected by making our homes Christian. But the stormy winds of change are blowing. Many are being carried about with every wind of doctrine, "by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14). Only teaching the truth of God and asking people to live by it can change this condition. Nevertheless, perhaps people have never been so confused as they are now.

King Asa's Reforms

As a noted example of one who stood firm for right living and against all forms of sexual immorality

is that of Asa, the third king of Judah (1 Kings 15:9-24; 2 Chron. 14-16). He came to the throne at an early age, but he was outstanding for godliness in his long reign of forty-one years. His grandmother, Maacah, was a fanatical devotee of idolatry, worshipping at the vilest of heathen shrines. Her idolatry greatly influenced Judah toward idolatry as well, King Asa deposed her. As it is written,

He removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron (2 Chron. 15:16).

He was so strong for truth that in his own family she was no longer regarded "as the King's mother" because he could not endure her sin.

So it was also with the Sodomites whom Asa drove out and destroyed. Scripture says,

And he took away the sodomites [the perverted persons, NKJV; the male cult prostitutes, NASB; those practicing prostitution in religious rituals] out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made (1 Kings 15:12).

Once the prophet Azariah met Asa and encouraged him in his reformatory works, saying,

Hear ye me, Asa... The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you (2 Chron. 15:2).

Thus encouraged, Asa proceeded with zeal not only to root out the prevailing corruptions and abominations, but also to establish again the laws and ordinances of Jehovah.

The Lord approved of Asa's work of reformation; when he died he was greatly loved and honored (2 Chron. 16:14). "And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God" (2 Chron. 14:2). God approved his conduct. "The memory of the just is blessed" (Prov. 10:7).

Today it is still right to oppose all forms (acts) of disobedience to God's original plan for the sacredness of holy marriage. Let us never think that we in our nation's history have fought a battle and won and that now the war is over. The devil never gives up. Sin is still destroying many of our homes today, and much evil is coming into the church through a lack of teaching on marriage and unlawful divorces. Souls are being lost. We must continue to stand for good, righteous Christian homes and for Scriptural marriages. In view of many present day evils, what should many families do?

Repentance Necessary

Many families need to repent. True repentance is a change of mind or will brought about by Godly sorrow for sin, and that results in a change of life (cf. Matt. 21:28-29; 12:42; Jonah 3:10). Repentance does not change the **past** life; it redirects the **future**. It always signifies a turning **from** sin and a turning **to** God.

The story of the prodigal son in our Lord's parables of the lost (Luke 15) well illustrates our definition of repentance. After leaving home and wasting his substance in riotous living, he finally "came to himself" (v. 17) and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have

sinned” (v. 18). This is Godly sorrow. “And he arose, and came to his father” (v. 20). This is the fruit of repentance. And “when he was yet a great way off, his father (who was waiting and longing for his return – PBC) saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him” (v. 20). His father welcomed him back home and prepared a great feast and rejoiced. God loves all people today. We need to make the message clear and plain: “CHRIST RECEIVETH SINFUL MEN!”

Repentance involves also the determination to make restitution as far as within one’s power (cf. Num. 5:6-8). The Old Testament prophet Samuel was a good man, and he recognized restitution as a part of God’s law of repentance. In his old age and near death, he said to God’s people:

...Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? **and I will restore it you.** And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us... (1 Sam. 12:1-4, emphasis added, PBC).

During the personal ministry of Christ, He once visited in the home of a rich tax-collector, Zacchaeus. These men had a reputation of taking all the tax money they could get and sending a part of it to Rome and then keeping the rest. While Jesus was visiting in Zacchaeus's home in Jericho, we read that the following took place:

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham (Luke 19:8-9).

This despised chief collector of taxes who desired earnestly to see Jesus was willing to abide by the law of Moses and restore anything he had wrongfully taken, even as much as four-fold, because the Savior came into his home and impacted his life (Exod. 22:1; Num. 5:6-7). What was said was evidence of his repentance, for repentance will cause one to make restitution as far as possible. He will also do it voluntarily.

After Zacchaeus had said this to Jesus, the Lord replied that He had "come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). People can repent and be forgiven of their sins (cf. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:9; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Acts 18:8).

Conclusion

We plead with all those who need to repent and

to make their lives better, whether married or unmarried, to do so immediately. We ask that all follow the teaching of the Bible. This is the way to be blessed in this life and in the life to come. Christ is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). "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). Heaven can be our sweet eternal home. Through the rich grace of our Lord and by our obedience to His will, may we all reach that heavenly home.

**For home sweet home will always be
The dearest shrine of memory.**

Endnotes

1 Yeats, Steven E., **Seek The Old Paths**, Vol. 15, No. 12., December 2004, p. 92, "January 22nd – The Anniversary of America's Disturbing Legacy"

Chapter 23

The Powerful Force Of Materialism

David B. Jones



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We are thankful to God for the East Hill congregation. Remembrance is made of them often for all the good works in which they are involved. Their stand for truth is something which is spoken of throughout the entire world and we continue to beseech God's blessings to rest upon them. The amount of good which is done from this place will only be properly measured in eternity. The Sain family has been as generous as any family we have ever known in the brotherhood. The Bible speaks of Barnabas as one who was generous:

And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:36-37).

Barnabas gave to those who loved truth and who had a need. Paul and his lovely wife also love those who love truth and are generous with their material possessions. The members of this fine church are also to be commended because of the devotion to truth and to the support of such endeavors as this lectureship. We are very familiar with the work which accompanies such undertakings at Nesbit, hosting the annual **Standing In The Gap Lectureship** each January, and we know these events are not successful without an enormous amount of service and sacrifice. We pray God's richest blessings continue to fall upon each member as he or she labors in love for the Lord.

The subject which has been assigned us this hour is the danger of Materialism as part of the storms which the devil brings upon the world, and especially, the church. We are in a spiritual battle everyday which we live upon this earth. Paul wrote:

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 (Eph. 6:10-13).

We wrestle, or war, against those in high places who are spiritually wicked. Satan has his army and his messengers and we must be armed and alert for his

attacks. Earlier, Paul had warned them not to walk according to his rule:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others (Eph. 2:1-3).

We need to be aware of the fact that Satan has his forces and he wages war daily with God and through His creation. Peter tells us we need to be sober and somber: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The devil "walks about" trying to devour as many as he possibly can. He sends forth his influences into the world to make captive and keep captive as many of God's creation as he can possibly hold. His goal is to destroy as many as he can before God decrees that time is up and, along with his angels, the devil is cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15). Satan has many devices as he battles God. Paul warned us not to be ignorant of Satan: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11). God has shed His light - the Bible - on Satan and we can clearly know of the Deceiver's charms.

One of the charms which Satan uses to allure people into his demonic world is that of materialism. The accuser of the brethren uses his influences to

convince the masses that they should live for the here and the now as opposed to trusting God's word and living for God in this life. Materialism causes one to put his faith in sight and not God. Satan has always attacked man through the three basic avenues, each appealing to the flesh. He has sought to subdue man through the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. John writes about these ways:

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 (1 John 2:15-17).

These avenues of temptation are brought about by Satan through the flesh and not through God. Man has basic human needs: thirst, hunger, sex, etc. These needs were placed there by God, but also regulated by the same through His word. When man seeks gratification outside the confines of God's word, then he depends on himself and not on God. Man's choice will ultimately end in death:

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12).

Man is not able to direct his own paths as opposed to God's way:

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

Satan uses the physical appeal of the things of this world to draw man away from dependance upon God, replacing it with his own wisdom and will. We must be reminded of the fact that we are tempted ONLY as we are drawn away of our own lusts:

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 (James 1:13-15).

The devil is powerless over us unless we are drawn away of our desires and demands. Those who believe that Satan has miraculous power over them are truly victims of his devious plots and plans. How is that the devil can lure us away from God through materialism? We will explore some practical ways which will help to serve as warning to us as we walk in the flesh on this earth.

The Motivations Of Materialism

As we began our quest to find why and how Satan can use materialism to lure us away from God, we start with the motivations which will cause one to trust in materialism. First, there is the motivation of pride. Satan himself was led away from God because of pride. When Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy and gave him the qualifications of an elder (1 Tim 3), he warned that an elder is not to be novice, lest he be lifted up with pride: "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the

devil" (1 Tim. 3:6). The Bible student will see clearly that the inductive reasoning from the Scriptures will teach that the devil was an angel who was created good but given the ability to choose. According to Peter, there were angels who left their first estate:

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment (2 Peter 2:4).

Scripture reveals that God created everything which was made and angles would have been part of that creation:

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it (Exod. 20:11).

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee (Neh. 9:6).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:1-3).

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him (Col. 1:16).

The devil was obviously created good since everything

which God created was good (Gen 1). However, given the ability to choose, it seems that he rebelled in heaven and was cast out:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 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. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 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" (Rev. 12:7-11).

John writes about a war which was carried out in heaven. True, John wrote in figures, but in this case, the figures to which John refers, probably were literal events which happened in heaven in the long ago. By combing the thoughts in Second Peter, First Timothy and Revelation, one sees that the devil was created good but was given the right of free choice. He exercised this choice and rebelled against God, attempting to overthrow God's authority. When unsuccessful in that attempt, he was cast out and made war against God's creation.

Now, having established that principle, we notice the fact that materialism plays into the hands of the *pride* of the devil. Materialism seeks to make man his

own god. Man seeks to fix his own destiny and depend solely on himself as the provider and beneficiary of his own good. Humanism has enthroned man as god and has attempted to dethrone God from His rightful throne. The person who believes he makes his own way and charts his own course, will obviously trust himself instead of God. Materialism aids the Devil in this effort. Materialism aids him in this effort because money and materials are necessary things one must have in order to live. A person does NOT need all the money in the world, but a person needs some money to survive. Since money is a necessary thing to live, the devil has a natural draw right in his hand. The devil manipulates people into wanting more and more. Often people will work more than one job simply to have more and more money. Desiring to be like everyone else and to "keep up with the Joneses," people will allow pride to get in their way as they try to out do their friends and neighbors. All the while they forget God, dethrone Him and enthrone themselves.

Hand in hand with pride goes *prosperity* and *greed*. Money becomes a god and idol which people worship. Their money rules them and they would do anything to be faithful to their devotion to have all of it they can have. Paul had some very timely and powerful words to say about the desire for money:

But godliness with contentment is great gain.
For we brought nothing into this world, and it
is certain we can carry nothing out. And having
food and raiment let us be therewith content.
But they that will be rich fall into temptation
and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful

lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness (1 Tim. 6:6-11).

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

Those who “desire” to have money fall into the trap of the devil. Having money is not a sin, but creating and cultivating the greedy heart for money certainly is. Desiring to be rich can cause people to have many new problems in their lives. They lose sight of what is truly important and they focus on the here and now. They may “sell their souls” to the Devil just to have more and more things. Often people will over charge and extend themselves, creating additional burdens for them and their families. Time is taken away from their homes as they chase the almighty dollar. Too often truth is compromised in order to satisfy their insatiable appetite to have an abundance of money. Children watch and believe that life is composed of pushing harder and harder to have more and more. An example of this in our day is the fact that so many teenagers want to find jobs while they are in school.

While it is not wrong for a teenager to work, and in some case the households need this, many of them only work to have things they want. These jobs often take them away from the worship services, youth activities and other functions of the local church. And where did they learn to devote so much time to money? They learned this from their parents! They are taught by the example of their parents that happiness is composed of having money and lots of it. Gambling facilities prosper because of the notion and need which people have to have their pockets lined with more and more money.

When one considers the motivations to have money, he must factor in the need for *power*. Too often the phrase “money talks” is exercised in various circles. The political arena is filled with individuals and groups of individuals who seek power and in order to have power and maintain power, money is needed. Unethical deals are conducted in order to increase the amount of money these people have. The Bible speaks to the subject of power and the misuse of it. John wrote to the church and warned about a man named Diotrephes:

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church (3 John 9-10).

Now, while John does not explicitly say Diotrephes

was wealthy, this man truly desired to have power and to misuse it. Frequently, having money brings a sense of power with it and the devil can manipulate individuals in that situation.

The Malignity Of Materialism

Materialism is a malignity of the soul. This sin will attack and destroy people slowly but surely. Often the individuals involved have no idea what is happening to them. Their friends and family members are too often involved in the same and so those who surround them are involved. Day after day this sin permeates the soul until one's motivations are devoted solely to satisfying and serving this idol. Just as cancer and other diseases attack the human body, draining it of its life, materialism drains one of his spiritual life in Christ. Paul spoke of some who allowed some sins to eat at their soul:

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some (2 Tim. 2:15-18).

These men were false teachers and their error eat at them as did a canker and it destroyed their soul. So it is with materialism. It will eat at us until it has devoured our entire spiritual life.

First, it creeps in due our not being on our guard. Satan is wise and cunning and he will use any and every opening we allow him. Suppose someone in the congregation or in one's family all of a sudden came into money. Too often jealousy will rear its ugly head and the green-eyed monster will create within us a dislike for their good fortune and a desire to be like them. Little by little it eats away at us. Satan will disarm us with attitudes such as: "You are as good as they are;" or "You deserve to have money just like them." He will fill our heads with ideas such as "Why does everyone else get to have these things and I can't have them?" Television and other media ads will play on this idea. They will too often depict the one who has money as one who is popular and the one who gets the girl or the boy. Slowly this malignity drains the respect and reverence we have for God. The desire for the Lord is replaced with a desire to be rich. The need for greed begins to penetrate the soul of the person and the spiritual life disappears.

Worship services become a drudgery and a duty. The person would rather either work on a project which will profit him or her more money, or the person will use worship times to rest so more energy can be exercised to make money. The conscience becomes seared by the not iron of sin and greed. The heart is hardened through the deceitfulness of riches and the life is totally choked from the soul. Jesus spoke of this very thing in the parable of the sower:

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word

out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience (Luke 8:11-15).

The desire for the riches of this life can choke the individual's soul and cause that person to spend eternity in torments. Just as the human body slowly gives way to the destructive diseases which attack it without the proper medicine, so the soul slowly gives way to the destructive disease of materialism if the spiritual "medicine" is not applied.

In the Old Testament, God warned His people over and over about this terrible sin. Moses warned the Israelites before they crossed the Jordan River of this very danger:

Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against

them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear (Deut. 31:19-21).

They were warned that when they came into the land they would become "fat." that is, prosperous and would forget God. They would be plagued with evils and troubles and this certainly was the case. Amos chided and condemned Israel for being greedy and not worried about the needy and poor:

Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name:" (Amos 2:6-7).

Jeremiah also encountered this problem in his day. The weeping prophet lamented over the fact that God's people did not study God's word and apply it to the saving of their souls:

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? (Jer. 8:20-22).

Earlier in this same chapter he had pointed out a catalog of sins and notice what one of them was:

Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them:

for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely (Jer. 8:10).

They were involved in covetousness from the least to the greatest. The malignity of materialism had spread throughout! Paul defined covetousness as idolatry:

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Col. 3:5).

The worship of God (actually the lack of worship) is not the only symptom of materialism. The lack of benevolent acts will also be an extension of this spiritual disease. People will be too interested in themselves and not interested enough in others to help. Pure religion will not be practiced. James wrote:

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).

Money will be hoarded and those who desire to help will be opposed by the greedy. Just as Judas of old criticized Mary for "wasting" the ointment of spikenard on Jesus because of his greed (John 12), many today will oppose good works because of their love of money. Truly, the malignity of materialism is a disease which will attack and destroy local congregations as it attacks and destroys individuals. Jesus addressed the subject of covetousness in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21). The rich fool had plenty and when he prospered more, instead of

helping the needy and poor, he tore down his smaller barns and built bigger so he would have all he wanted and needed. Jesus called him a fool and said: "...*this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*" (Luke 12:20). How many people in this country would Jesus address the same way today? How many in the church would fit into the same category?

The rich young ruler was another who had allowed the malignity of materialism to spread and destroy him. He approached Jesus, desiring to have eternal life (Mark 10:17-21). Jesus told him to keep commandments to which the young man replied that he had since his youth. The Master Teacher then beheld him and loved him enough to tell him he needed to sell what he had and give to the poor, following Him. The ruler went away sorrowfully for he had great possessions. He trusted in his riches rather than in God. He had allowed the malignity of materialism to riddle his soul and destroy him.

The Mortality Of Materialism

While all we have noticed which is associated with materialism is dangerous and deadly, materialism causes one to focus on and live for mortality and not immortality. Materialism is of this world and will cause one to keep his eyes fixed for the here and now. Jesus warned us about trying to serve two masters: "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon*" (Matt. 6:24). We cannot live our lives devoted to both mortality

and immortality. We must make a choice between the two. Paul exhorted those who were in Christ to set their affections above this earth:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Col. 3:1-4).

Our affections, the things of our heart, ought to be centered in heaven and not on earth. If that is the case, our treasure will be laid up in heaven:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:19-21).

The mortality of materialism is highlighted explicitly by these words of Jesus. They rust and corrupt here on earth. It is sad to see so many who labor fervently for that which will be destroyed one day by fire. Peter reveals that the earth and its works will be burned:

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" (2 Peter 3:10).

The things we see in this life are but temporary. One day they will be dissolved in fervent heat, but our

works will live on. If we have labored for the mortality then we will reap everlasting destruction. We need to labor for that which is immortal - the spiritual things of life. Materialism is part of the mortal things of life and we are foolish if we seek them above the spiritual.

Conclusion

We are warned repeatedly in Scripture that we need to focus on the spiritual things of this life. Solomon was a man who was endowed with wisdom as no one before or after him with the exception of our Lord. He wrote a great book – Ecclesiastes – which shows the folly of seeking the temporal, vain things of life. The conclusion which is reached at the end of the book should be a guide by which we live our lives today: *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”* (Eccl. 12:13-14). The “whole” of man is to fear God and keep His commandments. One of those commandments is that we are not to be covetous people. John tells us: *“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen”* (I John 5:21). Since covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5), we are to keep ourselves from covetousness or materialism.

Materialism is truly a storm which pounds and plunders the church. It is a tool of Satan and he wields it very successfully in this day and age. May God help us to have the courage and conviction to keep our bodies in subjection and bring it under the authority of God, avoiding materialism.

Chapter 24

Challenges (Storms) Facing Young People

Robert Hatfield



Son of Bobby and Elizabeth Hatfield an active and faithful worker at the East Hill Church of Christ (Pulaski, TN). Teacher in the Bible school (teen class) department and the Summer Bible School program at East Hill. A senior in Giles County High School. Preached in various congregations in the local area. Conducted his first gospel meeting this year at the Diana congregation.

Young people are faced with new obstacles to overcome on a daily basis. Doors of opportunity are often opened toward youth – sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. Can the young seek help in getting through these problems? **Can they survive the stormy winds of change?**

Where can young people go in order to survive? Doctors and scholars have written numerous books which can be helpful in the right situations, but even better than the best book from the best scholar is that which God has revealed to both young and old. The Bible has been accurately called “the Christian’s roadmap.” This Book, “life’s instruction manual,” proves helpful to those of all ages. The glorious thought is often sung in worship to God: “the blessed

gospel is for all!" Andrew Connally made this statement regarding the young: "God must truly love the young, for no one can be old without first being young."¹ Much time should be devoted to teaching and training young people in the ways of the Bible, so that when they are old, they shall not depart from it (Prov. 22:6).

It is truly an honor for this writer to be able to offer these thoughts concerning "**Challenges Facing Young People.**" This writer is truly thankful that the East Hill eldership, through their wisdom and study in the Word of God, willingly and urgently teach and train young people for the future.

Problems (Storms) Facing Young People

There are some temptations that each Christian will undoubtedly face. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12)². Temptations are inevitable. Satan desires our souls! He doesn't want any soul to be in paradise with God, and he will do everything within his power to keep one from salvation (Luke 22:21; 1 Peter 5:8)! Such is the case with all Christians, no matter how young or old. But there are some temptations that are unique or more tempting to the young than to the old. Satan uses every way possible to attack. He knows the weaknesses of man and is ready to use them at any given time. The writer now wishes to focus on some of those temptations that, for the majority, plague the young.

DRINKING. The first two problems listed, drinking and drugs, are often a great temptation with

most young people. The sad fact of the matter is that such is even infiltrating the youth of the church! The faithful **MUST** speak out in this matter and plead with these souls. God has spoken. Paul wrote to the Galatian brethren,

Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, 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. 5:21).

There is no possible way a drunk can enter into heaven. Note the words of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10:

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.

So many people boast, saying they can handle their liquor. They say they have it under control. But the fact of the matter is that all alcoholics and heavy drinkers begin this exact same way. Satan tempts, saying, "You can handle another. Just one more." And with each submission comes an addiction. This one is trapped, right where Satan wants him to be.

The Old Testament is just as clear on this matter as the New. The wise man wrote, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). This same writer of Proverbs also recorded:

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder (Prov. 23:29-32).

The prophet Isaiah wrote, "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink..." (Isa. 5:11-12). In Habakkuk 2:15 the Bible says, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" (Hab. 2:15). Let each young person read these words and pay close attention!

DRUGS. It seems that the number of teens using drugs rises with each passing day. It is quickly admitted that young people have problems. Things of the world can cloud the mind and cause one to be overly stressed about things. But the abuse of legal drugs and use of illegal drugs is not the answer to help deal with such problems. Seeking school-wide acceptance, today's teens turn to drugs as the answer for life itself. Please, be not deceived! Drugs affect the mind of the user. The Bible teaches that one's mind is a precious gift from Almighty God. Jesus taught, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). How can one righteously serve God when his mind is over-taken by the influence of drugs? Paul wrote to the Romans, "So then with the mind I myself

serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:25). Not only must the mind be devoted to God, but, as His creation, each one's body belongs to God. Nothing that a person has is his own, including the body and spirit. God is the Owner and Giver of all things. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 teaches that the body is the temple of God. Each Christian should shun such unfruitful works (Eph. 5:11) and "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22). Peter plainly and clearly spoke against all works of darkness when he wrote,

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11).

MUSIC & MOVIES. Another plague to the teen society is that which most young people "feed" into their brains on a daily basis. The TV shows, movies, and music that is directed and marketed to teens is made up of the most harmful things one could use to deteriorate one's faith and relationship with God. Young people are taught to spend every waking moment in constant lust, to do whatever they feel like doing at any given time. They are taught that cursing is alright; in fact, they are taught that cursing is to be used in normal, every-day conversation! **Such things ought not so to be!** The mind should not be contaminated in such a way! The Bible says, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the

right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2).

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity (1 Tim. 4:12).

The apostle Paul wrote very simply, saying, "keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22). "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22). In Titus 2:11-12, the Bible teaches that the grace of God is that which brings man salvation, and it teaches that Christians should "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts" and should live "soberly, rightously, and godly, in this present world." In commenting about dirty movies, Robert R. Taylor, Jr. stated, "The destination is damnation for all who espouse and practice that type of animal behaviour portrayed in such movies."³ Brother Taylor goes on to comment, "Christians constitute the family of God. What kind of representation are we making of God's family when we read bad books or attend dirty movies?" This temptation seems so harmless initially and is so hard to avoid and resist.

GAMBLING. The problem of gambling has an affect on both young and old. Gambling is an addictive evil that gets worse each time one takes part in this action. Gambling is fully against that which the Bible teaches. In Matthew 7:12, Jesus said that which is known today as the Golden Rule: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the

prophets." Gamblers do not practice the Golden Rule. This form of chancery and risk taking is wrong because it goes fully against the first and second commandments which read,

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Matt. 22:37, 39).

Robert R. Taylor, Jr. comments, "Gambling is wrong because it goes against the Bible's teaching in regard to honesty of toil and the dignity of personal labor."³ Gambling is stealing! The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus,

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth (Eph. 4:28).

Casinos make their advertisements so appealing! The lottery commercials and flyers that are posted everywhere make gambling seem so much fun! Yet, the addictive nature, the thought of a person taking that which does not belong to him, and all the different characteristics of gambling prove that the Christian should not partake in such sinful actions.

DANCING. One of the worst temptations that attack young people is that of dancing. School-sponsored groups promote such activity. Dancing is commonly considered acceptable, yet the Bible clearly teaches against it. If one were to search for the word "dance" in the Bible, he would note that this word is found only eight times in the King James Version. The words "danced," "dances," and "dancing" are found

nineteen times (combined) in the King James Version. Out of the twenty-seven times the root word “dance” is found, only five of those are found in the New Testament.

A study of the original Greek and Hebrew texts reveals that each time the root word “dance” is translated in the King James Version, it does **not** mean the type of dancing that is common in the twenty-first century. The type of dance to which the word alludes suggests that of a customary type of dance, something that was done as a part of tradition or involved in a type of festival.

The apostle Paul wrote the following to the church at Galatia:

Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, 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. 5:21).

While this verse doesn't contain the word “dance,” a look at the original text will show a word that shares the exact same meaning as what is seen on the dance floor today. The word of focus is “**revellings**.” A look at the Greek text will show “revellings” is a derivative of several words which, combined, mean “a carousal (as if letting loose); to lie outstretched (literally or figuratively). Does this definition not exhibit that which is seen on the twenty-first century dance floor? God has spoken: “they which do such things shall not inherit the kindgom of God!”⁴

The examples given above are only a few of the many things Satan uses to tempt young people. There

is no doubt about this matter – the storms will come. Sometimes a storm may have more force than at other times, so young people must be prepared. A part of preparation for the storms involves looking at the effects and consequences of them.

The Effect(s) Of The Storms

When studying the challenges facing young people, it is equally important to study the consequences, or effects, of giving in to these challenges. The Bible teaches that those who submit to Satan's temptations will be punished. Luke recorded the words of Jesus, "I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Luke 13:27). Those whose affections are set on this earth and the sin that dwells herein cannot enter into heaven eternal. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). After listing the works of the flesh, the apostle Paul noted to the Galatian brethren, "...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21). Failing to meet God's requirements results in eternal death of the soul. Note the inspired words of James:

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 (James 1:13-15).

From these three verses the Bible teaches that God

does not tempt man to sin (other passages clearly teach that Satan is the tempter — John 8:44; Eph. 6:11; 1 Peter 5:8). Every man is tempted and drawn away of his own lust. Sin is pleasurable and appealing to man (Heb. 11:25). If sin is allowed to dwell long enough within a person, it will eventually breed spiritual death for that person's soul. Horrible punishment awaits the disobedient. May each soul — young and old — strive to “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22)!

Suggestions On How To Draw Closer To God & Survive The Storms

Realizing the challenges that each young person will face along with the consequences of submission to said challenges, how can the young get past the storms and closer to God? The following have been offered as a few suggestions from the Scriptures.

Remember thy Creator. This phrase, taken from Ecclesiastes 12:1, shows that keeping a close relationship to God is important for Christians of all ages, but is especially important for youth. The Psalmist realized his dependency upon God as he wrote, “Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation” (Psm. 27:9). The late Andrew Connally commented concerning the problem with youth today: “Something is missing inside the youth culture of our day. They have forgotten God!”⁵ The Bible teaches that all Christians ought to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”

(Matt. 22:37). Young people should remember God and love him with all of their being. Such a remembrance of God in one's life is bound to only be a beginning of a commitment, zeal, and service to God in His kingdom. God has promised man, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). God will always be there. Will you always be ready and willing to serve God?

Simply read and study. To become closer to God is to become closer to His word and to the message of His only begotten Son. As simple as it may sound, one sure way to grow closer to God is to read and study the Bible. This is not something that is taken lightly in the Scriptures. The apostle Paul wrote the church at Ephesus, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4). Man is to read, that he might understand that which God wants him to do. Paul wrote to Timothy: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15). Christians are to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). While reading and studying seems too simple to do, the importance is great as young people begin their service and become closer to God.

Remember to TRAIN yourself. Proverbs 22:6 teaches, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This exhortation is directed to parents, but note that which

youth can learn from this verse as well. The word "train" is interesting in this passage. While there will be occasions when living the Christian life is easy for a particular person, there will be times when one must train himself to godly living. This will require one's action to train himself to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).

Remember that you will give account for every action. The Christian is to be "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10) in order to receive the crown of life. Matthew 10:22 admonishes, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." Note the teachings of Jesus:

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matt. 12:33-37).

Every action and every word that a man does or says will be taken into account on the day of judgment. Paul taught the church at Rome as he wrote, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12).

Choose carefully that which you feed your brain. The brain is referred to as the heart in the King James translation of the Bible. Everything that enters into the heart is what will ultimately come forth from a man. Jesus said,

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies (Matt. 15:18-19).

Any sin that is committed originates within one's mind. The old song says, "How shall the young secure their hearts, and guard their lives from sin? Thy word the choicest rules imparts to **keep the conscience clean.**"

Choose carefully your friends. The words written to the church at Corinth admonish young people today: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33). The original Greek word that is translated "communications" is "HOMILIA," which means "companionship." This word is from two other words which simply mean "association together." ⁷ Choosing those with whom one associates is an important decision! Friends have a major impact on the lives of people of all ages – especially the young. The Bible exhorts Christians to surround themselves with those of "like precious faith." Christians ought not to surround themselves with those who will persecute them for standing for the truth, but rather they should seek friends who will encourage them towards greater work.

Have the proper foundation. How is your

foundation? If a problem comes your way are you easily shaken? The Bible teaches that Christians are to stand up for the truth; they are to “put on the whole armour of God” that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11). Jesus taught that in order to have the proper foundation, one must hear and do what God says. Matthew 7:24-27 describes two men: the wise man and the foolish man. The wise man heard and obeyed, so when the storms blew in with the strong winds and rains, the wise man’s house was not shaken because it had a solid foundation. The foolish man heard, but failed to obey, resulting in the destruction of his house when the storms blew in. Young people must not be like the foolish man, but must hear and obey, building a solid, Scriptural foundation.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

Live soberly, righteously, and godly. Titus 2:11-12 teaches that God’s grace has been extended to every man. That grace is seen through God’s offer of salvation to man. So, the Bible brings God’s grace to all. The Bible teaches that, in order to get to heaven, men must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. To “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts” is simply to reject wickedness and corrupt desires. But God’s grace (seen in the Bible) also teaches that man must live in three ways: the first of these is **soberly**. To live soberly is to have a sound mind. Compare this to the problem of drinking and drugs. Can one live soberly while

under the influence of such evils? Next, the recipient of God's grace is to live **righteously**. This means to live holy and justly. Then one must live **godly**, meaning that one's life should be devoted to God. Man must show reverence and loyalty to the Creator. These three ways of life cover all of the previously stated suggestions for surviving life's storms. If one is living soberly, righteously, and godly, he will remember the Creator, he will read and study God's word, he will train himself in the ways of the gospel, he will stand ready before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. Those who are living in this fashion will use caution in selecting what they "feed" their brain and choose those with whom they fellowship very carefully. Likewise will they have the firm foundation of truth on which to stand.

May all young people look to the Scriptures and grow therein, that they might survive whatever storm Satan may throw at them!

Preparing To Face The Future

It is interesting to notice the amount of time people place in preparation. Many spend at least an hour (if not more) preparing themselves to go out in public. Much time is spent doing homework, studying notes for tests to make good grades at school. Young people, with their parents, must be willing to spend many hours to prepare for college. The list could continue on, but the point is clear: much preparation time is required to do what one wants to do. In that same manner, if one desires to go to heaven for eternity, he must be willing to spend as much time as possible in

constant preparation. Notice the words of Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." The latter part of the verse says, "while the evil days come not." The context of Ecclesiastes 12 shows this the phrase "evil days" is a reference to getting older, but notice how this phrase likewise compares in a more spiritual sense.

In Ephesians 6:13 the apostle Paul spoke of the evil days, saying, "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." Christians are to put on God's armour that they might stand "in the evil day." This evil day is the day of temptation. If anyone – whether young or old – wants to go to heaven, he must prepared to stand against Satan by putting on the whole armour. But getting this armour on will take some preparation, it doesn't simply come to a person once he or she is baptized. The armour can only be found and placed on one's person through diligent study in God's Word.

Only in the Bible can one find the strength needed for daily Christian living. Paul wrote these encouraging words to Timothy:

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; (2 Tim. 1:7-8).

As Christians, let us not be afraid to stand against Satan! "If God be for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8:31)? It is because of this courage that the apostle Paul could "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). It is because of this courage that Paul could boldly proclaim, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). And, at the end of his journey, it was this courage that allowed Paul to say,

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: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Conclusion

Storms will come to all who are striving to live the Christian life: including young people. There are problems that, at times, will plague the heart of the young the hardest. But, God has given hope, guidance, and encouragement that each young person may survive these storms! May we all begin preparing for the future NOW.

ENDNOTES

1 Andrew Connally, "Let No Man Despise Thy Youth—Exhortations To Young People" **The Epistles Of I And II Timothy, Titus**, ed. Curtis A. Cates (Pensacola, FL: Austin McGary and Company, 1986), p. 141

2 All Scriptures are taken from the King James Version.

3 Robert R. Taylor, Jr., **How Young People Get Hurt** (Ripley, TN: Taylor Publications, 1986), p.20

4 The reader is encouraged to see Matthew 5:8; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 1 Timothy 5:22; 1 Peter 2:11

5 Andrew Connally, "The Bible – None Like It In Meeting Youths' Problems" **The Bible None Like It**, ed. Curtis A. Cates (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation, 1989), p. 153

6 James Strong, **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible** (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers). NOTE: All original Greek or Hebrew language references taken from this reference.

Chapter 25

Will God Continue To Bless America?

Dave Miller



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To answer the question posed by the title of this lecture, we must go to the Bible and observe how God has dealt with nations throughout history. The book of Kings was written to expound a central thesis: **religious factors determine the course of a nation.** We might be tempted to include many other issues that we feel are important to national life, like Social Security, welfare, taxes, national defense, gun control, immigration, the economy, the environment, jobs, foreign policy, and health care. But the Bible teaches very clearly that these factors do not determine the history of a nation. Rather, it is spiritual and religious factors that establish national health.

Prior to the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan, God issued warnings to them in order

for them to understand the key to perpetuating their national existence:

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the Lord your God. **According to the doings of the land of Egypt**, where you dwelt, **you shall not do**; and **according to the doings of the land of Canaan**, where I am bringing you, **you shall not do**; nor shall you walk in their ordinances (Lev. 18:1-3, emp. added).

Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you **do not commit any of these abominable customs** which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the Lord your God (Lev. 18:24,30, emp. added).

You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. And **you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you**; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them (Lev. 20:22-23, emp. added).

It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but **because of the wickedness of these nations** that the Lord your God drives them out from before you" (Deut. 9:5, emp. added).

When the Lord your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that **you are not ensnared to**

follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for **every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done** to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods (Deut. 12:29-31, emp. added).

You remember what finally transpired. The Israelites conquered Palestine and commenced their national existence, only to gradually emulate the wickedness of their predecessors. How so? What religious factors eventually affected the course of Hebrew history? What behaviors did the king and the people copy from their predecessors? A quick listing of those practices that resulted in the expulsion of the Canaanites from their land would include: idolatry (2 Kings 21:3), adultery (Lev. 18:20; 20:10), mediums (2 Kings 21:6; 17:17), bestiality (Lev. 18:23; 20:13), bad judges (2 Chron. 19:5-7), homosexuality (Lev. 18:22; 20:13), and the killing of children (2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; 21:6). Question: **Do these behaviors sound like America?**

1. **What about idolatry?** As a matter of fact, Hindu and Buddhist temples have sprung up all over America. Other pagan religions have also made gains in recent years, including Taoism, Native American Religion, and New Age religion. Another form of idolatry that is rampant in America was spotlighted by Paul: "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and **covetousness, which is idolatry**" (Col. 3:5,

emp. added). Greed is out of control in America, manifested by the legalization of lotteries, the upsurge of casinos outside of Las Vegas, the preoccupation of Americans with television game shows, and all the other “get rich quick” schemes from Wall Street to the “Reality TV” shows. Without a doubt, America is an idolatrous nation!

2. What about adultery? Marital unfaithfulness is at an all time high. Sexual promiscuity by Americans is unprecedented. America is an adulterous nation! In fact, experts have reported their latest research findings that indicate that the marriage institution has lost much of its original cultural role and meaning.

3. What about mediums? Americans have been treated to a steady diet of witchcraft and astrology, as well as psychic advisors and palm readers. From the Psychic Hotline and the Psychic Friends Network to the Mystic Psychic Network; from Sister Julia and Miss Cleo to “Crossing Over.” Gallup polls show that millions of Americans believe that communication with the dead is possible, and it has been estimated that at least 40% of Americans believe in astrology.

4. What about bestiality? Books and proponents are receiving increasing attention. In fact, an entire vocabulary has been generated. Zoophilia is defined as sexual attraction by a human to non-human animals. An “antispeciesist” is one who opposes bestiality. Prominent books include Midas Dekkers’ *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality*, Mark Matthews’ *The Horseman: Obsessions of a Zoophile*, Andrea Beetz’s *Love, Violence, and Sexuality in Relationships between Humans and Animals*, Marjorie B. Garber’s *Dog Love*,

Hani Miletski's Understanding Bestiality and Zoophilia, and Colin J. Williams and Martin S. Weinberg's "Zoophilia in Men: A Study of Sexual Interest in Animals." Princeton philosophy professor Peter Singer has written an essay titled "Heavy Petting" in which he asserts that bestiality "does not make sex across the species border normal, or natural, whatever those much-misused words may mean, but it does imply that **it ceases to be an offense to our status and dignity as human beings.**" PETA [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals] president, Ingrid Newkirk, who backs Singer, affirmed regarding bestiality: "If it isn't exploitation and abuse, it may not be wrong."

In the infamous U.S. Supreme Court decision on June 26, 2003 in *Lawrence v. Texas* wherein all state sodomy laws were struck down as unconstitutional, Justice Antony Scalia, joined by Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justice Thomas, wrote the dissenting opinion of the court, noting:

The Texas statute undeniably seeks to further the belief of its citizens that **certain forms of sexual behavior are "immoral and unacceptable,"**...—the same interest furthered by criminal laws against fornication, bigamy, adultery, adult incest, **bestiality**, and obscenity. Bowers held that this was a legitimate state interest. The Court today reaches the opposite conclusion.

He further noted that once laws against homosexuality are eliminated, laws against all other sexual crimes must logically be eliminated as well: "Every single

one of these laws is called into question by today's decision." Folks, it's just a matter of time.

5. What about bad judges? To answer that question, just ask yourself how the average American feels about the justice system. Who in the midst of the nationwide culture war has been ruling in case after case against the public expression of God, Christ, Christianity, and the Bible? Who eliminated prayer from the classroom in the 60s? Who has expelled Bible passages, including the Ten Commandments, from public buildings? Who legalized abortion in 1973? I rest my case.

6. What about homosexuality? We have moved from virtually complete societal abhorrence of homosexuality to complete legal sanction. In 1965, 82% of men and 58% of women said that homosexuality represents a "clear threat" to the American way of life. In 1993, 66.3% of the American population believed that sexual relations between two consenting adults of the same sex were always wrong. Now, 59% of Americans oppose homosexual marriage. Gradual erosion of America's moral sensibilities is occurring.

7. What about killing children? Since 1973, more than 44 million babies have been butchered by abortion doctors. That figure is staggering and unfathomable. In the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Persian Gulf War, just over one million Americans lost their lives—a drop in the bucket compared to the number of babies that have been killed in America by Americans!

What is God's view of killing children? "[T]hey

have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, **nor did it come into My mind**" (Jer. 19:5). "And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, **nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination**, to cause Judah to sin" (Jer. 32:35).

Archaeologists have discovered that the pagan civilizations of the Old Testament sacrificed their children and placed their bodies in the walls of their homes to ward off evil spirits. What will future civilizations think about Americans when their archaeologists excavate our garbage dumps and discover the tiny skeletons of millions of aborted babies? If they are a moral people, they will consider us bizarre, barbaric, pagan, and uncivilized.

Conclusion

The nations that God expelled from Canaan were wicked, pagan civilizations that deserved the destruction they received. Why? Because they had been guilty of idolatry, adultery, mediums, bestiality, bad judges, homosexuality, and killing children. America is now guilty of these very atrocities. America has lost her moral compass. America will likewise deserve destruction.

Many, many nations have declined or disappeared in the history of the world, including the Philistines, Hittites, Amorites, Moabites, Hivites, Jebusites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Sumerians, Assyrians,

Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Romans, Nasca, Incas, Aztecs, and Mayans. Such civilizations were expunged for the same reason—their rejection of God and His Word.

Listen to the inspired assessment of one of Judah's kings:

He did evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the Lord. And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear an oath by God; but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel. Moreover **all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more**, according to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the Lord which He had consecrated in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers **sent warnings to them by His messengers**, rising up early and sending them, because **He had compassion on His people** and on His dwelling place. But they **mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets**, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and **had no compassion** on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand (2 Chron. 36:12-17, emp. added).

Alexis de Tocqueville was a French historian/politician who visited America from 1831-1832, traveling the country in order to analyze American institutions. The

result of his investigation was published in 1835 as *Democracy in America*. We would do well to contemplate his observations:

There is no country in the world where **the Christian religion** retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America; and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.

Christianity, therefore, reigns without obstacle, by universal consent; the consequence is, as I have before observed, that **every principle of the moral world is fixed** and determinate.

The revolutionists of America are obliged to profess an ostensible respect for **Christian morality** and equity, which does not permit them to violate wantonly the laws that oppose their designs.... [W]hile the law permits the Americans to do what they please, **religion prevents them** from conceiving, and forbids them to commit, what is rash or unjust.

I do not know whether all Americans have **a sincere faith in their religion**—for who can search the human heart?—but I am certain that they hold it to be **indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions**. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society.

The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other.... **How is it possible that society should escape destruction if the moral tie is not strengthened in**

proportion as the political tie is relaxed? And what can be done with a people who are their own masters if they are not submissive to the Deity?

Signer of the Declaration of Independence, vice-president under George Washington, and the second president of the United States, John Adams, addressed the Officers of the First Brigade of the Third Division of the Militia of Massachusetts on October 11, 1798. Here's what he said on that occasion: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions **unbridled by morality and religion....** Our constitution was made only for a **moral and religious people**. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

May God bless New Testament Christians with the courage and determination to remain faithful to His Word in the home, on the job, and in school and society. May we model Christianity to our nation and represent Christ accurately to this nation that is swiftly abandoning the Christian values on which she was originally founded. May we sound the alarm and alert people regarding God's view of what is transpiring. For only if a sizeable percentage of our citizenry returns to the foundational principles of the Bible—can God continue to bless America.

Chapter 26

Are We In The Last Days?

Bobby Liddell



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Introduction

Thanks, again, to the lovely, beloved brethren of the East Hill church, for their provision of this splendid time of learning more about the Word of God, and about how to answer these important questions of our day. The elders of this congregation are men of faith and wisdom, who ably lead and feed the flock. May their days be many, and their blessings multiplied. Brethren Sain and Britton are exceptionally worthy of commendation for their commitment to the Lord's cause, and for their diligent, productive, tireless work in spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. The East Hill brethren are known for their love, faithfulness, service, hospitality, and good works. For all these reasons, and many more, we rejoice with this church, and give thanks to God for it.

Many are confusing the ignorant and misleading the

gullible (Matt. 15:14) with their false doctrines about the last days. Their erroneous claims are that they **know** that we are in the last days, or that they **know** when the last days will be (but they do not know what the Scripture teaches concerning the last days); that is, that they **know** the end of this world is near, and that the “signs of the times” are their proof. Thus, they frighten many, including some sincere, searching people, with their preposterous prophecies. A passage particularly relevant for self-proclaimed prophets is Deuteronomy 18:22.

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him (Deut. 18:22).

Like the wicked, false prophets of old, the modern false prophets sell their prophecies (often by the millions of copies) in order to fleece men, and that to swell their coffers of unjust gain (cf. Jer. 6:13; 8:10; 14:14-18; 23:9ff).

Can we know the truth about the last days? Surely (John 8:32; 17:17)!

To that end, let us consider what false teachers are saying about the last days, in contradiction of God’s Word. Then, we shall look at the question, “What are the last days—as taught in Scripture?” Finally, we shall study what we must do in relation to the truth about the last days.

What Are False Teachers Saying About The Last Days?

To understand better the question before us (“Are We In The Last Days?”), let us consider some of the more common, well known assertions from those who teach error concerning the last days.

Many Have Set Dates For The End, But All Were Wrong

Date setters have failed, and continue to fail. Their failure begins with a misunderstanding of what the “last days” are. From the early days of Christianity, there have been a multitude of efforts to seek to determine the time of Christ’s return (the last day). Most have approached their objectives with erroneous, unscriptural, and anti-scriptural beliefs based on twisted passages as their basis.

When reading the following, remember the Bible does not teach a Rapture, nor Tribulation, or a literal, carnal world ending battle of Armageddon as taught by the system of false doctrine known as Premillennialism (and other forms of millennialism).

The Montanists (second century) proclaimed Christ’s imminent return to set up New Jerusalem in Pepuza (Asia Minor). No one, today, knows the location of Pepuza.

A.D. 999 saw many who gave away their possessions, to the Catholic church, thinking Jesus would come back on January 1, 1000. They lost their possessions.

Joseph Smith (Mormon) taught Christ would come back before the end of the 19th century. He did not.

William Miller (Baptist) said Christ would return in 1843, then 1844. When the time came and went, his movement fell apart.

Charles Taze Russell, who began the Jehovah’s Witnesses group, said the Rapture would take place in 1910, and the world would end in 1914—but, when his prophecy failed, he said Christ did come, but His return was “invisible.” Later, the Jehovah’s Witnesses said 1918, then 1925, then 1941, then 1975, then 1984, and 1994 were the dates (in November, 1995, they announced Armageddon had been delayed). They missed it every time.

Moses David (David Berg) predicted a comet would kill everyone in the United States in the mid 1970s, but

later cited 1986 as the date of Armageddon. He was wrong.

David Koresh, of the Branch Davidians, predicted 1995 as the date of the end, but his end came in 1993.

Louis Farrakhan (1991) said the Gulf War would be the war of Armageddon. It was not.

A full page ad in **USA Today**, placed by the Hyoogo Movement, on October 20, 1991, said the Rapture would take place on October 28, 1992. They were wrong.

Several noted the year 2000 as the time of the battle of Armageddon; thus, they deduced the Rapture had to occur in 1993. It did not.

John Hinkle picked Thursday, June 9, 1994. His specific prediction was absolutely wrong.

Harold Camping (president of **Family Radio**) said the world would end in September, 1994. Like all the others, he was in error.

Benny Hinn (Assemblies of God) predicted the Rapture would be in 1993 (and that God would destroy all homosexuals in America by 1994-1995). They are still here.

Peter Ruckman (1611 KJV Only Baptist) said the Rapture was to come around 1990, and that the Millennium would begin by 2000. As he so often has been, on so many other issues, he was positively wrong about this one too.

James Ussher predicted the end of the world would be 2,000 years after the birth of Christ, or, according to his chronology, 1996. It was not.

Vladimir Sobolyovhas forecast the Armageddon Flood, by analyzing prophecies of Nostradamus, to be in 1997-1999. He and Nostradamus did not know what they claimed to know.

Dan Millar and Bob Wadsworth employed astronomy to predict the Antichrist would arrive at the Vatican on April 10, 1997, as Pope Peter II. He failed to keep his supposed appointment--and is not there yet.

October 20, 1997 was to be the date of the beginning of the rebuilding of the temple. Eight years later, the temple still has not been started.

Marilyn Agee forecast the Rapture for May 31, 1998— then June 7, then June 14, and, then June 21. She was wrong every time.

Jack Van Impe said 2001 would be a year of global chaos, and the emergence of a one world church. He continues to be consistent in his being wrong.

Jerry Falwell stated in 1999 that he thought Christ's return would be within ten years. If Christ does come before 2009, it will not prove Falwell had any special knowledge. (From **Library of Date Setters of the End of the World, and Will Christ Return In The Year 2000?**).

Date setters have been wrong on every occasion, and shall always be. Jesus plainly said, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man" (Mat. 24:36). We know Christ is coming, but we do not know when, for our Lord said, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mat. 25:13).

Hal Lindsey's Widely Acclaimed—But False— Predictions

Hal Lindsey, author of 20 books which have sold 40 millions copies, and self-styled "prophecy freak," in a book entitled **The World's Final Hour** ("A Summary of The Late Great Planet Earth," which was a book Lindsey wrote in 1970, and which has sold multiplied millions of copies), wrote (in 1970):

There are events today which, because they are happening all at once, are different from any other time in history. We are seeing the final fitting together of all the prophetic signs that Jesus said would come (**The World's Final Hour**, p. 15).

Thirty-five years later, it is evident that Lindsey and all the misguided date-setters like him, who mistakenly point to Jesus as their basis for saying the so-called signs of the times indicate we are in the last days, are still wrong. As a matter of fact, they are shown to be even much more “wronger.” As a fitting and well known representative of this group of prophetic prognosticators, Lindsey lists seven signs of the return of Christ. A study of Lindsey’s “Seven Signs” will help us to understand how so many have reached the erroneous conclusion that “the end is near.”

The First Sign. Lindsey points to the establishment of the geographically bounded nation of Israel as the first and key sign.

When the Jews became a nation again in 1948, that was the most important sign that any generation could see, because now they had returned to their land. It was the first sign (**Hour**, pp. 22-23).

Israel became a nation on May 14, 1948 by mandate of the League of Nations. Lindsey says, “On that day, the prophetic countdown began!” (**The 1980’s: Countdown To Armageddon**, p. 12). Remember, the events which were to take place within “this generation” (Matt. 25:34) have, as their starting date, according to Lindsey, 1948.

Most agree a generation is equivalent to a time period of forty years; thus, 1948 plus forty years equals 1988 – the date when the “prophetic countdown” should end. Not surprisingly, since time proved him to be a false prophet, Lindsey has changed his date; first, to 2007; then, to 2040, and 2047. (We will look at the significance of 1988 later in this chapter.)

The Second Sign. Lindsey cites the Jews’ possession of Jerusalem as the second sign, and states,

That was the second great sign that the world stage was being set for the second coming of Jesus the Messiah. Now, since those two things are true, every other sign I am going to give you has great significance. If those two things were not true, the other signs would not have any more significance than they had in 1940 or any other time before that. But you see, there has never been a time when the Jew has been returned from a world-wide dispersion or been in total possession of old Jerusalem (**Hour**, p. 26).

In 1967, after the Six-Day War, Israel had possession of most of Jerusalem; however, the control of some areas remained with the Arabs.

From Jim Searcy's **Great Joy In Great Tribulation** comes this:

If Israel again took possession of Jerusalem in 1967, and a Bible generation is 40 years, everything including the tribulation and the Lord's return should be done by 2007. Please note that we are not telling anyone the day or the hour. We could be several years into the 7 years of final great tribulation and very few of us would know it. We have reason to expect the end to be before the end of 2007.

Obviously, since 1988 has passed and the Rapture/Tribulation/Armageddon events, as so loudly and confidently proclaimed by Premillennialists, have not come to pass, there must be a new date set for the last days—2007, per Lindsey and Searcy.

The Third Sign. Lindsey claims, "The third sign has not yet happened yet, but it will soon." Remember, Lindsey wrote this in 1970. He reasons,

For the Antichrist to desecrate the temple, there first has to be a temple. I've learned that since 1948 certain Jewish societies have been collecting what they call temple bonds. They already have a tremendous amount of money gathered for the construction of the temple. There were some documents discovered a few years ago, after the repossession of the temple area, which gave the exact methodology of cutting stone for the temple and so forth. They had been buried for centuries near the Wailing Wall. And now the temple can be prefabricated in about six months—the third sign (**Hour**, p. 28).

As of this day (2005), there has not been one stone laid, nor shall there be another temple, in which God shall dwell, built in Jerusalem (Acts 17:24-25; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; John 4:21-24; Matt. 23:37-24:2).

The Fourth Sign. Lindsey refers to a rising of a “fantastic power from their [Israel’s] uttermost north,” as the fourth sign, and concludes,

But we see in our day these prophecies taking place exactly as they were predicted, because, you see, Russia is the only nation to the uttermost north of Israel. If you take a globe and go directly north, you will end right in the middle of Russia. If you want to read the future of Russia, I can tell you exactly what is going to happen to Russia and its Communist confederacies, because all of its confederates are given here, too. The Arabs are also mentioned (**Hour**, pp. 31-32).

In 1970, when Lindsey wrote, Russia was a fearsome world power, but the Soviet Union has crumbled, and Russia’s once powerful status is no more. I remember well the many premillennialists who, in the 1960s and 1970s were preaching the mighty Russian state’s conquests were

leading to the imminently impending “battle of Armageddon.”

In December of 1991, as the world watched in amazement, the Soviet Union disintegrated into fifteen separate countries. Its collapse was hailed by the west as a victory for freedom, a triumph of democracy over totalitarianism, and evidence of the superiority of capitalism over socialism. The United States rejoiced as its formidable enemy was brought to its knees, thereby ending the Cold War which had hovered over these two superpowers since the end of World War II. Indeed, the breakup of the Soviet Union transformed the entire world political situation, leading to a complete reformulation of political, economic and military alliances all over the globe (**Cold War Museum**).

What will premillennial, prophetic predictors do since Russia no longer fits their fantastically imaginative plans? We know, from their recklessly wild speculations of the past, they will soon find a way to make current events, present day politics, and modern leaders of men seem to fit their last days’ prognostications.

The Fifth Sign. Lindsey says,

The fifth sign is that at the same time this northern power will arise, there will come up a confederacy of Arabs who will unite over their common hatred of the nation. Finally, they will actually launch the attack against the nation of Israel, bringing about the last war of the world.

He continues,

...Russia is going to make a lightninglike thrust, with its confederates, through the Middle East and conquer the whole African continent.... While the Russian army is down in Egypt and

Africa, news from the north and from the east will trouble them. If you look to the north of Africa, what do you see? Europe. And as you look to the east, you see Asia (**Hour**, pp. 33-36).

While some radical Muslims, and some Muslim controlled countries have, most certainly, displayed their hatred for Israel (and America), Russia's ability to do as Lindsey predicted, as noted earlier, has ceased.

The Sixth Sign. Lindsey asserts,

While all of this is going on, there will be a great confederacy of Asians formed, and they are going to come into this battle once the Arabs and the Russians start a war.... China, right now, is boasting an army, a militia, of 200,000,000 soldiers. I could never see how China could get an army that size to the subcontinent. Then some years ago I read some news releases and learned that India was taking Pakistan to the UN General Assembly because Pakistan was cooperating with the Red Chinese to build a road over the mountains which separate them, a road connecting the Red Chinese with the subcontinent—a straight shot to the Euphrates River. So this would make it possible to march a vast army from China [to engage in the Battle of Armageddon according to Lindsey, BL] to the subcontinent through the Euphrates River. Perhaps the reason Russia could get away with this lightninglike thrust without drawing a counterattack is that the army would have to march a long way. Up to this time, they haven't had the industrial complex to produce a fully mechanized army (**Hour**, pp. 37-38).

Can you imagine 200 million Chinese **marching** from China to fight in the Middle East?

The Seventh Sign. Finally, Lindsey conjectures,

The Bible predicts that ancient Rome will be revived again just shortly before the coming of Christ.... In the last days ten nations will rise up out of ruins of the Old Roman Empire. These ten nations, who will have descendants of the old Roman Empire in them, will join together in a confederacy. They will become a vast economic and industrial power. But the real power will come when out of these ten nations, or this Roman culture, will suddenly arise an electrifying leader: I call him the future Fuehrer; some call him the Antichrist.... At the same time that this person rises, there is one who comes up in the Middle East—a great religious leader who is called “the false prophet.” He will join forces with this Roman dictator.... I believe we are seeing the stage set for all of this to happen (**Hour**, pp. 39-40).

Later, the false prophet would write:

When I wrote that in Late Great, the only possible successor to the Roman Empire (in my opinion) was the European Common Market. But a decade ago, that organization had just six member nations, not the 10 the Bible forecast. In 1979, Greece became the 10th member of the Common Market (**Countdown**, p. 15).

As is the case with date-setters, subsequent history ultimately refutes their speculations. Historically, the six original countries making up the European Common Market were Luxembourg, Netherlands, France, Italy, West Germany, and Belgium. In 1973, Denmark, The United Kingdom, and Ireland joined. In 1981, Greece became a member, making a total of ten nations as Lindsey had

“prophesied,” and fulfilling the “seventh sign.”

However, in 1986, Lindsey’s prophetic theory was upset when Portugal and Spain were added (making a total of 12 nations--2 too many!). In 1995, Austria, Sweden, and Finland became members (for a total of 15 nations). Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Poland joined, what is now the European Union, in 2004. Today, there are 25 nations in the European Union—15 too many for Lindsey’s theory. Other nations are scheduled to join.

Lindsey’s false signs culminate in the scenario he describes next.

As soon as these ten nations form the confederacy, the Roman dictator and the false prophet will appear. That means that somewhere in Europe, right now, lives the greatest leader this world will ever know – outside of Jesus the Messiah. Somewhere in Europe there is a man who will make Hitler look like a choir boy. But, this man, according to the profile the Scripture gives him, is going to appear to be the savior of the world. People are going to accept him as a deity and even as a god. He is going to come with an electrifying program; we are even told what the main thrust of his promises will be. The first promise will be to free the world of war: He will bring universal peace. The second promise has to do with providing an answer to the economic problems plaguing the earth...He will have genuine answers. But worship of himself will be the price tag. He will force every person in the world to swear allegiance to him as god or they can’t receive a number; and if they don’t get that number, they can’t buy or sell or hold a job (**Hour**, p. 41).

Lindsey’s predictions continue:

I can see how the stage is being set for that already, because I have read many articles predicting we will have a moneyless and paperless society by the 1980s. I read a report showing how eventually all money and every transaction will be put on computers, and everyone will receive a number. The writers were debating about the best way to keep a person from losing this number, because if anyone found that number, he could wipe you out; he could get everything you had. So they were thinking of tattooing on some prominent place, like the hand or forehead, in ultraviolet letters, a number which would be a lifetime number. Now if that were done, it would fulfill exactly the prophecy about how the Roman dictator will have universal control (**Hour**, p. 42).

Then, he states,

The climax of all I am talking about, when all of these movements of history will converge, will occur during a seven-year period immediately prior to the return of the Messiah, and Bible students call this period the great tribulation...my own personal convictions are that if you are a true Christian right now, you will not be here during those seven years (for, Lindsey speculates Christians will be raptured to be spiritual ministers for "**some beings**" to God, "So this tells me that maybe God is going to redeem many races or worlds of people on other planets.") (**Hour**, pp. 42-44).

Did you notice that he said the end would come soon after the tenth nation joined the European Common Market (which happened in 1979), and that Christians would be Raptured to minister to aliens on other planets? Finally,

Lindsey wrote,

Do you realize that Jesus said that the generation that would see all of these things begin to happen would not pass away until all was fulfilled? You are the generation seeing these things; you are the generation which is not going to see physical death (**Hour**, p. 44).

In **The Late Great Planet Earth**, written in 1970, he defines the generation as follows:

What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs—chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place. Many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives believe that this is so (p. 54).

So, the time of the generation which would see Jesus' return would be bounded by 1948 and 1988. You and I both know, now, that Lindsey, and the "many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives," as date setters always have, missed it completely.

The Rapture Forecast For 1988

In 1988, I moved to Pensacola, Florida, to work with the Bellview congregation. Shortly after arriving, I learned Joe Civelli, of Pensacola, had written a booklet which touted the Rapture would take place in September of 1988. I called Mr. Civelli to inquire of his reasons for believing so. He eagerly explained how he had mathematically calculated Bible prophecies and dates to arrive at his conclusion. He was very confident he was NOT wrong.

When I quoted Matthew 24:36, which records the words of Jesus concerning His return: "But of that day

and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," he did not hesitate in saying, "We can't know the day or the hour, but it doesn't say you can't know the month and the year." So, in keeping with his view, he knew the month to be September, and the year to be 1988. He was wrong.

At about the same time of Civelli's writing, Edgar Whisenant wrote a booklet entitled "88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988" which was printed with another booklet, "On Borrowed Time." Concerning Matthew 24:36, Whisenant wrote:

Man can know every event of the end-time to the very second except for the day and hour of the Rapture. That is the only mystery in the whole thing. Isn't that just like God. He said day and hour. He didn't say week, month and year (**On Borrowed Time**, p. 20).

Whisenant stated,

God uses the dates of the last three Feasts of Israel in the years 1988 through 1997 to begin and end the counts of days given in the Old and New Testament books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. The lunar dates of the last three Feasts of Israel, which begins and ends the counts of days given in Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation will only fit 1988 through 1995. At no other time in history or the future will these Bible counts fit. This is unfakeable and undeniable proof that the 70th week of Daniel, called the Seven-Year Tribulation, starts in 1988 (**On Borrowed Time**, pp. 6-7).

He figured the Rapture would take place sometime between September 11-13, 1988, Armageddon would start on October 4, 1995, and the supposed earthly millennial reign of Jesus would begin on December 23, 1995. And, of

course, according to him, eternity begins on Tuesday, January 1, 3000! So, get ready.

Notice, according to Whisenant, there is "no other time in history or the future," other than 1988 through 1995, when these "Bible counts fit." Since Whisenant knows, then the conclusion, from the above, must be that Christ is never coming back! (cf. John 14:1-4).

After his 1988 prediction failed, he came out with a subsequent book, "89 Reasons Why The Rapture Is In 1989." He missed it, again.

Whisenant, as do other end time prognosticators, misuses Daniel's seventy weeks to try to prove his case. He wrote, "...from the Day of Atonement 1988 to the Day of Atonement 1995 is the Seven-Year Tribulation called the 70th week of Daniel" (**88 Reasons**, p. 17).

Daniel's Seventy Weeks

Daniel 9 records the last revelation of God to Daniel. (The chapters are not in chronological order. Chronologically, they would be in this order: 1-4, 7, 8, 5, 6, 11, 10, 12, and 9.) Daniel 9 is one of the most discussed and most misunderstood chapters in all the Bible. As noted earlier, many premillennial prophets and date setters look to Daniel 9 as if it supported their false doctrines. (I owe much to brother Rex A. Turner, Sr., under whom I studied Daniel, and to his book, **Daniel: A Prophet Of God**, for the following information.)

Darius I Hystaspes, the son of Ahasuerus, reigned from 521-486 B.C. (vs. 1-2). In the first year of his reign, Daniel understood from Jeremiah that God would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem (Jer. 25:11; cf. 29:4-10; 2 Chron. 36:19-21).

Daniel prayed with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. In his prayer: he praised God for His keeping His covenant and mercy; confessed their sins and disobedience; declared

their “confusion of face” because of their transgression; spoke of God’s doing what He had promised in His Word in bringing them into captivity; and, that God was righteous in so doing; and besought the Lord to let His anger and fury be turned away from the city of Jerusalem, and to cause His face to shine upon the sanctuary (temple) that was desolate, for the Lord’s sake (Dan. 9:3-19).

Zerubbabel had led 49,897 of the Jews back from captivity to Jerusalem (Ezra 1-2), in the first of three returns (536 B.C.). Work was begun on the temple, but was soon stopped by the opposition (Ezra 4). Darius searched for the original decree of Cyrus, and upon finding it, ordered the resumption of the building (Ezra 6). The temple, which was destroyed in 586 B.C. (Jer. 52:12-14), was finished being rebuilt in 516 B.C.

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to give Daniel understanding. Gabriel told Daniel of seventy “weeks” (seventy heptads or sevens). Seventy times seven equals 490 (years) (Dan. 9:20-23).

During the seventy weeks, or 490 years, the following would be accomplished (v. 24).

- To finish the transgression.
- To make an end of sins.
- To make reconciliation for iniquity.
- To bring in everlasting righteousness.
- To seal up the vision and prophecy.
- To anoint the most Holy.

1. To finish the transgression. There would be a full end of the desolation on the Jewish nation for their sins of idolatry. The Assyrian and Babylonian captivities broke them from idol worship.

2. To make an end of sins. A way (system) of forgiveness would be provided that sin would be

remembered by God no more (Heb. 8:12; cf. 10:1-4; 9:22; 10:12).

3. To make reconciliation for iniquity. Through Christ, man could be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rev. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4).

4. To bring in everlasting righteousness. The Gospel system of righteousness which brings salvation by Christ's atonement for sin would be brought in within this 490 year period (cf. Rom. 3).

5. To seal up the vision and prophecy. To fulfill the Old Testament prophecies which culminated in the Messiah (Matt. 11:13; 5:17-18; Luke 24:44).

6. To anoint the most Holy. Christ would be anointed as King of kings (1 Tim. 6:15; Dan. 7:13-14; Mark 16:19; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9), during this time of seventy weeks.

The seventy weeks would begin with the going forth of the command to build Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25). From then to the Messiah would be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks or 69 weeks. $69 \times 7 = 483$ years. Seven weeks (49 years) would be involved in the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem ("the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times").

After the threescore and two weeks (which come after the seven weeks); thus, **AFTER** 69 weeks or 483 years, Messiah would be cut off (suffer a violent death, Isa. 53:7-8). NOTE: Christ would begin His public ministry **AFTER** the sixty-ninth week; thus, **IN** the seventieth week. Many miss this point and misapply this prophecy (Dan. 9:26).

"But not for himself" means He would have nothing (ASV). He had no possessions (John 19:23-24). He had no position of worldly honor (18:36). He had been forsaken by His friends (Matt. 24:56). He was crucified by His people, the Jews (23:34-39; 27:23). He gave up self, and emptied Himself, to save man from sin.

The people of the prince (the Roman army under

Titus) would destroy the city (of Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (temple), with a flood (an overwhelming), which did happen in A.D. 70 (cf. Matt. 24:15). The Christians in Jerusalem fled to Pella and were spared, but multiplied tens of thousands of Jews were killed or taken captive in the destruction of Jerusalem.

According to Daniel 9:27, He would "confirm the covenant with many for one week" which refers to the work of Christ and His disciples to take the Gospel to the Jews. They were given the good news first (Matt. 10:5-6; Acts 1:8) until Acts 8:5. When the seventieth week was up, the Gospel would be taken to the Samaritans (Jew and Gentile mixed race, Acts 8:5), and eventually to the full-blooded Gentiles.

"In the midst of the week" means in the middle of the seventieth week. Therefore, **AFTER** 69 weeks (483 years) and one-half week (3.5 years), for a total of 486.5 years, Christ would be crucified.

Half of the week (the seventieth week) would be three and one-half years, the time of the public ministry of Jesus which began when He was about thirty (Luke 3:23; John 1:29-ff). He was crucified three and one-half years later. His ministry covered the time of four Passovers (John 2:12, 23; 5:1; 6:4; 12:1).

By His death on the cross, He would "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," nailing the Old Law (with its system of animal sacrifices) to His cross (Col. 2:14). By fulfilling the Old Law, He took it out of the way (Matt. 5:17-18), by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 10:9-10). Thus, there is no benefit to offering an animal sacrifice after the cross.

When did the command go forth (Dan. 9:24)? The command to restore and to rebuild the city was given to Nehemiah in the second commission of king Artaxerxes Longimanus (Neh. 1:1-3; 2:1-6). It was in the king's

twentieth year, and he began to reign in 477 B.C. Thus, his twentieth year would be 457 B.C.

TIMETABLE

Beginning with	457 B.C. (the going forth of the command), add:
7 weeks	49 years for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.
62 weeks	434 years until the Messiah's ministry.
1/2 week	3.5 years until the crucifixion.
1/2 week	<u>3.5 years of preaching to the Jews.</u>
Total	490 years (A.D. 33)

Thus, 457 B.C. plus 490 years equals A.D. 33. Subtract one-half week (3.5 years), and the date of the crucifixion was in A.D. 28 or 29.

The blessings of the Messiah are now available to us. This is not yet to be fulfilled. God has not postponed the Messiah's coming, Kingship, and blessings. They are available now just as Daniel prophesied. As always, the false prophets, date setters, and premillennialists have missed the point, misapplied the passage, and misled the people.

Men Falsely Teach That Jesus Revealed Signs Of The "Last Days"

They refer to them as "signs of the times," and they set forth the claims that Jesus revealed what signs would precede His second coming and the end of the Christian age. Misunderstanding and misapplication of Matthew 24 (and parallel passages) fuel their theories.

Our Savior, as His words are recorded in Matthew 24, gave a sign of the coming fall of Jerusalem (in A.D. 70), but of His second coming and the end of the world, He gave no such sign. His instructions and sign, as

followed by the Christians in Jerusalem, were such that not a single one perished in the conquest and destruction of the city by the Roman armies under Titus.

First, note that He gave NO signs of His second coming and the end of the world. Jesus said of "that day"; that is, the day of His return, "knoweth no man" (Matt. 24:36). No man knows yet.

On the other hand, of the punishment to come upon the Jews and Jerusalem, Jesus had told the hypocritical Jewish leaders: "All these things shall come upon this generation" (Matt. 23:36), and "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (v. 38). Departing from the temple, Jesus said to his disciples, "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (24:2-3). This must have seemed surprising indeed, considering the great size of the stones used in the building of the temple.

In the very presence (or view) of the magnificent and massive temple, which had been built by Herod (v. 1), the apostles asked Jesus, "Tell us, when shall these things be: and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (v. 3). They were interested in two things, "When," and "What." He answered the two questions (when and what) with a discussion of two events (the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world). It seems the apostles may have confused the two events, but Jesus showed clearly the distinction.

He began answering their questions with a discussion of the fall of Jerusalem, including the destruction of the temple, and the accompanying sign, which would show that which He said would "come upon this generation" (23:36); thus, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (24:34). Note the instances of "these things" in Matthew 23-24 (vv. 23:36; 24:2, 3, 6, 8, 33, 34), all of which are used in reference to A.D. 70 and the

destruction of Jerusalem.

The temple had been God's house (21:12-13), but, after God's presence departed, because of the wickedness of the Jews, the Roman army, under Titus, would come "in the name of the Lord" (23:39) to destroy it so that, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (24:2). History shows the Roman army demolished the temple, even removing stone from stone seeking the gold which ran down through the cracks when the temple burned.

Jesus warned, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (v. 4). False Christs would appear and deceive many (v. 5),

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these things are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved (vs. 5-13).

"These things" (wars, natural disasters, persecutions, false prophets, and love waxing cold) would come to pass, but they would not signify the end; that is, the fall of Jerusalem. So, His followers were not to be alarmed. Those who endured to the "end" (Jerusalem's destruction) would be saved (v. 13).

Modern false prophets and premillennial predictors

cite the very things noted above as proof that we are in the last days. They miss the whole point of Christ's words.

Christ continued, noting the gospel would be preached to all nations (which it was, Col. 1:23), and "then shall the end come" (v. 14).

The Abomination Of Desolation

The abomination of desolation standing in the holy place in God's temple (v. 15) would be the sign of the destruction of Jerusalem. When the Roman army besieged the city (Luke 21:20), the fulfillment of Daniel 9:27, in the destruction of Jerusalem, would come. They were called upon to "endure unto the end" (Matt. 24:13), but when Christians in Jerusalem saw the sign (v. 15), they were to flee. This was a sign they could understand (v. 15).

Thus, Jesus said,

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house; Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day (Matt. 24:16-20).

They could flee, and they were commanded to do so. Their flight was to be with haste, and their prayers in preparation should be to the end that they would not be hindered. Obviously, this was not a reference to the second coming of Christ and the end of the world from which none can flee. The Christians in Jerusalem saw the sign, fled the city (and went to Pella), and not one lost his life in its destruction.

The "great tribulation" (in the punishment of the unbelieving Jews and the destruction of the ecclesiastical

system of Judaism) of those days would result in the destruction of all there, "except those days should be shortened" (vs. 21-22). Those who refused to heed the sign lost their lives (or were captured), but for the sake of His people, the days were shortened.

Then, Christ warned of false sightings, and he said, "Believe it not" (v. 23). False Christs and false prophets would seek to deceive the elect, but, because of His previous warnings, they were forearmed (vs. 24-26).

The swiftness of the destructive coming of His judgment upon Jerusalem would result in the eagles gathering upon the carcass of the city (vs. 27-28). In figurative and apocalyptic language, Jesus described the fall of the Jewish system (leaders, priesthood, temple worship, etc.) like the heavenly bodies losing their light and position (v. 29; cf. Isa. 13). When these things came to pass, they would signify that "the Son of man," whom they had crucified, was "in heaven" (v. 30; cf. 26:64), and His coming in judgment (not His second coming) on Jerusalem was proof that He sat at the right hand of God (Heb. 8:1; Dan. 7:13-14).

Angels; that is, messengers who preached the gospel, not the heavenly host, would go forth with the good news to all the world (v. 31; cf. Mark 16:15-16). This, the followers of Christ did.

The Parable Of The Fig Tree

Premillennialists and date setters make much of this parable (Matt. 24:32-33). The simple truth taught by it is this: men can tell when summer is near (just as we can today) when the trees start blooming and budding. Just so, when the Christians in Jerusalem saw the sign which Christ had given (v. 15), they could tell the time was near.

The things of which Jesus had spoken, and which are recorded in the first part of Matthew 24, would come

to pass within the lifetime of that generation. Hear what He said.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (vs. 34-35).

A generation is about forty years; thus, what Jesus said would come to pass in about forty years, and it did, in the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple by the Roman army in A.D. 70. Who can miss this obvious truth without being deceived? Its certainty has been established: "My words shall not pass away."

The Second Coming Of Christ

Having concluded his discussion of what was going to happen in the destruction of Jerusalem and when it would be, Christ turned to a discussion of His second coming (Heb. 9:28). Though men could know the time of the fall of the city, as detailed above, none would know the time of Christ's return. The contrast begins with the word, "but," (Matt. 24:36).

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (v. 36).

= Note "that day" (referring to the second coming of Christ at a date unknown to man) is different from "those days" (referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70). There will be a day when Christ returns, but many days were involved in Jerusalem's fall (cf. 2 Peter 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:2).

There will be no sign of Christ's coming again, for how could He signify that of which time even He (then) did not know? How, then, can anyone presume to set a date for the Lord's coming, when such is impossible? No

man will know beforehand of the Lord's imminent return, but it will be as it was in the days of Noah (v. 37).

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 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 (vs. 38-39).

Therefore, since there will be NO signs of Christ's coming, all men must watch and pray, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (v. 42). We know He will come, but, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (25:13). When He comes, some will be received into eternal glory, but others will be consigned to punishment, eternally, in hell (24:40-41). Why? Because some will be ready, watchful, and others will not.

The Savior used illustrations to drive home His point. First, if the goodman of the house had known when the thief would come, he would have watched in order to prevent his loss (v. 43). Second, if the servant had known when his master would return, he would have been found faithfully conducting himself in his service, and would be blessed (vs. 46-47).

But, if he is unprepared, thinking "My lord delayeth his coming," and conduct himself inappropriately, "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of," and will punish him accordingly (vs. 48-51).

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (v. 44).

Christ's return will not be in such an hour as men think, but as they think NOT. Therefore, beware of lying

prophets, premillennial prognosticators, and date setters. Get ready, stay ready, and be ready for Christ's coming. It will be too late to get ready when He comes!

What Are The Last Days – As Taught In Scripture?

The words, "last days," occur in eight passages in the Holy Bible, as listed below.

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you [that] which shall befall you in the last days (Gen. 49:1).

And it shall come to pass in the last days, [that] the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it (Isa. 2:2).

But in the last days it shall come to pass, [that] the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it (Micah 4:1).

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams (Acts 2:17).

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come (2 Tim. 3:1).

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Heb. 1:2).

Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days (James 5:3).

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts (2 Peter 3:3).

In the passages listed above, the meaning of last days in Genesis 49:1 is thought by many to be a reference to the end of the Patriarchal Age, but some see always the Messianic or Christian Age in its meaning.

Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 obviously refer to the time of the Christian dispensation, specifically the time of the coming of the gospel of Christ and the establishment of the Lord's church (cf. Acts 2), the last period of time. In recorded history, there are three dispensations: Patriarchal (generally considered to be from Creation to the giving of the Law of Moses at Mt. Sinai), Mosaical (the time from the giving of the Law until the Cross), and Christian (the age in which we now live, and after which there shall be time no more).

Again, Acts 2:17, a reference to the events of Pentecost day, speaks of the Christian age. Peter's inspired interpretation and application of that which Joel spoke by inspiration (Joel 2) must be correct. Yet, almost two thousand years have transpired since Peter spoke those words.

2 Timothy 3:1 and 2 Peter 3:3 indicate the false doctrines and scoffing unbelievers who would be present in the Christian dispensation. Peter's inspired passage shows one of the things about which men would scoff was the second coming of Christ! However, though their scoffing took place in the last days (the Christian dispensation), their scoffing was not an indication that

Christ's return was imminent.

Hebrews 1:2 obviously makes the distinctive contrast between the revelation from God in previous days and the revelation through the Son in the gospel age. Note: he says, "in these last days" which was written about nineteen hundred forty years ago.

James 5:3 shows the folly of rich men who lay up their treasures, but who do so without consideration that we are living in the last days, and that Christ is coming in Judgment one day.

That we now live in the last days cannot be successfully refuted. New Testament writers, by inspiration, used this phrase to refer to the time between the first and second comings of Christ. There will be no time after this time; thus, these are the last days. There will be a last day, when Christ returns, but there is a difference between the last days (the Christian age), and the last day (the day of Christ's second coming, and the end of the world).

John wrote:

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time (1 John 2:18).

Evidently, the time of which John wrote, and in which John wrote was the last time (hour, ASV; cf. John 4:21), a reference to the last days (the Christian age). Many falsely claim (see discussions preceding) that the Antichrist (a wicked world leader according to them) will arise and that his presence will be a sign that we are in the last days.

John wrote "even now are there many antichrists" (cf. 1 John 4:3); thus, the appearance of antichrists was not a sign of the second coming of the Savior, but a testament to the fact that Jesus was even then reigning as King of kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim. 6:15). The last time (hour)

is not a reference to the last days of the Mosaic age, nor to the time preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, nor to the imminent return of the Lord, but to the entirety of the age from Christ's first coming to His second coming.

That there were those then opposed to Christ (anti Christ), and that there are such men (plural) today is not a surprise, nor is it a sign of Christ's imminent return. Premillennialism has missed it, again.

The last days refer to the time in which you and I live. It is the time to which all the Bible has pointed in fulfillment of God's will for man that salvation from sin be through His Son, Jesus Christ. When these days end, there will be no more days, but eternity.

What Must We Do In Response To The Truth About The Last Days?

First, we must realize we are living in the last days; that is, the Christian Age, and that this age will end when our Lord comes back. This does not mean that any man knows that Christ's return is imminent, or that any man can know the time of His coming by observing the "signs of the times." He could come at any time, and He will come some time.

Second, since Christ has promised to return, and we do not know when, we must be prepared at any time and always by hearing and heeding His Word.

Third, we must help others to understand the need to prepare properly, that they might be ready.

Fourth, we should have hope and rejoice that our Lord will return, and that we can be with Him eternally!

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Chapter 27

Will Our Anchor Hold During The Storms?

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Introduction

A few years ago, my wife and I were on our way home from Tennessee late one stormy night, with our twin granddaughters in the car with us. The entire area was under a tornado watch, and, as we crossed the state line into Alabama, the strong wind and hard rain intensified to the point that all I could see was the blackness of the night until a lightning strike would illuminate the road for a moment. Of course, I slowed the car until we were barely moving – and then, the rain quickly stopped and I felt the car shaking as if it was about to be lifted from the highway. I realized a tornado was over us, but, thankfully, after only a few seconds, the storm lifted and moved on and we were able to proceed home, with only the

lingering rain and lightning to deal with.

Needless to say, we were more than a little concerned about our safety. And when we found out the next day how much damage the storm, through which we had driven, had done to homes and church buildings throughout the surrounding area, we felt fortunate that we suffered nothing more than some anxiety.

However, when I read in the New Testament of a storm that took place in the first century, our unnerving experience pales in comparison.

I refer to the storm that the apostle Paul was in, which Luke wrote about in his historical account of *Acts of the Apostles*.

Euroclydon

Luke's account, in chapter twenty-seven of Acts, is of a journey that he and Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, made with Paul from Caesarea to Rome. Paul, under arrest because of his uncompromising proclamation of the gospel, had appeared before King Agrippa, and now was to be taken to Italy to appear before Caesar, as Paul had requested, so that he could present his case before him.

In a narrative that captures our attention, Luke tells about the apostle and some "other" prisoners (criminals), being put on a ship that was bound from Caesarea to Italy. The ship was headed to its homeport of Adramyttium, a seaport of Mysia. Luke tells us that its course was to have been along the coast of Asia. When they finally landed at Myra, a city of Lycia, the

company of 276 was transferred to a ship of Alexandria that was sailing into Italy.

After a few more days of traveling along the Asian coasts, they adjusted their course because "the winds were contrary," and took a turn to the south, sailing below the island of Crete. Then, according to Acts 27:8, they came to a place called Fair Havens, where they remained for a while. Paul urged the centurion in charge to stay at Fair Havens to avoid the loss of lives and cargo.

However, Paul's advice was rejected. Because they were now at the time of the year that such traveling would have been deemed perilous, and Fair Havens was not considered "commodious" to winter in, the owner of the ship determined that they would try to make it about forty miles further to the west, to Phoenix, where they could spend the winter.

Soon thereafter, the "south wind" that "blew softly" quickly changed, and became a "tempestuous wind" (Acts 27:13-14) and they found themselves in a major storm. This storm is called "Euroclydon" in the King James; in the American Standard Version, it is called Euraquilo. Baker's Bible Atlas describes it as a violent "northeaster," that frequently arose in the Cretan waters, and swooped down from the mountains of Crete in strong gusts or squalls. It was that which, today, we call a typhoon, often reaching enormous proportions.

The ship was driven by this fierce storm for fourteen days and nights, during which time emergency measures were taken by throwing cargo and pieces of equipment overboard. Finally, after

seeing neither stars nor sun for many days, the crew lost all hope that they could survive.

After restraining himself for quite some time, the apostle Paul broke his silence and stood among them to speak. Beginning his remarks with a note that they should have listened to him, his message was encouraging because he said that not one life would be lost, although the ship would be lost. He informed them that an angel of God had assured him of this. With bold words, he declared,

For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island (Acts 27:23-26).

On the fourteenth night, Paul's words began to be fulfilled. As they neared land they cast anchors and secured the ship until daylight. As the day approached, Paul encouraged them all to eat for their strength and reassured them that not a hair would fall from the head of any of them. Then he took food and gave thanks for it in the presence of them all. At daylight, they saw land and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. They ran the ship aground, where two seas met. This secured the forepart, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves (which fulfilled Paul's words, in verse 22).

Some jumped from the ship and swam ashore, while others made it safely to shore on boards or

broken pieces of the ship – and they all escaped safely from the storm, just as Paul, with faith in God’s promise, had declared!

When Your Euroclydon Comes

Many years ago, my wife and I attended a Gospel Meeting at the Westside Church of Christ in Florence, Alabama. The speaker was Nakomis Yeldell. He recounted the story of Acts 27, and how Paul’s confidence in God never wavered during the storm. Then, he reminded us that storms come into the lives of all of us – in the form of tragedies, disease, loss of health, loss of job, the death of a loved one, etc. He then posed the question: When your Euroclydon comes, how will you react?

That is the question of this study for you. When your Euroclydon comes, and it will come, how will you react?

Will Your Anchor Hold In The Storms Of Life?

Our heavenly Father, in his infinite wisdom, knew that we would experience trials and hardships in life. Through the scriptures, he has given us promises and assurance that he will not forsake us, or leave us in a helpless or hopeless situation.

He has confirmed through the writers of the New Testament books that, in him, we have an anchor that will hold in the storms of life. We can rely upon him to protect us and provide for us. Here are five Scriptures that lead to that conclusion:

(1) When the apostle Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, his son in the faith, he admonished him:

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for 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. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1:6-13).

Note, first, that Paul gave encouragement to Timothy by reminding him that our Father has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power (v. 7). That has the sound of confidence — a confidence that one's anchor will hold in the storms of life!

Second, note that Paul had great confidence in

the ability of the Lord to sustain him, regardless of what the future held (v. 12).

(2) To the Roman Christians, Paul wrote a powerfully motivating message about our salvation, and the hope that characterizes all who have peace with God, being justified by faith:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us (Rom. 5:1-5).

In verse two the phrase “rejoice in hope of the glory of God” is worthy of consideration in the context of this study. One whose heart is filled with the joy of justification, one who waits, with hope, to experience the glory of God, is one whose anchor will hold in the storms of life.

In verse five the phrase “hope maketh not ashamed” communicates the reassurance that our hope, which is rooted in Christ, will not leave us disappointed. As a matter of fact, the New King James Version translates it, “hope does not disappoint.”

(3) To the Corinthian saints, Paul wrote a profound defense of the reality of the resurrection. Then, in light of the fact that the resurrection is going to happen, he concluded with a strong exhortation to them:

WILL OUR ANCHOR HOLD DURING THE STORMS?

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 (1 Cor. 15:58).

If one realizes that physical death on earth does not end one's existence, he is surely motivated to serve the Lord steadfastly and diligently, confident that his anchor will hold in the storms of life, and that his earthly service will not be futile.

(4) One of the most reassuring promises our Father has given to his children is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but 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 (1 Cor. 10:13).

Oh, what a powerful anchor this scripture is during the storms of life. There are three important things taught in this text. First, it states that the storms of life are common to all men; Christians are not exempted from the troubles of life. Second, it teaches us that God will not permit his people to be tried beyond that which they are able to bear. Third, it declares that, when trials come, God will make a way to escape — a way to endure it. Fourth, it reminds us that the one who made this promise is faithful. In other words, he is worthy of our complete trust.

With such a guarantee from our trustworthy Father, we can endure the storms of life, knowing that our anchor will hold.

The hope and the security that we have through Christ is made plain in the sixth chapter of the book of Hebrews: Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew 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 have 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 stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 6:17-20).

There are three things in this Scripture to which I direct your attention.

First, in verse 18, the writer spoke about us laying hold upon the hope that is set before us. The Christian should “lay hold” (i.e., seize or get a firm grip on) on hope. It has been “set before us” – ready to be embraced and utilized!

Second, in verse 19, the divinely inspired author affirmed that hope is the “anchor of the soul.” He then added that this hope is both sure and steadfast.

Third, in verse 18, we are told that all of this enables us to have “strong consolation.” The Greek word, from which “consolation” is translated, carries the idea of encouragement, and it is so translated in the New American Standard Version.

Indeed, this scripture encourages us and causes us to believe that our anchor will hold in the storms of life, because our salvation and all spiritual blessings are from the one who has promised: I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee (Heb. 13:5).

WILL OUR ANCHOR HOLD DURING THE STORMS?

Regardless of what the future holds, let us cling tenaciously to the promises of the Lord, and serve him steadfastly all the days of our lives. Regardless of what the storm is, or how severe it is, let us remember that, through our faith in the Lord, we have an anchor that will hold!