

**32nd Annual**

**Truth In Love**



**Lectureship**

**"You Believe What?"**

**Hosted By The  
East Hill Church of Christ**

**For more information**

**Visit our website**

[www.easthillchurch.org](http://www.easthillchurch.org)

**Visit us**

509 East Madison Street,  
Pulaski, TN 38478

**Give us a call**

(931) 363-2777

Kase Britton, Editor

# Table of Contents

<b>1 You Believe In God?</b>	<b>5</b>
Jason Rollo	
<b>2 You Believe That Our Worship Should Look Like What?</b>	<b>25</b>
Robert Hatfield	
<b>3 You Believe In Two Genders?</b>	<b>36</b>
Scott Cain	
<b>4 You Believe There Is No Sinner's Prayer?</b>	<b>76</b>
Larry Fife	
<b>5 You Believe That Homosexuality Is A Sin?</b>	<b>88</b>
Jason Rollo	
<b>6 You Believe In The Sanctity of Life?</b>	<b>112</b>
BJ Clarke	
<b>7 You Believe That All Alcohol Is Sin?</b>	<b>140</b>
Joshua Cantrell	
<b>8 You Believe In Hell?</b>	<b>152</b>
Wayne Rodgers	
<b>9 You Believe In Heaven?</b>	<b>167</b>
Steve Miller	
<b>10 You Believe In The Inspiration of The Bible?</b>	<b>183</b>
Jameson Steward	
<b>11 You Believe That Adultery Is The Only Cause For Divorce?</b>	<b>194</b>
Craig Simon	

**12 You Believe Christians Are The Only Ones Going To Heaven?** 210  
Barry Grider

**13 You Believe That Baptism Is Essential For Salvation?** 217  
Kevin Rutherford

**14 You Believe That There Is Something Better Than This Life?** 229  
Joshua Cantrell

### **Ladies Classes**

**15 You Believe A Woman's Role In The Church Is What?** 242  
Melissa Cain

**16 You Believe A Woman Must Submit To Her Husband?** 253  
Cindy Rodgers

## CHAPTER 1

# YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?

Written by **Jason Rollo**

### INTRODUCTION

One can only imagine how many questions have been asked since the dawn of time. The vast number would certainly be beyond calculation. Yet, of all those questions, certainly the question we are considering currently is one of the most important. Others like it would certainly follow, questions like: Why am I here? What is the purpose of life? Is Jesus Christ who He claimed to be—the very Son of God? What is sin and how can I be saved from it? What happens after death? Yet, the very question we are now considering, namely: “Do you believe in God?” is intensely important, because THIS QUESTION must be answered first. In short, what one believes about God will lead to a study regarding these other eternally important questions. So, if one were to ask: Do you believe in God? My answer would come quickly—ABSOLUTELY! Yet, I do not just “believe in God,” rather, I believe in the ONE TRUE AND LIVING GOD, that is, the God of the Bible (Jeremiah 10:0; 1 Thessalonians 1:9). Holy Writ makes this point emphatic, as it notes twice, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God...” (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). In the New Testament, Romans 1:20 does the same thing, “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so they are without excuse.” Yes, there is no excuse for not believing in God. Why? Because God has made His existence abundantly clear. In short, God (Jehovah—the

God of the Bible) has made Himself known. He has made His PROOF evident. Let us look at this overwhelming proof –this EVIDENCE–for why I believe in the God of the Bible and why you should too!

## **THE EXISTENCE OF GOD – IMPLICATIONS**

Imagine a world without God. Sadly, one does not have to use much imagination, as a simple study of history demonstrates the reality of what happens when God is rejected. One hundred plus million dead bodies testify to the evils of atheistic Communism, alone. Even a cursory study of this evil philosophy shows its connections with atheism and rationalism. From Karl Marx to Vladimir Lenin, to all the German rationalists and other philosophers before them, such things are always connected with a rejection of God and truth! Psalm 9:17 perhaps describes it best, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (cf., too, Proverbs 14:34; 29:2; Psalm 7:11). Psalm 50:22 adds, “Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.” Psalm 10:4 reads, “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.” It was one of the Pharaoh’s of old who asked the rebellious question, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice?...I know not the LORD...” (Exodus 5:2). Although Pharaoh was not “an atheist,” he certainly was as many have been over the years—a worshipper of false “gods,” thus in essence a practical atheist. The same also goes (i.e., practical atheism) for all who know the truth but do not obey it. Just read the Old Testament! From the Pentateuch to the Prophets, to a study of the Kings, one will see repeatedly that the heathen nations and their rejection

of the TRUE GOD (including the same oftentimes with rebellious Israel!). Pathetic is the scene of false religion and the worship of idols and false “gods.” Such vulgarity and wickedness as sacrificing/murdering their little babies in the name of religion and rampant fornication are often connected. No, they might not have been technical atheists, but in reality, they were certainly so (Leviticus 18-19; Deuteronomy 18:10; 2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35; 1 Corinthians 10:1f; *Etcetera*).

FIRST, let us disregard the faulty complaints about the God of the Bible, as if He is the same as the “gods” of false (and evil) religions. This dog will not hunt. The endless teachings of world religions and the perversions of “Christianity” are not from God. SECOND, the old argument about God and the concept of evil can be easily dismissed, as well. Their reasoning usually goes something like this: If God is loving, how does He allow “evil” to exist (cf., the innocent to suffer)? Evil (and suffering) exists, therefore there can be no loving/benevolent God. Yet, here is the problem with their supposed “problem.” Even on the surface, to a THINKING person: How can there be “evil,” if there is NO STANDARD (i.e., No God)? In other words, without God and truth, the very discussion of “evil,” is an absolute joke. Their supposed “problem of evil,” begs for God! In short, if there is evil (cf., right and wrong), then there must be a standard, yet, without God, there can be no standard. The first time an atheist says something (anything!) is right, wrong, evil, and so forth, they have a dilemma—a very, Very, VERY big one. The Humanist Manifestos show this tragic and laughable situation readily. In these terrible booklets they use words regularly, such as: moral values, humility, compassion, empathy, should,

values, good, social responsibility, and so forth. If my count was right, Humanist Manifesto II used the term "must" 18 times and "should" 23 times. Think about this concept for a minute. Seriously, meditate upon it. How ludicrous is the concept of appealing to a standard (hence, "must, should, etcetera"), when, according to them, there is no standard/ no God? As one reads through the original two documents (written in 1933 and 1973), one question keeps surfacing to any reasonable mind: BASED ON WHAT? It is clear that they are basing their views upon nothing other than the feeble opinions of a few morally bankrupt old professors and supposed "thinkers." Yeah, right! They call for "compassion," and we must ask: Based on what? They call for "morals/values," and we again ask: Based on what? They state, "We strive for the good life, here and now" (Humanist Manifesto II, p. 17), and we say: Ah, NOW we are getting to the bottom of our question! Now we are beginning to see what it is all based upon. They says, "There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny and in the way that our lives have influenced others in our culture" (p. 17). They shout, "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves" (p. 16). They add, "We believe in cultivation of feeling and love" (p. 18). Again, "...divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered 'evil.' Without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity, a civilized society should be a tolerant one. Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express



their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire" (p. 18). We could go on and on. But let's just pause here and evaluate the absolute insanity and contradiction found within this last quote. Clearly, they are wanting to allow sexual freedom, yet several times they use words that limit this "freedom." How? Why? Again, **BASED ON WHAT?** These atheists are appealing to a standard—when they **DO NOT BELIEVE IN ONE**. Such is nonsense and hypocrisy on the highest level. What their beliefs demand is this: "... every man [doing] that which is right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25). If this is true, and it is (per logic), then, we ask: Upon what basis do they dare demand restrictions? In other words, **WHO ARE THEY** to limit these freedoms/actions by saying, "we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression," if it is "between consenting adults?" Why? Why do these adults need to "consent?" History is filled with terrible examples kidnapping and rape. Was such wrong? Upon what do these "thinkers" base their opinion?! Also they write, such things should be "without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity," and **AGAIN**, we ask: Why? Based on What? Put another way, why—**WHY**, can't a person use mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity? What's the standard? They write that everything goes, as long as it comes "short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise." Such language is pathetic and ridiculous! If there is no God, no truth, **NO STANDARD**, then why (**WHY?!**) not "harm others" or "compel them to do likewise?" Let me make it plain: They have absolutely **NO** answer for such questions. It's like an atheist that I read about years ago who admitted, regarding getting his child to obey him, that it was difficult. Drawing from my memory, he said, in essence, "I would tell

my child to do something, and he would say, 'But why?' I would say, because it makes me happy; because I want you to do so. The child would again, say, 'But why?,' to which I would respond similarly. After a while the child would relent and obey." Can you imagine such a mindset? Well, this is exactly the position/the dilemma that the atheist finds himself in—a world wherein NO STANDARD exists. God's beautiful Word puts it best when it says, "O LORD, I know, that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Proverbs 14:12 reads, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (cf., 16:25, too). Proverbs 28:26 says, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool..." (cf., again, Proverbs 14:1; 53:1; Jeremiah 17:9f)! Perhaps Jeremiah 18:12 describes such rebels the best when it declares, "...we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart." How sad; how tragic; how hopeless is such a life. How terrible is a society when these beliefs are implemented! Yes, as noted earlier, there are countless examples of those who have abused religion (even the true religion—that found within the Bible), but this does not reflect badly upon THE TRUTH ITSELF. No, it only reflects upon the countless rebels who have perverted the truth (2 Timothy 3:13f; 1 John 4:1; Matthew 7:13f). The long and short is this: Without God, there is no standard, thus everything (and we do mean EVERYTHING!) goes. Hitler simply implemented what Darwin proposed. As brother Thomas B. Warren clearly showed in his famous 1970's debate with Anthony Flew, without God (thus, a true standard), one cannot say Hitler and those with him were wrong in torturing and slaughtering the Jews. If Darwin's nonsense is true, then humanity is nothing more than an animal and we all know

what animals do—they act like animals (cf., Job 39:16-17; 2 Peter 2:12)! On page 19 of the Humanist Manifesto II, they write, “People are more important than decalogues, rules, proscriptions, or regulations,” but logically, their “reasoning(?)” demands that people aren’t important at all, seeing they are simply the highest elevated animal and destined to die like one—without hope! As a side point, the liberals (even among us) use the same reasoning, namely: “We aren’t under any rules!” Let’s see, again, how did these godless atheists from the Humanist Manifestos put it, exactly? What was there reasoning concerning mankind? They said, “There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body” (p. 17). No wonder then they reject “rules.” Listen to the Preface of the Manifesto II, written in 1973, “As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism...[is] harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival” (p. 13). What are these “other means” to which they “look...for survival?” As these ridiculous documents show, they look to things such as: Darwinian-Evolution, technology, sexual freedom, no-rules mentality (cf., the good life here and now), globalism, and the like. Put bluntly, they look to humanity (cf., themselves) for all the solutions. Picture the countless souls who have been accosted, assaulted, robbed, pillaged, raped, and murdered if they think such a “standard” works? Obviously, not! Likewise, those who besmirch the character of TRUTH (cf., attacks upon the true God and His actual truth) do so by attacking TWISTED-VERSIONS OF TRUTH, are not the ACTUAL TRUTH. At least

such is often the case. In other words, their attacks are upon ERROR—as if it were the truth, and this of course—proves nothing! Again, sadly, this is what usually happens with these atheists. They attack “the abuses,” as if such “abuses” are actually what God promotes. No, no, no! This straw man situation will not work. Unfortunately, false views and false religion (especially that which is wrongly applied to God, including the Old-Testament, as well as to Christianity) do untold damage in encouraging these atheists. Yet, when the dust settles, one thing is still true: The implications connected with there being no God/no standard are far reaching and undeniable. Without God (truth) one could eat their own mother in a soup! Without God, one can “marry” his own mother (and father, daughter, or horse for that matter)? If not, why not? How pathetic and bone-chilling and SICK is such a mindset. “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works...” (Proverbs 14:1). I believe in God because first and foremost I believe in MORAL LAW. But there is so much more. The proof for God (the God of the Bible) is overwhelming!

## **THE EXISTENCE OF GOD – OVERWHELMING PROOF**

The proof for the existence of God is usually discussed in the field known as “apologetics.” This area of study deals with the defense of the faith (cf., 1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3). As noted above, false religion has done untold damage to the truth. For instance, many have wrongly defined faith, making it nothing more than some “blind leap in the dark.” Such a concept is emphatically false. Let us never forget that denominationalism is NOT true Christianity! True biblical faith, while not based on “sight” (2

Corinthians 5:7), is absolutely based on EVIDENCE (Hebrews 11:1f; Romans 10:17). The faith (belief/trust) of the New Testament Christian is built upon mountains of evidence. This evidence starts with proof for God's existence. For a deeper study, the diligent student is encouraged to investigate and study resources found at places like Apologetics Press ([www.apologeticspress.org](http://www.apologeticspress.org)), as well as digging into other helpful brotherhood materials. Yet, for a quick overview regarding PROOF for the existence of God, consider these:

### **MORAL ARGUMENT**

We have already hit upon this argument in the earlier section. The long and short is this: Without God, there can be no objective truth, and without objective truth, there can be no right or wrong, thus no morality. Modernism, Postmodernism and Deconstructionism are stupid! Morality (right and wrong) does exist. Why? Because God exists! Should a man be faithful to his own wife (and the wife to her own husband)? Should children obey parents? Should older people be shown respect? Should an aged parent be taken care of when he or she is old? Should humans be kind to one another? Should a person love his neighbor? What about his enemy? Is theft wrong? Rape? Hatred? Racism? Murder? On and on the questions could go. Try answering these without God, truth, or an OBJECTIVE standard of morality? Yet, for those who follow the Bible—God's proven Book of truth, these answers come easily (cf., Ephesians 5:22f; Colossians 3:18f; Ephesians 6:1f; 1 Timothy 5:1f; Matthew 7:12; 22:37f; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 1:8f). This list could be expanded to hundreds (yeah, thousands) of specifics, but the atheist would have no real answer other than, "Well,

whatever make you happy, whatever 'society/culture' dictates, and so forth," yet, God's BOOK has an answer (either explicitly or implicitly—cf., principles!) for EVERY question that can be asked and for every scenario that can be perceived (2 Peter 1:3-4; Acts 20:32; Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 8:20). Yet, with God, everything makes sense. Even when we do not understand, we believe/trust. Why? Some blind leap in the dark? Hardly! No, we believe/trust because we have SEEN (even though we do not "see," Hebrews 11:3, 27) the abundant evidence for Him who is unseen (Hebrews 11:6). We know based on faith (which comes from God's Word, Romans 10:17) that God will always do right and eventually justice (true justice) will prevail—even if it is in the next life (Genesis 18:25; Colossians 3:24-25; 1 Timothy 5:24-25)! Yes, with the eyes of faith, God's existence is CLEARLY SEEN (Romans 1:20). The moral argument proves there is a God! Let those who "call evil good, and good evil" repent of their sinfulness (Isaiah 5:20; Romans 1:1f). The world might change words (cf., alternative lifestyle vs. sodomy), but God and His beautiful Word does not change (Hebrews 13:8; 4:12).

## **ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**

This deals with how God's very being/nature is seen, including within humanity. Genesis 1:27 reads, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Why is murder wrong (and note, all killing is not murder)? The reason is given in Genesis 9:6 which says, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man." Oh, what a beautifully inspired book we have in Genesis! There is a reason the skeptics attack Genesis. They hate God, thus this Book

must go, as it destroys so much of what “they want” to believe. They claim the first eleven chapters of Genesis is nothing but myth, but certainly this is not the case. See this author’s manuscript in the 2000 Lubbock, Texas, Lectures on this topic (“In The Beginning,” Southside Church of Christ). The grand book of Genesis (including the first eleven chapters) is endorsed by the Apostles and Jesus, repeatedly (cf., Matthew 19:1f; 24:37f; Romans 5:12f; 1 Corinthians 15:22f; 1 Peter 3:20f). In this beloved first book of the Bible we come to understand so many “beginnings,” including the beginning of: Creation, man’s existence, the sexes—and there are only two (male and female), marriage, family, man’s dominion over animals, man’s need to obey God, consequences for not obeying God, the tragedy found within false worship, murder, and many other such things. Most importantly, we learn that man needs God to save him from sin and condemnation (Genesis 3:1f), and even more importantly still, the reality that God plans to do just that—offer humanity salvation, through the Messiah (cf., Genesis 12:1f; 49:10; Galatians 3:8, 27f).

Again, we must ask: Why is man different from animals? Why is mankind (as a whole—and this is undeniable, as any study of history will show) religious? Why does mankind worship God (even if it is often falsely)? What is it about humanity/mankind that is so very different from other living things? Although, there have been (and are) so many abuses, why does man (again, as a whole—overall!) adhere to “moral oughtness?” Let me ask it a different way: Why do people drive by roadkill, yet always stop when another person (even a stranger) is hurt on the side of the road? Why does the typical mother love her young so much, and the child the mother? Why does

mankind find the murder of one's own family so repulsive? Why do even rogues often admire kindness and decency in others? Because God exists! There is nothing like God. His very nature should be studied (and it can be, thankfully—in the Bible; Holiness, goodness, love, mercy, kindness, justice, and the like). Yet, to study God's being is to also begin to understand man. No, God is not "man," and often man does not act as God commands him. But this is not God's fault. After all, God made man with freewill. As a good study will demonstrate, something (and that "something" is God) made humanity, and "this something" clearly made them VERY DIFFERENT from everything else. Yes, the ontological argument proves that man's very nature (based on God's nature) BEGS for God's existence!

## **TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**

As with the other arguments, this argument is very strong! Within the universe, within the animal kingdom, and certainly within man himself, we see ORDER, DESIGN and PURPOSE! Interesting! Why is this true? We see great design and wisdom EVERYWHERE within creation. Listen to Psalm 139:14, as the penman speaks of God, but also of man, "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." The very idea of some "big bang" or some other concept creating (from nothing) something (much less, EVERYTHING!), is utterly ridiculous, even on the surface. Look at the animal kingdom. Study the bees, study the spider, study the ants (cf., Proverbs 6:6f; 30:25) and learn! How can one explain such wonder without a Creator/God? Is this intricate design simply an accident? Without God, such makes no sense and cannot be explained to any reasonable person. Primordial soup won't cut it. More so,



one should study the way the circulatory system works within humans, delve into the power of the human brain, analyze the function of skin, and sweat glands, meditate on the nature of DNA, contemplate the way humans procreate (as opposed to the way animals do so) and SEE THE POWERFUL EVIDENCE for almighty God. We need to ask questions like: Why do we have fingernails (instead of bone on the tips of our fingers)? Why do we have the marvelous thumb? Why do we have eyebrows? Why does our body “heal itself” when it comes to bruises and cuts? Why tastebuds? The design of God is so evident in this world. Even old Darwin could not study the details of the eye without leaning toward a Creator!

## **COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**

The universe exists. It did not create itself. Clear laws of science forbid it. It is not eternal. Again, clear laws of science forbid it. Well, if it did not create itself and if it is not eternal, then that leaves God! Spontaneous generation and eternal matter will not work. Study the First and Second Law of Thermodynamics, the Law of Biogenesis, the Law of Causality (cause and effect), along with other such laws, and realize that TRUE SCIENCE and TRUE RELIGION do not contradict. Tragically, however, pseudo-science and corrupt religion have done much damage. Thus, we often see either corrupt science or corrupt religion—or both. The proponents of Darwin, German rationalists, Catholic history, denominationalists, and those of such ilk have twisted many things. The result is apparent: Confusion!

Yet, listen to the clarity and simplicity of Scripture. Hebrews 3:4 states, “For every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God.” Genesis 1:1 is not

hard to understand, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The universe and all that is within it exists. What is the cause for such an effect? Remember, the cause must be something much greater than the effect!! Consider this concept slowly. Think about the galaxies, the numberless stars, the rotation of the planets, the rotation of the earth, the distance of the earth from the Moon, from the Sun, and even how such things impact the waves of the sea, habitable temperatures, and the like. Seriously, study such phenomena and ask yourself: Can such a magnificent design exist accidentally? Does "accidental DESIGN" even make sense? Of course not! Let the words of Psalm 19:1 ring in our ears, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." How often is this "glory" declared? Note the next verse, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." That is, EVERY DAY and EVERY NIGHT such proof is given showing God made it all. The stars cry out if you will, "There is a God, He is alive!" In fact, verse 3 goes further saying, "There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." In other words, throughout the entire world (the whole planet) such proof is given—DAILY! As the next few verses shows (and as true science has shown), the entire solar system involves the great DESIGN of almighty God! "Praise ye the Lord...Let them praise the name of the LORD: for He commanded, and they were created" (Psalm 148:1, 5; 33:6f). All of those with a PhD who deny God might want to read 1 Corinthians chapter one. "Scholarship" is not wrong, but when it denies God, it is not real "scholarship"—instead it is utter and silly foolishness.

## **ANTHROPIC ARUGMENT**

Within the Design Argument, we could do an entire study on what is usually called, "The Anthropic Principle." Without getting technical, the basic argument is this: It is almost as if the entire planet (earth) was perfectly created for man's existence. It's hard not to laugh out loud. Of course, this planet was perfectly designed for humanity! Read the first few chapters of Genesis. From the nature of oxygen (as it relates to humans), to how plants work (cf., use of carbon dioxide, production of oxygen), to the restraint/boundaries of the oceans, to the design of land, clearly THIS earth was made for a particular reason. What was that reason? To place mankind upon it. Think of the food chain, the nature of beauty, the design of male/female (including the design of the family—as God established it), and the like, and realize that this planet was perfectly designed for what God desired: A place for mankind to dwell. No, not a place for eternity, but a place whereby mankind would be able to choose if he would follow God or not. This concept is seen even in the early chapters of Genesis. Man has a choice. He can either chooses God or he rejects God. The truth is that man has freewill, regardless of what the evil false doctrine of Calvinism says (John 3:16; Revelation 3:20; 22:17). Further, God loves man so very much that He even determined before creation HOW He would save mankind from sin (cf., Genesis 3:15; 12:1f; 49:10; Romans 1:1f; 5:6f; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Ephesians 1:3f; 3:9-11, 19-21; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2). The Anthropic Principle alone is strong proof for God's existence. Much more could be said on this concept, including God's desire for man to glorify Him as faithful members of the Lord's church, while upon this earth (Ephesians 3:20-21; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13f, 39-40), but time will not allow.

## **BIBLE ARGUMENT**

Yes, I understand fully that man reject the Bible. The atheist would cry, "You can't use the Bible, because it claims to be from God." However, even an honest court system would allow a person to testify for himself. The truth is this: The Bible is FULL OF PROOF for its inspired nature, thus showing that it without question from God. It testifies for itself strongly with internal evidence of its inspiration. Couple this concept with the countless miracles and witnesses (cf., the apostles and others) that have confirmed it and one indeed has a very strong case. While we do not have time to analyze the various proofs within the Bible Argument, one should understand that entire volumes have been written showing the details of such "proof." One should consider and study such things as: Scientific Foreknowledge, Prophecies, Anticipation of Error, Geographic and Historic Perfection, The Purpose of Man, The Need for Salvation, and many other "internal" proofs found within God's Word. Study verses like: Genesis 17:12, Leviticus 17:11, Psalm 8:8, Job 38:16, Isaiah 40:22, Psalm 2:1f; Psalm 110:1f; Isaiah 9:6f; Daniel 2:44; and so many other passages. For an entire sermon on this topic, please see this author's lecture (on YouTube): "How do we know the Bible is God's Word," Mabank, Texas, Church of Christ.

## **JESUS ARGUMENT**

Jesus was a real person of antiquity. His historicity is not in dispute, even among "most" atheists. This being the case, one should study the Jesus of the Bible and ask: Was Jesus a bad man, a lunatic, a good man, or as He claimed, the very Son of God (Deity) come to earth in the flesh (cf., Book of John)? We know he was not a bad man, because

bad men do not do what Jesus did (Luke 1:1f; Acts 10:38). Bad men do not teach what Jesus taught (Matthew 5-7; Acts 10:35). Bad men do not live and die for others (John 15:12-13). No, Jesus was not a bad man. Furthermore, clearly, Jesus was not a lunatic. Do lunatics go around feeding the hungry, healing the sick, helping the poor, confronting hypocrisy, showing humility during persecution, teaching men to forgive and reject adultery, hatred, murder, and the like, all the while being without personal sin (cf., Matthew 5:21f; 11:5; 1 Peter 2:21f)? I don't think so! No, Jesus was no lunatic. What about a good man? Was Jesus Christ merely a "good man?" Hardly! How can one be a good man if he tells lies? Of course not. And this would be the case if Jesus was not who He claimed to be. Jesus taught empathically that He was God (cf., Mark 2:1f; John 9:35f; 10:30; 14:6f). Did He lie? Remember, good men do not lie. No, Jesus did not lie. He is not some merely "good man," rather He is who he claimed to be—the very Messiah, the Savior. Yes, Jesus is God (cf., John 1:1f; Hebrews 1:1f)! If time and space allowed, we could pontificate more upon such things as: **The proclamations of Jesus** (who He clearly claimed to be, and proved!), the personality of Jesus ("Never man spake like this man," John 7:46!), **the purity and perfection of Jesus** (No one could convict Him of sin, John 8:46), **the preaching of Jesus** (cf., the Sermon on the mount along with all of the beautiful teachings of the entire New Testament, 1 Corinthians 14:37; John 16:7f), **the powerful demonstrations of Jesus** (His miracles—there are so many of them, confirmed by many CREDIBLE witnesses; Evidence does matter! cf., John 20:30-31), **the prophetic fulfillment of Jesus** (i.e., there are over 300 prophecies about Jesus alone—not counting all of the other countless prophecies about

people and nations, cf., Isaiah, Daniel), **the persuasion of Jesus** (that is, the impact of Jesus and the Bible upon people and societies—and when properly followed/applied—the only result is GOOD!; cf., the origination of modern hospitals, education, and so forth), **the passion of Jesus** (i.e., a thorough study of the empty tomb leaves no doubt that Jesus is who He claimed to be and that He came forth from the grave! Question: Who took the body?! Logic demands God raised Him up), **the proclaimers of Jesus** (cf., apostles, witnesses; a study of Paul alone should make one a believer), **and His purpose for coming** (i.e., to save men from their sins; Jesus did not come to improve sanitation or to give the poor welfare or “social justice”—no, not at all; Instead, Jesus came so that man could fix his real problem: SIN! Jesus died to save men from sin (cf., Romans 5:6f; 6:1f). Countless books have been written upon these subjects. An unfathomable number of sermons have certainly been preached along the same line. The Jesus argument when studied in detail is overwhelming proof of God. IF Jesus, THEN God!

## **LOGICAL ARGUMENT**

The Book of Ecclesiastes is an interesting and wonderful book. It is one of 66 that God has given us. This book is written from the vantage point of one seeking the meaning/purpose of life (without God). Everything is tried. Nothing brings true happiness (cf., the blessedness of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:1f). Nothing, that is, until the end of the book is read. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 reads, “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." This shows man's purpose in life. Why am I here? What happens when I die? Does God love me? All of these questions are answered in the Bible (cf., 1 John 3:18; Hebrews 2:14; John 10:10). They are understood when one studies and realizes the REAL PURPOSE of man's existence. It is very sad that false teaching has confused so many people. From the false pictures seen in most science books of the "geological timetable," to the hoaxes often propagated within Darwinian-Evolution, to the discussions of "vestigial organs," to the confusion some have with the "fossil records," the reality is that those who truly STUDY such things are able to give "answers" and LOGICAL reasons for what should be believed. From studying about sin, to the historic flood of Noah, to understanding things like inverted strata, proof within cave drawings, the abundant amounts of archaeological evidence, and other such things, proving the God of the Bible is not difficult. After all, God said that His existence is easily proven/seen (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1f)! Yes, God "left not Himself without witness..." (Acts 14:17)!

## **THE EXISTENCE OF GOD – CHOICE & ETERNITY**

If God (Jehovah) exists, and He does, then men have a choice to make. As the Bible shows (Deuteronomy 11:26f; Romans 6:16f), and as Jesus makes clear (John 1:17-18, 29, 12), man (and this means EACH individual person) has a choice to make in this life. He can choose God (and eventually Heaven) or he can choose Satan (and eventually Hell). Eternity hangs in the balance (Matthew 25:1f; 2 Thessalonians 1:6f). Judgment Day is real and every person will give an account for his or her choices/actions (2 Corinthians 5:10; John 5:28-29; Romans 2:4f;

14:10). Death seals one's fate (Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:19f). Upon facing death, one of those old God-denying infidels (as I recall, it was Robert Ingersol) said, "I fear the land of the shadows." Well, I guess so! Can you imagine facing death and not believing in God? How utterly hopeless! This is exactly how such is described in the Bible (1 Thessalonians 4:13f). Yet, for those who have followed God and His clear plan (and this means following the New Testament for those living after the Cross of Christ), we do have hope—GREAT HOPE (cf., Hebrews 9:12, 22f; 6:10f; Romans 8:18f). Faithful New Testament Christians (i.e., members of the Church of Christ) will be with God in Heaven (cf., Acts 20:28f; 1 John 3:1f; John 14:1f; 1 John 2:25; Titus 1:2; Ephesians 1:3f; Galatians 3:8, 27f; Romans 6:1f; 1 John 5:13, 19-20). Bible believers have the best of this life and the one to come (1 Timothy 4:8). This is true even when things are problematic (Acts 5:40-42; Philippians 4:6-7; James 1:1f). You ask me: Do I believe in God? I say, "Absolutely!" and I think to myself, "What type of person would say otherwise?" The answer quickly comes to my mind—THE FOOL! God begs people not to be fools! God wants all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). God has done his part (grace). Man must do his part (faith). Read Acts 2 and become a faithful member of the Lord's Church (the Church of Christ) this very day. If you are a member of the Body (and there is just One body, Ephesians 4:4f; 5:23f), then remain faithful (Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:10)—because God DOES EXIST and thus His Word/Truth must be obeyed (Psalm 19:7f; 1 John 2:3f; 5:2f; Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:13f). Question: Do you believe in God? You better. If not, you have no hope.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**



## CHAPTER 2

# YOU BELIEVE OUR WORSHIP SHOULD LOOK LIKE WHAT?

Written by **Robert Hatfield**

### INTRODUCTION

People are often surprised to learn that worship patterned after the New Testament is so simple. This is especially true in a time when many worship services resemble rock concerts, complete with lighting rigs, fog machines, and multiple video screens. Nevertheless, many admit that what they are looking for is deep, meaningful worship that connects them to God.

Thankfully, God has revealed the way to appropriately and meaningfully worship Him in the New Testament. What's more, the pattern for worship in the New Testament is beautifully simple. There's just no need for the flashy productions we see in many modern worship services. You can commune with God, offering Him the worship He deserves, and leave knowing that you have been in His presence!

I should warn you, however, that true worship will require your heart and your actions - your all. You do not give God a portion of yourself. Worship is offering praise to God, the sacrifice of your feelings to God. When humans worship God, we do so as inferior creatures rendering respect and praise to our infinitely superior Creator. Our

hearts are overwhelmed with awe because of His greatness and filled with praise because of His goodness. As a result, we “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15).

Are you ready to explore what God says about worshiping Him? The key to offering God meaningful worship is to answer two important questions.

### **AM I WORTHY TO COME INTO GOD’S PRESENCE?**

The Old Testament helps us appreciate the value God places on worship. God, speaking to an apostate people whom He warned would soon be punished in captivity, spoke through His prophet Isaiah to emphasize the gravity and privilege of worship.

Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; And I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul

hateth: They are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: Yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: Your hands are full of blood (Isaiah 1:10-15).

God clearly was displeased with the sacrifices the people presented as they appeared before Him. Specifically, He tells them that He has had enough of them ("I am full," 1:11), that their sacrifices are "vain" and their incense in an "abomination" to God (1:13). He says He cannot "away with" ("endure," ESV) the way they have perverted the worship assembly (1:13), and that such is burdensome to God ("I am weary to bear them," 1:14). As a result, God said He would no longer hear their prayers (1:15) because their lifestyle was so unholy.

God called upon these people - a people who had turned away from Him - to do two things. *First, they were to examine their purpose.* "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" (Isaiah 1:11). Why were they continuing to offer the animal sacrifices required under the Law of Moses when they persisted in acting like the "rulers of Sodom," "people of Gomorrah" (1:10), and living in iniquity (1:13)? God says their worship was wearisome to Him (1:14). For what purpose were they really doing all of this? Was it to please God or to seek to appease Him as they continued to serve themselves?

The Old Testament is teaching us a valuable lesson. Worship is about God; it is not about you. What's more, acceptable worship to God is worship that is offered from a

heart that truly seeks the Lord. Judging merely by the outward appearances, one may draw the conclusion that the people to whom Isaiah preached were fairly pious, but God calls them to examine their motives. Why had they come?

You and I should take note. To what purpose is the multitude of our sacrifices to God? Think about the number of times you have observed the Lord's Supper. How many times have you sung "How Great Thou Art"? When someone stands before the congregation to lead us in prayer, are you concerned with how long his prayers typically are or are you focused on uniting your thoughts with his so that you can pray with both spirit and understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15)?

The point is, you don't have to work hard to make worship about you. Some Christians leave the assembly with words of criticism on their lips rather than words of praise to God. Perhaps the song service was not up to their standards or the sermon was too long for their taste. Maybe the building was too hot or too cold. Perhaps the person on the other side of the room did not speak to them. Do you see how each of the preceding examples is selfish? As we make application from Isaiah chapter one, God invites us to examine our purpose for assembly.

*Second, they were to explain their presence.* "Bring no more vain oblations ... It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting" (Isaiah 1:13). God essentially says: "Stop coming." What a strikingly terrifying statement! It is possible to so pervert true worship that God would rather us stay at home! That's because perverted worship is selfish worship.

Of course, God Himself had commanded them to worship Him (Exodus 20:4-6, plus see the worship laws in the book of Leviticus). To be sure, God alone is worthy of our worship! But note the important lesson this Old Testament text is teaching: merely attending worship is not enough; one must come to offer acceptable sacrifices of praise to God from a pure heart.

Some Christians I have met act as though God should be glad that they are merely occupying their pew on Sunday morning (with little expectation for them to return any other time). Hear the message God communicated through Isaiah: we should come to worship God out of reverence for Him and respect for His holy ways. Isaiah 1:11-15 shows us how God feels about those who come without that reverence and respect for Him.

So in Isaiah chapter one, God challenges these vain worshipers to examine their purpose and explain their presence. By application, we are challenged to do the same.

The central issue behind both questions is the matter of our humility as we enter the presence of God. In reality, none of us deserves to enter God's presence, yet in worship God invites us to commune with Him. Through Jesus, we are even welcomed there (Hebrews 10:19-25)! So, let us "enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name" (Psalm 100:4).

Worship is not about you; it's about God. Isaiah chapter one makes that abundantly clear. This reality will

help us offer meaningful worship to God. But there's a second question we need to answer.

## **IS GOD THE PRIORITY WHEN I COME TO WORSHIP?**

One of the most insightful passages about worship comes from a conversation Jesus had with a Samaritan woman in John chapter four. Looking specifically at John 4:21-24, it's easy to see where Jesus places the priority in worship: "worship the Father" (John 4:21), "worship the Father" (John 4:23), "worship Him" (John 4:24).

Worship should reflect the desires of the One being worshiped, not necessarily the desires of the worshipers. That is to say that God defines and sets the parameters for the ways we express our worship to Him. I may enjoy a particular activity or may be talented in a particular area, but that does not mean it's fit to bring into my worship of God.

The same principle applies to all of the Christian life. Part of dying to self (Galatians 2:20), being raised with Christ (Romans 6:3-4), and being a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17) involves learning to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). In other words, I need to learn to love what God loves and hate what God hates. That's why I said that worship does not *necessarily* reflect the desires of the worshipers. If I'm imposing my own desires into worship, then I am in sin, but if I am conforming my desires to hunger and thirst for righteousness, then the thoughts of my heart will be on doing what God wants (Psalm 19:14).

Look at what – or, rather, *who* – Jesus says His Father is seeking: “true worshipers ... the Father seeketh such to worship Him” (John 4:23). Jesus’ authoritative message here echoes that of Isaiah chapter one. There is a “true” way to worship God, which implies the existence of a false (or vain, empty) way. So is God your priority in worship? Is He my priority? If so, we will seek to worship Him the way He desires to be worshiped.

Thankfully and mercifully, God has not left us in the dark when it comes to offering Him true worship. Jesus gives the general prescriptions for true worship here, and the early church, guided by the Holy Spirit, demonstrates the particulars of true worship throughout the New Testament.

Here in John chapter four, Jesus uses an imperative when He describes true worship: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24, emphasis mine, RH). M-U-S-T – it’s that important! We must worship God “in spirit and in truth.” Clearly these two general prescriptions warrant our attention and investigation. Let’s consider them in reverse.

God is to be worshiped “in truth.” This refers to our *actions* in worship, the things we do. Since worship is about God, and God says there is a true way to worship Him, we can look to His word, the truth (John 17:17) to show us the way of true worship.

A survey of the New Testament reveals that the Christians in the early church (who were guided by the Holy Spirit’s instruction through the apostles and other

inspired teachers) expressed their worship to God through five avenues: they sang “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” to the Lord without instrumental accompaniment (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16); they prayed together (Acts 2:42); they remembered the Lord’s death by participating in the Lord’s Supper each Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29); they gave attention to God’s word through Scripture reading and preaching (Acts 20:7; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:20); and they voluntarily made financial contributions to fund the work of the church (like the Lord’s Supper, they did this each Sunday, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

The Scripture references cited in the preceding paragraph are by no means exhaustive, but are provided to give you a clear sampling of God’s specifically authorized avenues of worship. Since they were guided by teachers who were inspired by the Holy Spirit (compare 2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 14:26; 16:13), we can trust these examples. Their worship was acceptable to God, therefore it stands to reason that we will acceptably worship God when we pattern our worship after theirs. This is how we worship God “in truth.”

God is to be worshiped “in spirit.” This refers to our *affections*, that is, our attitude and emotions. When Jesus saw Mary weeping over the death of her brother, Lazarus, He “groaned in the spirit, and was troubled” (John 11:33). Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were dear to Jesus. Their grief affected His *emotions*, expressed in the term “spirit.”



There is an emotional or attitudinal component of our worship. Expressing praise to God is not a rote, ritualistic activity in which we mindlessly participate; we are to offer the sacrifice of our praise to God from the heart. We sing “with grace in [our] hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). Our prayers unite the sentiments of our hearts as we address God (1 Corinthians 14:15; compare Romans 8:26-27). Participating in the Lord’s Supper includes self-examination, thus employing your heart (1 Corinthians 11:28). The public reading of Scripture and the proclamation of God’s word through the sermon are each aimed at the heart (James 1:21). Our financial contributes are made in accordance with what each person has purposed in his or her heart (2 Corinthians 9:7). All of this describes how we worship God “in spirit.”

Back to John four, Jesus said that true worship involves worshiping both in spirit and in truth. That coordinating conjunction, “and,” gives equal weight to the thoughts on either side of it, which means there is to be a balance between worshiping God in spirit and worshiping God in truth. Some have run to extremes on either side. One group touts emotion as king and, consequently, neglects the truth. This, according to Jesus, is not acceptable worship. Another group touts truth as king and, as a result, demeans the presence of any emotion in worship. This, too, according to our Lord, is acceptable worship. We make God the priority of our worship by taking care to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

## **PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL**

The worship described in the New Testament is beautifully simple. It is deep and rich, connecting us to God and expressing to God the worship He deserves. Because worship is an expression of your heart, it is *personal*. Each Christian, as part of the royal priesthood of God (1 Peter 2:9), offers worship on behalf of himself or herself. I come to worship each Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10) filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), which is to say that I have the word of Christ dwelling in me (Colossians 3:16). Filled with His word and impressed by His vastness and His goodness, I come to offer my sacrifices of worship to Him.

But worship is also *communal*. We commune with God Himself in our worship. The writer of Hebrews places the words of Psalm 22:22, 25 in the mouth of Jesus in Hebrews 2:12: "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." Did you catch that? The writer of Hebrews says we commune with God and with Jesus when we gather for worship! What a thought! The next time you are singing, consider the fact that the Lord Himself is present with you. When you share in the Lord's Supper, remember that He promised to be with you (Matthew 26:29; 1 Corinthians 10:16).

We also commune with each other as we worship. Hebrews ten makes it clear that we gather with other saints as we worship God. Let's trace the argument in Hebrews 10:19-25: Jesus' work as our atoning sacrifice and as our faithful priest makes God and God's salvation accessible to humanity! This truth has tremendous implications: (1) the work of Christ calls us to personal devotion (10:22); (2) the work of Christ calls us to maintain spiritual consistency (10:23); (3) the work of Christ calls us to consider one

another (10:24-25). Considering one another demands that we are together. Assembling with other Christians encourages our worship to God and spurs us on to love and good works.

Worship is personal. I worship God on behalf of myself (therefore, there is no place in New Testament worship for a choir, a praise team, or any other group to offer worship in my place). Worship is also communal, it is designed by God to be participated within the assembly of God's people. God's plan for worship in the New Testament is beautiful and wonderful!

## **CONCLUSION**

I remember hearing Tom Holland say (from the pulpit at the East Hill congregation, by the way): "Impression precedes expression." In other words, you must be impressed with something before you can adequately and enthusiastically express it to someone else. Study God's word, observe His wonderful creation around you, take note of His care in your life, and be impressed with our great God! Then, employ your impressed and grace-filled heart to express your worship to God in the assembly of His people.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## CHAPTER 3

# YOU BELIEVE IN TWO GENDERS?

Written by **Scott Cain**

### INTRODUCTION

“You believe in only two genders?”

“What? Two genders won’t get you far. They can’t even lay eggs. You need a gander and a goose: just like you need a rooster and a hen, a bull and a cow, or a stallion and a mare.”

“Genders. G-E-N-D-E-R-S. Do you really believe a person is either only a man or a woman?”

“Well... yeah. What, you think there are more than two genders? What else could there be?”

Cue the debate.

One side vies for near-infinite gender terms. For instance, Facebook once offered fifty options for a user’s gender, but as of January 2023 the categories were female, male, nonbinary, or “more options.” The “more options” were agender, androgyne, androgynous, bigender, cis, cis female, cis male, cis man, cis woman, or cisgender, and each could be further modified to suit any self-description or whether that singular soul prefers the pronoun “he,” “she,” or “they.”

Dissenting voices quip one-line zingers of simplistic genius: “Five-year-olds who identify as twenty-one still cannot legally drive or vote;” “Mowgli tried identifying as a wolf, but to deny his humanity was to fool himself with a sheer con;” or “Mr. Pete from up the street identified as a parakeet until he leapt from a roof and fell thirty feet.” The witticism often shifts from gender number to transgenderism to transsexualism: “If a surgeon replaces an ear with a nose, can the patient smell out of the side of his head,” or “If human anatomy was meant to be accessorized, man would have been made in the image of Potato Head instead of the Godhead.” What gets accomplished this way? Does either side listen to the other?

This discussion must be had. Though sensitive gender identity is a lightning rod issue reshaping fundamental perceptions in society: marriage, parenting, and safety. This is central to public bathroom debates: in an inherently vulnerable and compromised environment, should they who sincerely perceive disparity between their bodies and brains be compelled to lower their guard in an intimidating setting, or should women and girls simply accept the new normal of knowing that every visit to “the little girls’ room” risks being alone with a bad boy, uncovered in a setting where their husbands and fathers dare not intrude, but fully accessible to any malicious male with malintent who falsely identifies as a woman just to sneak a peak, cop a feel, or worse?

This discussion must be heard. Let Christians hear the entire question before assuming the answers: “He that

answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Proverbs 18:13). Too many are too busy spouting opinions to hear anyone else: "A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself" (Proverbs 18:1). "Understanding" involves discernment (Strong, "Tâbûn"), or separating an issue mentally (Strong, "Bîyn"), that is, to behold an issue from another person's viewpoint. Understanding souls listen and gather information before speaking: "The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge" (Proverbs 15:14). Understanding souls maintain composure in potential conflict: "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" (Proverbs 14:29). Understanding souls choose careful words and calm conduct: "He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit" (Proverbs 17:27).

The worldly care nothing for understanding. The world aims to silence dissent, regardless of the dissent's source. J.K. Rowling, a vocal advocate for homosexuality, in 2020 received a torrent of public vitriol and cancelations after defending the two-gender idea and refusing to bow to political correctness (Rowling, online). Today's culture is willing to terminate teachers over "preferred pronouns" and to suspend social media accounts over insensitivity to nonbinary genders (Lyons 1, online); it gives no heed to views deemed distasteful to its ears, especially when presented distastefully. Christians cannot expect a world that has rejected the wisdom of God to exercise God's wisdom by practicing understanding and objectivity. The responsibility rests on the redeemed to approach the topic

in an informed manner, exhibiting sympathy and charity without for one instant compromising righteousness.

“The heart of the righteous studieth to answer” (Proverbs 15:28). Listen before speaking. Ponder before pontificating. Invite before instigating. Chat before chastising.

## **HEAR WHAT TODAY’S CULTURE SAYS ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY.**

Today’s culture avers, “It’s common for people to confuse sex, gender, and gender identity,” but, “they’re actually all different things” (“Sex and Gender Identity”). To understand how culture differentiates these ideas, note the usage shift in the medical field in recent decades.

A 2001 Institute of Medicine report advised researchers to discern sex from gender in humans, with “sex” as “the reproductive organs and functions that derive from the chromosomal complement,” and “gender” as “a person’s self-representation as male or female” or how “social institutions” treat a person based on “the individual’s gender presentation” (Torgrimson, online).

A 2005 *Journal of Applied Physiology* article posited that “sex is biologically determined and gender is culturally determined” (Ibid.). Sex-based research skyrocketed at the turn of the century: the Journal’s fifty-nine gender-relevant article titles from July 1948 to December 2000 increased to sixty from January 2001 to December 2004 (Ibid.). Because of this, physiologists faced calls to use “sex” for “structural, functional, and behavioral characteristics” as “determined by sex chromosomes,” and to use “gender” for “behavioral,

cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex" (Ibid.). This was new to the field: every article examined from 1960 to 2004 with "gender" in the title used gender as a synonym for biological sex (Ibid.).

The 2008 American Medical Association Journal of Ethics *Virtual Mentor* called sex "the biological differences between males and females," and based gender on "complex psychosocial self-perceptions, attitudes, and expectations people have about members of both sexes" (Tseng, online). "Even the terms male and female, man and woman are not interchangeable" (Ibid.).

The World Health Organization sees gender as the "characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed," including "norms, behaviours (sic) and roles," a concept which "varies from society to society and can change over time" ("Gender and health," online).

Planned Parenthood defines sex as "a label - male or female... assigned by a doctor at birth" based on "hormones, chromosomes, and genitals" ("Sex and Gender Identity"). Gender is depicted as "much bigger and more complicated than assigned sex," a notion based on "society's set of expectations, standards, and characteristics about how men and women are supposed to act," including "thoughts," "behavior," and "social and legal status," with standards varying with culture (Ibid.). Gender identity is described as how people "feel inside" and how they "express those feelings" through channels such as "clothing, behavior, and personal appearance" (Ibid.).



A 2018 Associated Press article “Science Says: Sex and gender aren’t the same” quoted “Dr. Jason Rafferty, a pediatrician and child psychiatrist at Hasbro Children’s Hospital in Rhode Island, and lead author of the AAP’s [American Academy of Pediatricians] transgender policy” (Neergaard, online). A specialist in the healthy body and minds of youth, he limited sex to the anatomy, said that “gender goes beyond biology,” and called gender identity “more of an inner sense of being male, female or somewhere in between – regardless of physical anatomy,” concluding that “it’s more about the brain than the sex organs” (Ibid.).

Modern dictionaries now define gender as “the male sex or the female sex, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones, or one of a range of other identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, “Gender”).

These are culture’s terms and definitions, and understanding the nuances is vital to have hope for a constructive conversation over gender or gender identity. To the world, “sex” is a person’s anatomical, biological, and chromosomal makeup, “gender” is a fluid concept based on cultural norms of how a society expects sexes to act and think, and “gender identity” refers to how people feel about themselves, perceive themselves, and express themselves.

These distinctions shape the vocabulary of America’s assistant Secretary of Health, once a married man who fathered two children with his then-wife and whose original

Harvard and Tulane diplomas read “Richard Levine,” but who now goes by Rachel and identifies as a woman. This is why when the House Judiciary Committee ask an abortion activist if “men can become pregnant and have abortions,” she replied, “Yes” (Chasmar, online). This is why the 1976 men’s Olympic decathlon gold medalist stated in a 2015 interview, “My brain is much more female than it is male,” insisting, “that’s what my soul is,” “That female side is part of me,” and, “That’s who I am” (“Bruce Jenner: The Interview”): within months “Bruce” transitioned to “Caitlyn.”

When “sex” is different than “gender,” “transsexual” is different than “transgender.” A “transsexual” is “one who has undergone gender reassignment,” informally a “sex change,” while “transgender” is a broader term for any “whose gender identity or gender expression does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Identifying linguistic terms is important. Identifying long-term impact is imperative.

## **HEAR WHAT TOMORROW’S CONSEQUENCES SAY ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY.**

Basing gender identity on a person’s feelings and perception uses highly subjective and imprecise metrics. Feelings are a dangerous guide: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12). Perception can be out of focus: “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts” (Proverbs 21:2). The spiritual danger is real, and so are the physical and psychological.

Dr. Paul McHugh, the University Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University, noted to *The Wall Street Journal* in 2016 that “policy makers and the media are doing no favors either to the public or the transgendered by treating their confusions as a right in need of defending rather than as a mental disorder that deserves understanding, treatment and prevention” (McHugh, online). He identified transgenderism as a mental disorder based on two factors: first, “the idea of sex misalignment is simply mistaken - it does not correspond to reality,” and second, transgenderism “can lead to grim psychological outcomes” (Ibid.). Both the disconnect with reality and the “grim psychological consequences” warrant consideration.

How does transgenderism “not correspond to reality?” “The transgendered suffer a disorder of ‘assumption’ like those in other disorders familiar to psychiatrists” (Ibid.). The argument for transgenderism is a solipsistic argument, an argument that hinges on the “self-centered” notion that “self is all that can be known to exist” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, “Solipsism”), therefore the only certainty is what is in a person’s mind. “For the transgendered, this argument holds that one’s feeling of ‘gender’ is a conscious, subjective sense that, being in one’s mind, cannot be questioned by others” (McHugh). Because of this, a transgendered person “often seeks not just society’s tolerance of this ‘personal truth’ but affirmation of it” (Ibid.) “Psychiatrists obviously must challenge the solipsistic concept that what is in the mind cannot be questioned” (Ibid.). The transgender desire to conform reality to the mind instead of conforming the mind to reality is a disorder of consciousness: “Disorders of

consciousness, after all, represent psychiatry's domain; declaring them off-limits would eliminate the field" (McHugh).

Some might label Dr. McHugh's diagnosis as outdated as of 1974, when *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* ceased recognizing transvestitism and homosexuality as "deviant sexuality" of a pathological nature: that is, extreme behaviors that are abnormal or indicative of an illness or mental problem (Miller, "Sexual Deviation..."). Has a half-century of increasingly accommodative medical language aided the transgendered in their mental health?

Consider the "grim psychological consequences." Dr. McHugh coauthored an article with statistician Dr. Lawrence Mayer, wherein they observed that the LGBT community displays "a disproportionate rate of mental health problems compared to the population as a whole" (Mayer). These souls frequently have histories of trauma: "Compared to heterosexuals, non-heterosexuals are about two to three times as likely to have experienced childhood sexual abuse" (Ibid.). They have an estimated "1.5 times higher risk of experiencing anxiety disorders than members of the heterosexual population, as well as roughly double the risk of depression, 1.5 times the risk of substance abuse, and nearly 2.5 times the risk of suicide" (Ibid.). The statistics are grimmer when specifically surveying transgender individuals, whose "rate of lifetime suicide attempts" is approximately "41%, compared to under 5% in the overall U.S. population" (Ibid.).

A 2011 long-term study from Sweden's Karolinska Institute's followed 324 people for up to thirty years after sex-reassignment surgery, comparing their physical health, mental health, and mortality rates with a random control group of 3240 individuals matched by birth year and allowing for comparisons of both birth sex and reassigned sex (Dhejne, online). Before their procedures, these patients had been four times as likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric disorders **other than gender identity disorder** (Ibid.). After sex-reassignment, these patients were again hospitalized for psychiatric disorders within an average of 10.4 years, and the mortality rate of both reassigned sexes was three times above the comparable population (Ibid.), being more prone to medical conditions such as cardiovascular issues. The most alarming statistics pertained to suicide: transsexual individuals were almost five times as likely to attempt suicide and almost twenty times as likely to die by suicide (Ibid.). Researchers concluded, "Even though surgery and hormonal therapy alleviates gender dysphoria, it is apparently not sufficient to remedy the high rates of morbidity and mortality found among transsexual persons" (Ibid.). Statistically speaking, sex reassignment did not cure their ills or bring inner peace.

Why are the transgendered prone to mental and emotional issues? Most blame social stigmatization and discrimination, but studies show that "they likely do not account for the entire disparity" (Mayer). There is far more to the equation than external influences.

With such an elevated risk of psychological turmoil, and despite the tendency of the transgender community to

jeer at the “label” of “sex” assigned to people at birth, there has been an undeniable push to assign the “transgender” label to children at the earliest hint of gender dysphoria, with lawmakers introducing laws to prevent parents from seeking counseling to help children overcome gender dysphoria (Lyons 2, online). If any label is premature, it is the assigning of “transgender” to an undeveloped and undiscerning mind: “When children who reported transgender feelings were tracked without medical or surgical treatment at both Vanderbilt University and London's Portman Clinic, 70%-80% of them spontaneously lost those feelings” (McHugh, online). Nonetheless, a report from UCLA's Williams Institute reflects the transgender proselytizing of teens: whereas “8% of people in the U.S. population are ages 13-17,” “18% of people who identify as transgender are ages 13-17” (“How Many...”, online).

Why is the rate of transgenderism so much higher among teens? A survey polled 256 parents whose adolescent and young adult (AYA) children exhibited a rapid onset of gender dysphoria, “41% of the AYAs had expressed a non-heterosexual sexual orientation before identifying as transgender,” and 62.5% “had reportedly been diagnosed with at least one mental health or neurodevelopmental disability prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria” (Littman, online). In 86.7% of cases, the sudden onset of gender dysphoria coincided with “an increase in their social media/internet use,” having “a friend group in which one or multiple friends became transgender-identified during a similar timeframe, or both” (Ibid.). In “36.8% of the friendship groups,” parents reported “the majority of the members became transgender-identified” (Ibid.). Gender dysphoria depends

not only on a person's innate mind, but also social circles and influences: "the hypothesis that gender identity is an innate, fixed property of human beings that is independent of biological sex—that a person might be 'a man trapped in a woman's body' or 'a woman trapped in a man's body'—is not supported by scientific evidence" (Mayer).

Gender dysphoria is contagious, especially for impressionable, susceptible minds. It is an identity crisis, a "period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to a change in expected aims or role in society" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, "Identity Crisis"). With its rapid rise among teens and its contagious nature upon conflicted, confused, and conformable minds, transgenderism will only grow in prominence. As its rates grow today, so grow tomorrow's rates of surgeries, psychoses, anxieties, and suicides.

Tomorrow's consequences have spoken, and the warnings are sobering. Yet the statistics only show transgenderism's physical and psychological impact. What about its spiritual impact?

## **HEAR WHAT THE CREATOR SAYS ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY.**

**Start with the right mirror.** Who has never stared into a mirror and asked, "Who am I," or, "Where do I belong?" Each soul faces soul-searching questions, but not every answer is to be found in a person's core. The Hebrews spoke of a person's core with the word *lêb*, "the feelings, the will and even the intellect" or "the centre of anything:" most often translated "heart" in the Old

Testament (Strong's). Biblical wisdom warns against letting the heart be the guide: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26). Society urges souls to trust internal feelings and ignore external facts, but searches that are only introspective seldom give a full perspective. There is a great danger to looking inward without looking outward or upward. Life's biggest decisions are best made seeing the big picture and seeking a higher perspective.

A physical mirror is effective for examining the body. God gave a better mirror for the soul: the Word of God (James 1:21-25). If an 8-pound housecat sees a mirror and walks away thinking it is a 300-pound lion, it is out of touch with reality. So also the man who beholds God's Word, identifies conflict between his way and God's will, yet goes his way as though all is well: is not he equally disconnected from reality? God's Word is the only mirror that can give any soul a clear picture of personal strengths, weaknesses, potential, limitations, value, and purpose.

The right mirror only aids souls willing to use it. Any who deny God's existence must first objectively examine evidence for God before they will heed His Word. Others who admit God's existence but reject His influence need an unbiased look at the integrity and inspiration of Scripture. Until they accept the Creator's identity, they will not let the Creator shape theirs.

For identities in crisis, before dismissing God's existence because His standards seem stringent, before basing beliefs on bias, and before resting "reality" on personal preference, why not first examine evidence for whether God is real and the Bible is right, just to see if



there exists a higher standard and clearer mirror than self? What will souls find who are truly willing to use the mirror of God's Word?

### **Each Person's Identity Is Found in How That Soul Was Crafted by God.**

God created all mankind in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). No other earthly creature owns that distinction, however great, small, powerful, beautiful, or intricate: only man. Every detail God made was "good," but only after He made mankind did God deem His creation "very good" (Genesis 1:31). He bestowed to mankind dominion over the physical earth (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 8:6), crowning man with such glory and honor that only heavenly beings hold a higher station: "For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor" (Psalm 8:5). Indeed, each human soul possesses a special position in the Creator's eyes.

God crafts each man through His involvement. Just as God "made" (*âsâh*) man in His image at Creation (Genesis 1:26-27), He actively and attentively "made" (*âsâh*) David in the womb (Psalm 139:14-16). God handcrafted both Adam and David (Strong's). Just as God "formed" (*yâtsar*) Adam of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7), He "formed" (*yâtsar*) Jeremiah in the womb (Jeremiah 1:5): He was as involved in sculpting Jeremiah as He had been in sculpting Adam (Strong's). From Eden to eternity, God's gentle hand has been involved in shaping every soul born under the sun (Ecclesiastes 11:5). God's hand created all. God's hand crafts each.

A question arises: if God crafted all, then what about those born with disabilities, disorders, or deformities? Is God at fault when children are born with eyes incapable of sight, minds unable to develop to full maturity, or bodies with abnormal features such as six fingers on one hand or genitalia of both sexes? Before pointing fingers at God, consider two ideas.

First, before accusing God, remember that the Creator did not cause sin's consequences. Mankind chose sin, and sin brought death (Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:6, 19). Death is inevitable (Hebrews 9:27). Death is unpredictable (James 4:14). Life in this physical world is subject to physics, chemistry, biology, and genetics and deadly consequences can occur at any time and work at any pace. God never guaranteed a minimum number of years, bill of health, nor quality of life, nor is He to blame for not miraculously intervening when biology results in the long-expected passing of a 95-year-old, when chemistry culminates in the 6-month cancer battle of the 55-year-old, when physics results in the sudden vehicular death of a 25-year-old, or when genetics yield the chromosome disorder of the newborn. Because of sin, death is a fact of life, and so are disabilities, disorders, and deformities.

Life's duration is subject to the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, and genetics, and so is life's condition. Chemical consequences can yield babies born with imbalanced receptors for estrogen or testosterone, giving feminine traits and mannerisms to males or masculine traits and mannerisms to females. Genetic consequences can cause chromosome mutations and leave infants with varying combinations of male and female anatomical

features. God is no more obligated to intervene when sin's long-term consequences result in physical deficiencies than He is when those consequences result in physical death. Such hard realities are ripple effects of sin. Sin's physical consequences are mankind's fault, not God's.

Second, before accusing God, remember the potter is not prejudice for using precision. Paul anticipated first century Jews to dispute God's use of their nation in His plan: "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?" (Romans 9:19). His reply to their society is equally apropos to individuals: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Romans 9:19-21). A potter is not obligated to make every vessel identical, but possesses the power and prerogative to craft each with precise purpose. He crafts a drinking cup with small volume and fashionable features, and he patterns a storage pot with large volume and functional features: neither is suited to replace the other, neither is superior to the other, and neither is more valuable than the other, therefore neither can complain about not being like the other. A potter can even craft a vessel's features with such unique purpose that it seems disabled, disordered, or deformed when compared to any other vessel, yet no other vessel can accomplish its unique purpose. Difference in fashion or function does not mean difference in value.

As with pottery, so with people. Not all are the same. People vary in countless categories such as intellect,

strength, stamina, stature, and sight. The Divine Potter has the power and prerogative to prepare and place vessels in just the right place at just the right time for just the right task. When Jesus and His disciples encountered a man born blind, the apostles assumed the man's blindness resulted from either his sin or that of his parents (John 9:1-2). Jesus dismissed their notion. The man's blindness was not a punishment for sin in his immediate family, but God would use his condition to let His power be seen in Christ (John 9:3). God did not make the man blind just to "show off," but his blindness served as a perfect opportunity to provide further proof of Who Jesus was. Question: which is more likely, that this man looked back at his sightless years with resentment toward God, or that he perceived every lightless day as another reason to be thankful for the opportunity to know firsthand the identity and ability of the Son of God?

Each vessel is different. Distinct traits can cripple a vessel in one function while perfecting it for another. So it is with people: one person's psychological, physiological, and genetic differences might cripple the most basic of abilities, but the same limitations can become qualities and strengths equipping that soul as a special asset in ways beyond the capacity of most others. This MUST be remembered. Some bodies are demonstrably different, with chromosome structures yielding rare anatomical features. They are not broken. They are not freaks. They are people. They are special. They need help. They have value. They too have God's image.

Instead of resentfully envying the lives and functions of others, let all souls acknowledge that God has crafted

each soul with purpose, and the ultimate purpose is eternal glory with God, no matter how humble a soul's earthly station that may be. "For ye were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Some base their identities on their net worth measured by material possessions, savings, and investments: they sell themselves short. The true measure of a person's worth is seen in the value at which God appraises a person. Paul said that Christians were "bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20): that price was the blood which Christ shed to purchase His church and provide "the remission of sins" (Acts 20:28; Matthew 26:28). This is a soul's value to God.

### **Each Person's Identity Is Found in What That Soul Cost to God.**

God gave His Son because He loves all men. Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16), and the word "love" is translated from *agapao*, which is *agape* love (Strong's, "Agape"). Whereas the Greek word *philia* involves "affection for" and "personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling" and is "chiefly of the heart." "Agape" is wider, embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will" and is chiefly "of the head" (Strong's, "Phileo"). *Agape* is a matter of the head (mind) involving "judgment and the deliberate assent of the will." *Agape* is more of a decision than an emotion. *Agape* is a **choice** based upon a **judgment!** *Agape* evaluates the

potential object of love and concludes, "I love you because you are worth it!"

Hear it again: "For God so **loved** the world" (John 3:16). The Father beheld a world lost in sin and told the Son, "I love them; they are worth saving; go save them." Paul stressed God's *agape*: "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). To God the world was worth saving, and His Son was the ransom to give all the opportunity "to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4-6).

God gave His Son because He loves each man. Paul perceived God's love was not only universal, but individual, saying of Christ, "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Here was *agape* love displayed to an individual: Christ gave Himself for Paul because He saw Paul as worth saving. Every soul holds that same value in the sight of Almighty God: worth saving. The Father and the Son saw the cross as worth it, even if it saved only one soul.

What higher value could there be? Instead of measuring identity on wealth or personal achievement, let each soul's value be seen in the investment God made in every individual! All lost souls need an identity crisis to see who they are and who they can be by opting to "put off the old man" and "put on the new," renewed in the Creator's image (Colossians 3:9-10).

**Each Person's Identity Is Found in What That Soul Will Change for God.**

A person's morality can change to conform to God's image. God calls "all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). To "repent" is to "think differently" or to have a changed mind (Strong's, "Metanoeo"). The changed mind of repentance results from a heart broken with Godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10). A life of sin is a life lived denying reality, either rejecting the reality of God or expecting God to conform to man. In repentance, a mind changes to recognize reality. Yes, souls can change how they think! Yes, souls can change how they live. They can abandon sinful actions. It simply requires a change of mind. A changed mind leads to a changed life!

A person's personality can change to conform to God's image. Paul pleaded with Christians to "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" (Romans 12:2). Once again, the mind can be changed! Transformed! It is a decision a mind is fully capable of making, and it will change a person to the core! This changed mind allows a soul to have an experienced understanding of the will of the Father (Romans 12:2). This changed mind allows a soul to adopt the mindset of the Son, for souls truly can "let this mind" be in them "which was also in Christ," mirroring the mentality of He Who "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant," and humbling themselves like He Who "humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). This changed mind allows souls to yield the Spirit's fruit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness,

temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23). Indeed, conforming to God's image is just a decision away!

A soul can choose to change the mind, leading to a changed life. A person with a new mentality, morality, and personality is a person with a new identity. A person can choose to change superficial traits without inherently impacting a soul's relationship with God: hairstyle, hair color, hairless, eye color, fitness level, and so forth. There are, however, aspects of the identity that remain constant. When God made mankind, He assigned two identifying qualities.

### **Each Person's Identity Is Found in What That Soul Keeps Constant for God.**

*God assigned mankind's species: "Let Us make man in Our image"* (Genesis 1:26). Man is distinct from every beast of the field, bird of the air, or fish of the sea, and each soul's identity will forever be such. Humanists and their disciples can shout as loudly and as long as they may, but to claim man has no more value or purpose than a chimp is categorically false.

Psychology has diagnoses for people who assume the identity of animals. One such diagnosis is boanthropy, a condition wherein a person assumes the identity of a cow, which seemed to have been King Nebuchadnezzar's psychosis when he ate grass as oxen (Daniel 4:33). Should family and friends encourage this today, telling people to "get in touch with their bovine side" or to "stop worrying about the human on the outside and be the cow you are on



the inside?" To ask is to answer. Such a soul is out of touch with reality, delusional, and in need of help.

*God assigned mankind's sex.* The specific details of God separately creating the man and the woman are recorded in Genesis 2, when God formed "man" (*âdâm*) from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7), and then made "woman" (*ishshâh*) from Adam's rib (Genesis 2:21-23). The record of Genesis 1 offers a briefer description of mankind's inception, but also includes a pivotal detail: He made them "male and female." "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). The words translated "male and female" are *zâkâr* (male) and *nêqêbâh* (female) (Strong's). These are not specific to mankind, but are the same words used to describe males and females of all species, such as when Noah was told to bring "two of every sort" with him "into the ark, to keep them alive," and the specimens of each animal were to be "male and female" (Genesis 6:19; etc.).

God created them separately and distinctly, and He gave them different roles. From the start the female/woman was to be the male/man's helper and counterpart (Genesis 2:18). These roles still apply in the home: a wife is still to submit to her husband, and a husband is still to lead his bride lovingly and sacrificially (Ephesians 5:22-27). These roles apply in the church, with the leadership duties in the church deriving directly from God's original creative order: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve; And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Timothy 2:13-14). The roles for men and women did not originate as a punishment for sin, violation

of these roles contributed to the first sin. In the aftermath, God first corrected Eve, stressing that she would submit to her husband, like it or not, and that her husband would have the authority (Genesis 3:16). He chastened Adam for his failure to lead, having listened to his wife's wants instead of God's guidance (Genesis 3:17). The first man and woman got their gender roles reversed, and sin entered the world.

Gender distinction was important enough for God to forbid transvestitism: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 22:5). This does not mean that a man from a robe-wearing culture is in sin because someone from a pant-wearing culture mistakes his robe for a dress. The wardrobe selection God forbade was a deliberate effort to identify and be perceived as the opposite sex. This was not about gender-neutral clothing nor a condemnation of a woman with a perfect-fitting pair of men's boots: this was clothing that obviously pertained to the other gender, worn to identify the wearer as the opposite sex. It was false advertisement. For a man to masquerade as a woman, or for a woman to masquerade as a man, was an abomination in God's sight. God called transgenderism an abomination.

The New Testament is not silent on this topic. For instance, in describing behaviors that would cost souls eternity, Paul included "effeminate" (1 Corinthians 6:9), a description of a "soft" male who assumed a feminine role with another male (Strong's, "Malakos"). He reminded the Romans of man's wicked history, including when "even

their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly" (Romans 1:26-27). Inspiration left no room to call such actions the justifiable lifestyles of souls with gender dysphoria. It was still sin. It still is.

Cultural gender roles & clothing conventions come and go. Rather than fret over whether her boots are too masculine or his pink tie is too feminine, souls who care about God's standards will be modestly robed and not falsely identifying themselves as the opposite sex.

The Creator's gender roles are here to stay. God created mankind "male and female" (Genesis 1:27), with no ambiguity in which was which, neither in anatomical sex nor in gender roles, for God made male and female separately, first man and then woman, and assigned to each their roles. Culture claims that gender roles are fluid, that gender-specific roles and terms can be adopted by members of either sex, but when God identified the female as woman and called the male man, Heaven stamped, sealed, and sent a standard that human subjectivism cannot change. A society which truly celebrates the beauty of distinctiveness will value distinctiveness for the way that it fits into God's plan instead of conforming to fit man's puzzle.

The heart of the matter is a matter of the heart. The gender dysphoric and transgendered would agree; they insist that their hearts tell them one thing while their bodies tell them another. The hard reality is that this is not just a

heart issue, but a heart problem. To become transgender is to choose to change the body rather than to change the mind. It is a refusal to repent (2 Corinthians 7:10). It is a refusal to be transformed by the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2). It is an effort to change that which, biologically speaking, cannot be changed.

“Sex change” is biologically impossible. People who undergo sex-reassignment surgery do not change from men to women or vice versa. Rather, they become feminized men or masculinized women. Claiming that this is civil-rights matter and encouraging surgical intervention is in reality to collaborate with and promote a mental disorder (McHugh).

Today’s culture says gender identity will depend on personal preference. Tomorrow’s consequences say transgenderism will destroy more lives. The Creator says gender identity is determined by Deity. How do thoughtful Christians discuss gender identity and transgenderism?

### **HEAR WHAT TRUE COMPASSION SAYS ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY.**

To help souls grappling with gender identity, saints need conviction in truth, cognizance of error, concern for souls, and compassion for hearts. A helper with no compassion is helpless. Not all gender identity struggles are identical. They stem from a range of issues, including anatomical, chemical, social, or moral.

**True compassion offers hope to souls with anatomical issues.** Although extremely rare, a person can be born with both male and female anatomy. Once known as hermaphroditism but now commonly described as “intersex,” this condition occurs in as low as .018% of the population (Sax 1), as high as .07% (“Answers to...”), and results from a mutated chromosome (“Hermaphroditism,” online). In some cases, this is identifiable at birth by the presence of both male and female genitalia, while in other instances a child may be born with external features of one sex and internal reproductive features of the other. In these cases the condition may go unidentified until an adolescent is taken for medical attention because she had never menstruated or because his testicles have not descended, only to learn that “she” is actually a genetic male whose Complete Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome stunted testicular development or that “he” is actually a genetic female with Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia with ovaries and a uterus (Sax 2).

This is a medical condition, not a lifestyle choice. Such situations require patience and frequently counseling, first for the parents, and then later for the child as the body matures. In the past, if identified at infancy, parents would select the child’s gender based on which external genitalia seemed most prominent, but in such cases genital prominence is frequently inconsistent with chromosomal makeup and internal reproductive organs, and many chose an external anatomy contrary to the child’s actual biology. Because of this, doctors now advise such parents to delay surgery for as long as adolescence or adulthood, allowing sufficient time for testing, bodily development, and the informed input of the child (“Hermaphroditism,” online).

Like any other genetic disorder, families facing intersex need compassion. The parents and the child need support and encouragement. They need to talk, to vent, and to seek answers to Biblical questions, medical questions, and unanswerable questions. They need the benefit of the doubt that they are doing their best to make the wisest decisions. They need reminded that, whatever limitations their differences create, they may be the very struggles that shape them into perfect vessels for a perfect purpose that human eyes can never foresee. Point them toward God.

Intersex is just one specific category of Disorder of Sexual Development (DSD) (Ibid.). Not all DSDs yield intersex anatomies. Others exist, presenting other challenges.

**True compassion offers hope to souls with chemical issues.** DSDs can produce other symptoms, such as an excess or deficiency in estrogen or testosterone that results in females with masculine secondary traits or males with feminine secondary traits (Sax 2). Other individuals may be hormonally impacted later in life by diet, medication, or other external influences. These are not individuals with conflicting internal or external genitals, but with chemical imbalances.

Whether the chemical issue is congenital or environmental, such souls still need aid. They often need chemical help to stabilize hormone levels, much like stabilizing dopamine for them with mood disorders. They will need emotional and spiritual help from Christians.

Their atypical traits will be recognized and stigmatized by the worldly society around them, pushed toward homosexuality by voices that ridicule and insist, "You must be gay," and pulled toward homosexuality by voices that recruit and invite, "Come be gay." They need a haven among God's people, a place with a sense of belonging, where their manhood or womanhood is not scrutinized, and where they feel loved. They need reminded that they have a choice, the choice to be transformed by renewing their minds and following God's will instead of being led by the chemical impulses from within. They need the church. They need the Lord.

What about parents whose underage children exhibit gender dysphoria, but who reside where government authority prohibits parents from seeking counseling to intervene (Lyons 2)? The apostles' words to the Jews' high court still hold true: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Parents still have a responsibility to "bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). If the threat of imprisonment or family separation is so great, it may be time for that family to consider relocating. It would not be the first time that the wisest thing for God's people to do was to get out of town (Matthew 24:16-18; Acts 8:1-4).

**True compassion offers hope to souls with social issues.** It could be that her dad traumatized her. Maybe his mom scrutinized him. Perhaps her peers stigmatized her. For whatever reason, they feel ostracized from people. They are outcasts, longing to belong.

They do belong. They belong to the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:20). They belong in His church. If gender-conflicted souls in Corinth be changed and be Christ's (1 Corinthians 6:9-11), so can conflicted souls today. They may need reminders that the body is not made just for a mind's urges. Corinth did: "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord: and the Lord for the body" (1 Corinthians 6:13). They may need compassionate help to face difficult truths, such as gently asking a soul who holds to the key transgender assertion that his "gender" differs from his anatomy: "If your body disagrees with your mind, why assume that the body is wrong and the mind is right?" At times a mind must recognize and accept a body's limits, "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?" (Matthew 6:27). They belong, and saints must avoid whimsically ostracizing souls just because mannerisms seem "a little off," whether it be a young child, an aged man or anything in between.

Let Christian parents be especially careful how they treat their children. Should children always be sternly steered toward specific gender roles? Is it really wrong if a girl plays with frogs or if a boy likes dolls? Strictly speaking: no, nothing is inherently wrong if a child has atypical toy preferences, no more than it is inherently evil for a man to work in a salon or for a woman to operate a bulldozer. Despite stereotypes, a man can be a hairstylist without being a homosexual or a philanderer, and a woman can work construction without being a lesbian or a strumpet. The same is true for boys and girls with atypical toy preferences. Maybe he likes tea parties, or maybe she



would rather get dirty, but this does not mean that either is predisposed to gender dysphoria or rebellion against God's gender roles. Should parents of such children be mindful to societal pressures placed on such children? Absolutely. Should they just assume that their children are destined for gender confusion or homosexuality? Let it never be! They belong in Christ. They belong in the church. They belong in heaven. Show them.

**True compassion offers hope to souls with moral issues.** Transgender leanings are not always a matter of chromosomes, chemicals, or culture. For some it is a matter of character, and they have chosen to chase their cravings, using medical issues pertinent to transgenderism as justification for homosexual behavior: "If babies can have both male and female sex organs, then there are degrees of maleness and femaleness, which explains homosexuality."

Attempts abound to classify other Disorders of Sexual Development as intersex (Sax 2). Planned Parenthood calls intersex "a naturally occurring variation in humans" and not "a medical problem," claiming that "1-2 in 100 people born in the U.S. are intersex" ("What's intersex?" online). This count reflects the inflated estimate of sexologist Anne Fausto-Stirling, whose intersex calculation of 1.7% included disorders with no impact internal or external genital anatomy. The true rate of intersex is as high as .07% ("Answers to..."), as low as .018% (Sax 2), 24 to 94 times less than Fausto-Stirling reported.

To broaden the meaning of intersex is the typical human ploy of grasping at legitimate ailments to justify

personal wants. One person's affliction is another's excuse, like healthy children who see a diabetic classmate receive the medically needed perk of an extra snack during class, and suddenly an epidemic of wooziness arises so that the appetites of many can feed on the medical condition of one. Mutated genes in .07% of the populace do not justify the mutated lusts of 4.5% (Gallup, online). If mutated sex genes justify all same-sex attraction, what about disorders that limit mental maturity, like Down syndrome ("Down Syndrome")? If intersex excuses homosexuality, then a rare chromosome disorder that limits one person's mental maturity to age ten excuses a broader class of people who claim that their sexual attractions never advanced beyond age ten, justifying their pedophilia!

Might this be an overreaction? Consider prominent Baltimore sexologist Dr. John Money, a driving force in the rise of transsexualism, who "formulated, defined, and coined the term 'gender role' and later expanded it to gender-identity/role" ("John Money," online). In 1967 Dr. Money was the forefront of his field, working with Johns Hopkins University and conducting televised interviews to publicize his theory that babies were born gender-neutral, and that gender could be changed with early-age surgery and gender-focused rearing (Burkeman, online). One interview intrigued the parents of Bruce Reimer, an identical-twin boy who "at seven months of age had his penis accidentally burned to ablation" by a malfunctioning electric cauterizer during circumcision (Diamond). The parents contacted Dr. Money, who assured them that their injured son could be surgically and mentally sculpted into a happy and healthy daughter, and on July 3, 1967, 23-month-old Bruce underwent surgery to become Brenda,

removing his remaining external male organs and fashioning a “cosmetic vaginal cleft,” with the parents being told “not to talk about it” and “not to tell [Brenda] the whole truth, and that she shouldn’t know she wasn’t a girl” (Burkeman). This was the perfect test for Dr. Money’s theory, with Brenda’s twin brother Brian serving as a control subject to compare the gender-oriented characteristics of the two as they were reared as brother and sister.

Bruce was reared as Brenda for twelve years, steered toward feminine pursuits, never told of the infant trauma, and taken annually with twin brother Brian to be examined by Dr. Money, who published reports and books detailing his success (“Dr. Money...” 1). Yet, despite surgery and estrogen supplements, the experiment was no success: Brenda favored boyish pursuits, grew mentally volatile, “attempted suicide at least once,” and by age thirteen demanded answers for the evident masculinity, at which time Brenda’s father finally told his child the truth (Burkeman). Within weeks Brenda began a series of procedures to reconstruct a male anatomy (Ibid.).

As Dr. Money celebrated breakthrough success that would influence innumerable sex-reassignment surgeries, Brenda became David. David later married and adopted three children.

Dr. Money has been scrutinized for the ethics of publishing a patient’s case without the patient’s permission, and because “he continued to let people believe that it had been successful long after he had stopped seeing Brenda and she had become David” (“Dr. Money...” 1). The strongest ethical accusations against Dr. Money come

directly from Brian and David Reimer, who detailed their reasons for eventually refusing to be further examined by Dr. Money:

When my folks weren't around, well then, we did what we were told, and if we didn't, we got yelled at to the point where we thought that we were gonna get, uh, backhanded. If we were told to take our clothes off, well, eventually we took our clothes off and sat on the couch, and had photos of us taken ("Dr. Money..." 2).

Dr. Money showed the twins "explicit sexual pictures" (Burkeman), directed them to "inspect one another's genitals," and had them rehearse sexual positions and motions together (Gaetano, online). He once had "Brenda assume a position on all fours" while Brian approached and made contact from behind, something Money called "sexual rehearsal play" (Burkeman).

Is this not deviant? Is this not a form of pederasty and pedophilia? Is this not criminal? This was the expert credited with coining "gender identity."

As already noted, the homosexual and transgender community has higher rates of sexual trauma, psychiatric disorders, and suicide. Brian and David Reimer's psychiatric scars lingered into adulthood. In July 2002, Brian Reimer died at age 36 of an antidepressant drug overdose in a suspected suicide (Gaetano). Two years later, in May of 2004, after his wife expressed desire for a separation, David Reimer died of a self-inflicted gunshot to the head ("Dr. Money..." 1). Any society characterized by movements

built on lies is a society verging on collapse, especially when it labels criminals as victims, perverts as experts, or pedophiles as pioneers.

The Gospel is the only hope for a sin-sick society. Saints seek the salvation of souls for whom Christ died, even them of the ilk of the late John Money. If Ananias taught Paul, "chief" of sinners (Acts 9:17-18; 1 Timothy 1:15), and if Paul taught in exceedingly immoral Corinth (1 Corinthians 15:1-2; 6:9-11), let saints today take the Great Physician's great prescription to every creature, for all need it (Mark 16:15-16). At the same time, let saints be wary of them who use others' plight to gain acceptance for their own evil agendas. Satan falsely identified as "an angel of light," his stooges identified as "apostles of Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:13-14), and Jesus warned of wolves who outwardly identify as sheep to gain inroads to their prey (Matthew 7:15).

### **CONCLUSION:**

These are tough circumstances. Gender dysphoria convinces sincere souls that something must change, and society insists that reality can conform to the individual's will. Statistics show the physical and psychological consequences of letting a mind refuse reality for delusional assumptions. Scripture makes it clear that species and sex are innate and inflexible traits, and that God has given specific gender roles to each sex. Sympathy moves Christians to take the Gospel of Christ to souls groping in sin, including those in tough circumstances and struggling to come to grips with reality and identity.

Paul knew tough circumstances. He knew the need for relief and the powerlessness to achieve it. He wrote from tough circumstances to a church in tough

circumstances, with neither able to change their external conditions, and the letter was an epistle of joy! “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). Despite anxieties and struggles, Paul knew joy and peace, and related a vital lesson that carried him through hardships: “I have learned, in whatsoever state that I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11). Paul’s words to Philippi offer powerful counsel to souls discontented in their bodies:

In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, 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. The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you (Philippians 4:5-9 - ASV).

Even souls struggling with gender identity can find peace and joy to the point of being able to say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "Answers to Your Questions about Individuals with Intersex Conditions." *American Psychological Association*. 2006. Print.
- "Bruce Jenner: The Interview." *ABC News*. 2015. abcnews.go.com. (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Burkeman, Oliver and Younge, Gary. "Being Brenda." *The Guardian*. 2004. theguardian.com. (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Chasmar, Jessica. "Dem witness tells House committee men can get pregnant, have abortions." *Fox News*. foxnews.com. (Accessed 23 May 2022).
- Dhejne C, Lichtenstein P, Boman M, Johansson AL, Långström N, Landén M. "Long-term follow-up of transsexual persons undergoing sex reassignment surgery: cohort study in Sweden." *National Institute of Health*. 2011. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3043071](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3043071). (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Diamon, Milton and Sigmund, Keith. "Sex Reassignment at Birth: A Long Term Review and Clinical Implications." *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. March 1997.
- "Down Syndrome." *Mayo Clinic*. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. [www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/down-syndrome](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/down-syndrome). (Accessed 23 May 2022).
- "Dr. Money and the Boy with No Penis." *BBC Science & Nature*. 2014. Video. bbc.co.uk. (Accessed January 31, 2023).

- "Dr. Money and the Boy with No Penis." *BBC Science & Nature*. 2014. [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk). (Accessed January 31, 2023).
- Gaetano, Phil. "David Reimer and John Money Gender Reassignment Controversy: The John/Joan Case." *The Embryo Project Encyclopedia*. [embryo.asu.edu](http://embryo.asu.edu). (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Gallup, Inc. "In U.S., Estimate of LGBT Population Rises to 4.5%." *Gallup.com*. 22 May 2018. [news.gallup.com/poll/234863](http://news.gallup.com/poll/234863). (Accessed 15 May 2019).
- "Gender and health." World Health Organization. [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) (Accessed 1 February 2023).
- "Hermaphroditism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 21 Nov. 2018, [www.britannica.com/science/hermaphroditism](http://www.britannica.com/science/hermaphroditism). (Accessed 15 May 2019).
- "How Many Adults and Youth identify as Transgender in the United States?" *UCLA School of Law Williams Institute*. 2020. [williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu). (Accessed February 3, 2023).
- "John Money, Ph.D." *Kinsey Institute, Indiana University*. <https://kinseyinstitute.org>. (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Littman, Lisa. "Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria." *National Institute of Health*. 2018. [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). (Accessed January 31, 2023).
- Lyons, Eric. "A Biblical Response to Cancel Culture." *Apologetics Press*. 2022. [apologeticspress.org](http://apologeticspress.org). (Accessed 31 January 2023).



- . "California's Continual War Against Biblical Values." *Apologetics Press*. 2012. [apologeticspress.org](http://apologeticspress.org). (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Mayer, Lawrence S., and Paul R. McHugh. "Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences." *The New Atlantis*. Number 50. 2016.
- McHugh, Paul. "Transgender Surgery Isn't the Solution." *The Wall Street Journal*. 2016. [wsj.com](http://wsj.com). (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Miller, Dave. "Homosexuality and Transgenderism: The Science Supports the Bible." *Apologetics Press*. 2016. [apologeticspress.org](http://apologeticspress.org). (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- . "Sexual Deviation Prior to Political Correctness." *Apologetics Press*. 2016. [apologeticspress.org](http://apologeticspress.org). (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Oxford English Dictionary*. "Gender." Oxford English Dictionary. [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com) (Accessed 1 February 2023).
- . "Identity Crisis." Oxford English Dictionary. [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com) (Accessed 29 June 2021).
- . "Transgender." Oxford English Dictionary. [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com) (Accessed 1 February 2023).
- . "Transexual." Oxford English Dictionary. [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com) (Accessed 1 February 2023).
- Rowling, J.K. "J.K. Rowling Writes About Her Reasons for Speaking Out on Sex and Gender Issues." 2020. [www.jkrowling.com](http://www.jkrowling.com). (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Sax, Leonard. "How Common Is Intersex? a Response to Anne Fausto-Sterling." *Journal of Sex Research*, U.S. National Library of Medicine. Aug. 2002, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). (Accessed 15 May 2019).

- Sax, Leonard. "How Common Is Intersex?" *Leonard Sax MD PhD*, 1 Aug. 2002, [www.leonardsax.com/how-common-is-intersex-a-response-to-anne-fausto-sterling/](http://www.leonardsax.com/how-common-is-intersex-a-response-to-anne-fausto-sterling/). (Accessed 15 May 2019).
- "Sex and Gender Identity." *Planned Parenthood*. 2023. [plannedparenthood.org](http://plannedparenthood.org). (Accessed 31 January 2023).
- Strong, James. "Agape." Entry #G25. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "Malakos." Entry #G3120. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "Metanoeo." Entry #G3340. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "Phileo." Entry #G5368. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- Strong, James. "Âdâm." Entry #120. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "Ishshâh." Entry #802. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "Bîyn." Entry #995. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "Zâkâr." Entry #2145. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.

- . "Yâtsar." Entry #3335. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "Lêb." Entry #3820. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "N<sup>e</sup>qêbâh." Entry #5347. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "Âsâh." Entry #6213. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.
- . "Tâbûn." Entry #8394. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, OakTree Software, 2008.

The Holy Bible: American Standard Version. Print..

The Holy Bible: King James Version. Print. All references are to this translation unless otherwise specified.

Torgrimson, Britta N., and Minson, Christopher T. "Sex and gender: what is the difference?" *Journal of Applied Physiology*. American Physiological Society. [www.journals.physiology.org](http://www.journals.physiology.org). (Accessed 31 January 2023).

Tseng, Jennifer. "Sex, Gender, and Why the Differences Matter." *Virtual Mentor*. American Medical Association Journal of Ethics. 2008. [journalofethics.ama-assn.org/issue/sex-and-gender-medicine](http://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/issue/sex-and-gender-medicine). (Accessed 31 January 2023).

What's intersex?" *Planned Parenthood*. 2023. [plannedparenthood.org](http://plannedparenthood.org). (Accessed January 31, 2023).

## CHAPTER 4

# YOU BELIEVE THERE IS NO SINNERS PRAYER?

Written by **Larry Fife**

### INTRODUCTION

I live in Raleigh, North Carolina, the county seat of Wake County, North Carolina. There are approximately 1.15 million people in Wake County. On average, 66 people move to Wake County every day. Currently, Wake County is the third fastest-growing county in the United States. Brown-Wynne Funeral Home, located in Wake County, North Carolina, is the oldest and most prominent funeral home, with five locations to serve the greater Raleigh area. I have worked with Brown-Wynne Funeral Home for five years; on average, I conduct around sixty funerals for Brown-Wynne every year. Ninety-nine percent of the funerals I officiate are for people who are not members of the Lord's church. This ministry has allowed me to not only help those that are grieving, but also to teach them the truth. When I meet with families to discuss their funeral service arrangements, I often hear: "I know that they are saved and are with Jesus because they said the sinner's prayer." When I can have a Bible study with those to whom I have ministered at a funeral, the sinner's prayer usually comes up in conversation, and most, if not all, are surprised that I do not believe in the sinner's prayer. It amazes me what people say at funerals and, more so, what most people think about salvation.

## THE SINNER'S PRAYER

Consider why this might appeal to those who do not know what God requires regarding one's salvation:

Accept Christ into your heart through prayer, and he'll receive you. You'll be born again when you receive and accept Christ as your Lord and Savior. He is standing at your door, knocking. Won't you let him in? You don't have to change your bad habits; just trust Christ as your Savior. God loves you and forgives you unconditionally. Jesus died on the cross for you. You can be saved if you accept Christ now and tell him that you are a sinner and need him in your life! So, just repeat this prayer with me, Jesus; I accept you as my personal Savior. I believe in you. I ask you to come into your heart.

Does this sound familiar? This conversion method has had far-reaching effects worldwide. Unfortunately, many have claimed this as the basis for their salvation. The notion that one can pray Jesus into their heart and that baptism is merely an outward sign is a dangerous doctrine.

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

The Bible tells us that prayer avails the Christian (James 5:16). It's hard to fathom that the God of heaven hears us when we pray. God listens to Christians who speak to Him in the name of Jesus (Colossians 3:17). But can *anyone* pray to God? What about the sinner? Can

someone outside of Jesus Christ pray to God, the heavenly Father? In Acts 9:10-11 we read,

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.

In these verses, we see a sinner named Saul praying to God. We know this to be the same Saul, who became known as the apostle Paul. Saul, lost in his sins, is praying to God. Many sinners pray, but what are they praying for, and is God listening? Does the Bible even teach the sinner's prayer?

### **WHAT IS A SINNER?**

Let us first define the word "sinner." Well, are we not all people sinners in the sight of God? In one sense, yes, we certainly are. Paul writes, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Paul also tells us that there are none that are righteous (Romans 3:10). This is undoubtedly true until a person obeys the gospel and receives forgiveness for their sins. No one can stand before God of his own righteousness and be acceptable in God's sight. Even as Christians, we all fall short of God's expectations and glory. We break God's commandments and laws because we are human and imperfect (1 John 1:8). Every man sins and has nothing of importance for his coming into the presence of God.

But the kind of sinner we are talking about is an unforgiven sinner, alien to the kingdom of God, and one has never become a Christian by obedience to God's complete word. When a person obeys the gospel, he is no longer a sinner because sin no longer controls him. It no longer dwells in his heart. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18).

Can a Christian sin? Yes, but the Christian no longer lives in sin or chooses to serve sin. It no longer dwells in the person. They have a relationship with God and no longer sin willfully once they become a Christian. A sinner is one who has never been baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins (Galatians 3:27; Acts 2:38). Can such a sinner pray? Does the Bible ever command such a sinner to pray, to come to Christ, or for any other reason? If so, what should a sinner pray for?

### **SHOULD SINNERS PRAY?**

Sinners are often encouraged to pray today. I hear televangelists (i.e., Billy Graham, Joel Osteen, John Hagee, etc.) telling people who wish to come to Jesus to bow their heads in prayer with the speaker. I have had the deceased's family tell me these exact words in many funeral arrangements. Many will recount their conversion experience to me and tell me what they felt after the sinner's prayer. But is this even biblical? Does the Bible

command a sinner outside Christ to pray for forgiveness? Does the Bible ever tell a sinner to pray at all?

Some people are told they should pray for a supernatural act of God or an indwelling. But the question is, does the Bible teach that a sinner should pray for a revelation of God's will? Is that how faith in God is created within a person's heart through a supernatural experience? Paul tells the reader how faith is produced. "So, then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Faith is created by hearing the word of God. The Holy Spirit doesn't miraculously fill a person with faith. That is not how it happens. A person doesn't fall on his knees *without* faith and gets up *with* faith after having some sort of feeling or experience. Romans 10:17 shows the necessity of the sinner hearing the preaching of the gospel. Paul tells us how one comes to know the gospel in Romans 10:13-17:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.



Paul says that a sinner cannot be saved without hearing the gospel. God's plan of salvation requires a sinner to read His word or hear His gospel preached and for one to obey it and to be saved. That is where faith is produced. There is a difference between what Paul is talking about in Romans and the time that we are living in today. There was no written record of God's word in Paul's time. Those in the first century did not have the New Testament as we do today.

We read this in Acts 8 about the Ethiopian eunuch. The Ethiopian eunuch was returning to his home from Jerusalem. He had a scroll of the prophecy of Isaiah with him. Perhaps he had obtained it while in Jerusalem. He was reading the words of Isaiah 53, which foretells Jesus' crucifixion and how He would be the sacrifice needed to take away the world's sins. The problem was that this man did not know who Isaiah spoke about. He was reading through the Old Testament scriptures wanting to learn. If faith comes through praying, the Ethiopian eunuch could have asked God for salvation. Why did God not just use the Holy Spirit on his heart and cause him to understand what he was reading? The Bible does not tell us that he prayed for knowledge or understanding. For the sake of argument, let us assume that the eunuch did ask the Lord for understanding or for some sign that he was a sinner. If that was the case, we know how the Lord answered his prayer by God sending Philip to him.

Some people today think it happens the other way, that faith somehow comes miraculously after we ask for it from God. The Bible says that God sent Philip to teach this man the gospel of Christ. "And Philip ran thither to him,

and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:30-31). Isaiah's prophecy had not yet been recorded in our current form. It was being preached by word of mouth while the Holy Spirit led the apostles to preach and write the New Testament.

## **DO SINNERS HAVE A PRAYER?**

Today, people can read the Bible and learn what they must do to receive salvation from God. We can point people to the Bible and show them what they must do to be saved. A man who has never heard of Christ can pick up a copy of the scriptures and, with a sincere heart, can learn all by himself what God wants him to know and what he must do to become a Christian. That was not the case during the church's infancy. What has not changed is that faith comes from hearing the word of God. God's word directs man in the way that he should go. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet And a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

Should a sinner pray for salvation? The sinner's prayer is when an individual is urged to pray to receive Christ into their hearts and to become Christians. But does the Bible ever instruct any sinner to pray such a prayer? Where in the New Testament do we read of any sinner being taught to pray to God for salvation? Was it on the Day of Pentecost? As the crowd gathered that day and after hearing the gospel, they were convicted of their sins and wanted to be saved for their past. You won't find a more straightforward example in the New Testament of people

who wanted to be saved, who then asked how to be saved and were told what they must do. They asked Peter that day, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Peter could have said, "Repent and say this prayer and invite Jesus into your heart." But that is not what Peter said. Peter did not send mixed signals regarding God's instructions on salvation. "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).

Every person present was commanded to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. Not one word was said to them about praying for their salvation. We also do not find the sinner's prayer in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). They could have stopped by the side of the road, and both of them could have kneeled in prayer beside the chariot and prayed for the Lord to forgive this man of his sins. But that is not what the Bible records. How did the eunuch respond when Philip preached to him Jesus? "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

From where did the idea of a sinner's prayer come? As you continue to read through the book of Acts, you will read of men and women coming to faith in Christ upon hearing His word preached. Nowhere in the book of Acts do we find any semblance of anyone saying a prayer that forgives them of their sins. Now someone may say, was not Saul commanded to call on the name of the Lord?

There is your sinner's prayer. Did not Paul later tell people to call on the name of the Lord to be saved in Romans 10? Yes, he did.

Saul was a zealous Jew who was busy trying to destroy the church of Christ. He was persecuting Christians everywhere he could find them. But the Lord changed everything in an unforgettable experience along the road to Damascus. Jesus appeared to him and confronted Saul about his behavior. On that day, Saul understood that this Jesus, whose name he had previously despised, was, in fact, the Son of God. "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Here's a man who wanted to be saved. Saul has the opportunity to ask the Lord Himself what he must do "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6).

Jesus did not tell Saul to say a prayer, and Jesus did not tell him he would come into his heart. Jesus said someone would come and tell him what he must do to be saved. A few days later, a man by the name of Ananias was sent by the Lord to teach Saul.

"And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold he prayeth...." (Acts 9:10-11).

There it is! The Bible gives us an example of a praying sinner. But what was Saul praying for? The Bible does not tell us. If it was for the forgiveness of his sins, the Lord didn't hear and answer his prayer. Saul was a religious man, and, unsurprisingly, his reaction to the events on the road to Damascus would cause him to want to pray and understand better. He has a lot of questions about all of this, and here he is, struck blind, waiting for three days for someone to come and explain all of this to him. But, what we do not read in the text is Saul being told to "pray through" and accept Christ as his Lord and Savior. Saul did not pray his sins away. The Bible says that Ananias came to him and restored his sight and told Saul to stand up and be baptized. Ananias could have prayed with him to let Jesus come into his heart to receive forgiveness. But that is not what we read. Ananias told Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Saul was told to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved! How was he to do it? By being baptized for the remission of his sins. Baptism puts one into a new relationship with Christ Jesus. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

## **CONCLUSION**

Being in Christ causes one to obtain many spiritual blessings that he did not enjoy before. One of those blessings is the ability to pray through Jesus Christ as his mediator unto God. A person does not have that right before they become a child of God. I must call upon the Lord's name or avail myself of the authority in that name by being baptized for the forgiveness of my sins. When that

happens, I am in a new relationship with Christ that includes the right to access the throne of God in prayer. From that day forward, when I sin as a Christian, I may go in repentance and confession to the Lord's throne in prayer and ask for pardon from that sin (1 John 1:9). But that is not the privilege of the alien sinner. He must first exercise faith and obey God's command to be baptized for remission, and removal of one's sins (Acts 2:38). The concept of the sinner's prayer is not taught in the Bible, despite its popularity in the world today. It is a manufactured doctrine, spread by evangelists tickling the ears of sinners, who call hundreds at a time to recite a prayer for salvation. And, as has been shown, no single account of conversions recorded in the book of Acts was done with a sinner's prayer.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*The Holy Bible: King James Version.* (World Publishers). All scripture references are to this version.

## CHAPTER 5

# YOU BELIEVE THAT HOMOSEXUALITY IS A SIN?

Written by **Jason Rollo**

### INTRODUCTION

The question is asked: “You believe that homosexuality is a sin?” My answer comes quickly—YES! And you should believe the same, as well. Not because of my belief, but **because of what the Bible says**. In this short paper we will examine “the ‘why’ of this sin,” not based upon human opinion, but upon God’s TRUTH (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; John 8:32; 17:17). Let us begin our examination with a few quotes from the proponents of such evil.

“We shall sodomize your sons, emblems of your feeble masculinity, of your shallow dreams and vulgar lies. We shall seduce them in your schools, in your dormitories, in your gymnasiums, in your locker rooms, in your sports arenas, in your seminaries, in your youth groups, in your movie theater bathrooms...Wherever men are together... our only God is handsome young men” (Swift). What year was this was written? **It was 1987.**

“In February...the National Coalition of Gay Organizations met at the Armitage Avenue United Methodist Church in Chicago. An invitation had been sent out to 495 homosexual organizations across the United States to come and prepare a ‘gay stance for the...



elections.' About 200 individuals from 18 states representing 85 organizations were present from this two-day event. Conference participants adopted the...Gay Rights Platform...Some of the demands were: 1) Federal encouragement and support for sex education courses, prepared and taught by homosexuals presenting homosexuality as a valid and healthy preference and lifestyle as a viable alternative to heterosexuality, 2) Repeal of all legislative provisions that restrict the sex or number of persons entering into a marriage unit; the extension of legal benefits of all persons who cohabit regardless of sex and/or numbers. No doubt...[the idea was] to shift the debate from that of behavior to that of identity..." (Bailey 273-274). The year? **It was 1972.**

Further, sometime ago, Dr. Joseph Fletcher wrote a pitiful book entitled, "Situation Ethics." This evil book proposed "love" as the solution to various supposed moral dilemmas. The problem is that it defined love in numerous ways, making such mean whatever one wants it to mean. In short, the book taught that "the situation" and "love" (as variously defined) would make something acceptable or not. Objective truth was NOT determined as coming from God (cf., from a standard (i.e., like the Bible), but from one's personal feelings, coupled with "the situation." The year? **It was 1966.**

"We are convinced that the time has passed for theism...The distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained...Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now...the quest for the good life

is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams" (Humanist Manifesto I). The year? **It was 1933.**

Thus, for almost **ONE HUNDRED YEARS** now, the radical drip of immoral promotion in this country has been consistent and constant. Interestingly, the same approximate time-period (actually, a little longer; cf., 1925 and the "Scopes Monkey Trial") has seen Darwinian Evolution pushed (and allowed) in our schools/classrooms. This connection should NOT go unnoticed. **The year is now 2023.** The roots (of such immoral propaganda—backed by the rejection of God) in our country have grown very deep, the corrupt tree has matured, and the poisonous fruit is dripping ripe in far too many places! Unbelievably, in our day, we see this immoral propaganda from the kindergarten to the schoolboard to the corporate boardroom. Yes, we see the blossoms of this forbidden fruit seemingly everywhere. It is as if the words spoken against Judah and Jerusalem many years ago could have been written against the United States of America at this very time, "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (Isaiah 1:4). Proverbs 1:7 tells us, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Sadly, for most, we have lost the "fear of the Lord." Clearly, it is past time for waking up!

As noted above, it has been nearly one hundred years since the despicable words of the Humanist

Manifesto I, were penned. Again, these things have been being promoted/taught for many decades. Along this same line, the 1973 Humanist Manifesto II was very direct. Beginning on page 16, this despicable document declares, "...humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves...**We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational... Ethics stems from human need and interest...We strive for the good life, here and now...**In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct...**The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered 'evil.'** Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, **individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire.**" Wow! Sadly, the drums of those promoting the wickedness of sodomy have been beating for many years. It should not surprise us then, when in 2015, the United States of America did what even heathenistic pagan Rome would not do—They fully embraced and legally endorsed "homosexuality" as being acceptable, calling it "marriage." Think about this reality for a moment. With the swing of a gavel, justices undid centuries of moral law, ushering in sodomite "marriage," making it legal in all 50 states. Again, we need to remember that these things did not happen overnight. Again, the dam has been oozing water for a long time. Study early English and American History and you will realize that we have gone from the death penalty for such unspeakable vileness to that of celebrating such with an entire month of "PRIDE." In other words, in the United States, a lot has changed in only a few

hundred years. No, we are not advocating violence to anyone. Our goal is to bring such people to the Lord. We want them to come to Jesus in repentance and find forgiveness IN Christ (Galatians 3:27f; Romans 6:1f; Ephesians 1:3f). In other words, our goal is for sinners to become saints (Christians). This is our goal. This is ALWAYS our goal. For people to say otherwise is to distort our speech. The homosexual movement is violent. We are not. We want them to be saved. They want us to abandon God and His plain teachings. Tragically, most people will not come to the Lord (Matthew 7:13f). It is not that they cannot come, and it is not that God does not want them to come, for Scripture makes it abundantly apparent that salvation is exactly what God wants for mankind (1 Timothy 1:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 5:6f; Matthew 11:28f). No, the problem is what they "choose" (cf., Joshua 24:15). God always gives men and women a choice. Our loving God has blessed us with freewill (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Unfortunately, by the droves most use this freewill to reject God. As a study of Scripture will show, these rejections impact lives, communities and ultimately a nation. While ultimately there will be a FINAL JUDGMENT DAY (Romans 14:11-12), wherein every person will stand equal before God (Romans 2:11), there can also be providential judgments upon societies and nations (as a study of history demonstrates; cf., Daniel 4:17f).

Thus, we must contemplate: How far has the United States fallen? How far will it fall before the dust finally settles?! Read Proverbs 14:34, Psalm 9:17 and Daniel 4:17. Read Jude 7. Also, read 2 Peter 2:6. Add to this reading Genesis 13:13, along with Genesis 18:20. Seriously, READ THESE SCRIPTURES! This SIN is a serious (very serious!)

problem. God brought Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities around them down for accepting the wickedness of homosexuality. Rome, too, was destroyed from internal decay—that is, from within (cf., Daniel 2). We better take heed while we are still able (cf., Genesis 18:32; Jeremiah 5:1)! Again, it is past time to wake up. If not, God will bring this nation to its knees. There are only 66 books in the Bible and yet how many of these books deal in largess with the rebellion and fall of nations—especially Israel and Judah, DUE TO their continuation in sin and wickedness (including the sin we are currently discussing)? The answer is easy. Most of them! God’s thoughts on these situations are not hidden. God will NOT overlook wickedness/immorality, including the promotion of such within a nation. God sees it (Psalm 10:11-16; 73:11; 94:7; Hebrews 4:12-13). Sin is against God Himself (Genesis 39:9; Psalm 51:14). Sin can and will collapse a country.

Thousands of years before any of the words of the Humanist Manifestos were ever written, or even before any of the English and American laws were given, Genesis chapter 19 showed the history and condemnation of homosexuality—forever setting forth such as SIN! Yes, “homosexuality” is absolutely a sin. It’s not a sin because of what I believe, although I absolutely believe that such is a sin. Rather, it is a sin because God’s Word says that such action is a sin. As just noted, sin is against God and against His law/truth (Isaiah 59:1f). In fact, until just a few decades ago, the United States fully recognized the wickedness of these actions and even had laws (cf., “sodomy laws”; Example, Texas in the 1990’s) against such filthy actions. What has changed in our society? Well, it certainly was not the teachings of Scripture. The Bible says the same thing

now that it has said for thousands of years. Thus, we must ask: How did we get here (cf., in the United States in the year 2023)? How did we get to the point of legalizing so-called “gay marriage” or “celebrating” for an entire month (cf., every June) the idea of “pride” or “LGBTQ2S+,” *etcetera*? How did we get to the point of having numerous high-ranking governmental officials placed simply because of their sexual debauchery (cf., Secretary of Health, Secretary of Transportation, Press Secretary, and so forth)? How did we get to the point that CEOs of major companies feel compelled to march in “Pride Parades?” How did we get to the point that cartoons and school curriculum are being used to intentionally indoctrinate small children with such unspeakable ideas? How did we get to the point that “the rainbow” (a sign of God’s mercy after His Judgment through the Flood—a judgment brought about because of terrible wickedness/sin; Genesis 6:1f), become the very “symbol” of the Sodomite movement, itself? Seriously, how did we get here—i.e., to such a despicable point within American society? As with all wickedness and sin, we did not get here overnight, nor did we get here by accident. As Paul told Timothy almost two thousand years ago, “Evil men and seducers shall wax WORSE AND WORSE, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13). As with wicked men like “Jannes and Jambres” who “withstood Moses,” so we too have been bombarded by “men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith” (2 Timothy 3:8). Like those Gentiles in ancient Rome, these nasty individuals have “changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator...” (Romans 1:25). In short, such people have made themselves “gods”—as the Humanist Manifesto proclaimed. They are like those in the book of Judges, wherein it says,

“...every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). Proverbs 14:12 and Jeremiah 10:23 serve as commentaries on such rebels, even today!

## **HOMOSEXUALITY—HOW DID WE GET HERE?**

As noted above, the journey to modern America in 2023, wherein it seems that “homosexuality” (cf., Sodomy, lesbianism, and the like) is being promoted regularly, was not something that happened in five minutes. In fact, for hundreds of years (and even until very recently) this “land of the free and home of the brave” (as a whole, anyway) was absolutely opposed to the sin of homosexuality. For practically all of American history the sin of homosexuality was a matter of shame and reproach. Even as soon ago as 2008, liberal President Obama himself was on record as saying marriage was between a man and a woman. But his views started to morph! Go figure. The real point is this: As Bible knowledge and morality in this country has waned (cf., over the last 100 years or so), the acceptance of the devious has increased, exponentially. As referenced earlier, a study of the Old Testament will show you this same pattern with many now-fallen countries. Israel, Judah, Babylon, Rome, and on and on we could go. The Old Testament is literally filled with such examples. One of the first areas that such is seen deals with our very subject. Study Genesis chapters thirteen to nineteen, especially about “Sodom and Gomorrah” and “the cities of the plain.” A quick Bible search will reveal that “Sodom” is mentioned nearly fifty times in the Bible. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, from the first book (Genesis) to the last book (Revelation), this word “Sodom” is mentioned—and NOT in a good way. How did we get here, we ask? Simple!

The lessons from “Sodom” have been forgotten and/or ignored. As one article noted, “Using books like *Heather Has Two Mommies* or *Daddy’s Roommate*, teachers have [been] instructing that there are essentially no right or wrong actions when it comes to relationships and families. Anything goes, as long as ‘love’ is the ultimate motivation” (Miller and Harrub). But here is the problem—“Love,” must be properly defined. Thankfully LOVE has been defined. God defines it. Listen to the Bible: **“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments:** and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). **“And this is love, that we walk after His commandments.** This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it” (2 John 6). Put in brief, “LOVE” is forever connected with DOING WHAT GOD SAYS! The word “love” used in these verses is from the Greek term *agape*. As a study of this wonderful term will show, *agape* deals with sacrificial love. It involves seeking the highest good for another. In other words, love (i.e., true love) is NOT a selfish (lustful) “love,” but instead it involves sacrifice and goodness. Real love involves righteous action—as defined by God’s Word. This love is seen in Jesus dying for humanity—for sinners (John 3:16; Romans 5:8f). It is seen in one loving his enemies (Matthew 5:43f). It involves telling a person what they need to hear, not necessarily what they want to hear (cf., Mark 10:21f). Yes, biblically based *agape* love is what the world needs—not lustful/selfish (humanistic defined) “LUV.” Yes, the world needs LOVE, but it does not need LUST. When the homosexual speaks of #love, they do not mean what God means. Note: There are four Greek words for love (3 used in the Bible directly and 1 implied). Those words involve some form of: *agape* (as noted above), *phileo* (cf., brotherly love), *storge* (cf., love of



family) and *eros* (sexual love). Here is the problem: The world is trying to solve an *agape* problem (cf., the problem of sin) using *eros* love, and perhaps sometimes using *phileo* or *storge*. In other words, the world seeks to SATISFY THEIR SOULS LONGINGS with unauthorized and deranged sexual "love" (cf., not as God defines it—between an eligible husband and a wife, but with some sinful arrangement—such as seen within homosexuality or other forms of fornication). Further, while *eros* is their favorite approach, they sometimes even try to find their happiness with some version of *phileo* and/or *storge* (which certainly have their place, as noted in God's Word, but not as they use it). In other words, for the world, lust and/or at best friendship/family determine truth. Yet, what they never do, is use *agape*. The idea of seeking another's highest good based upon WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS is NOT a part of their motivation. In classic satanic fashion, they regularly reverse terms and use "love" when what they mean is "lust." LGBTQ2S+? Really? This is NOT **agape**. This is SIN!! So, we ask one more time: How did we get here? We got here by sinful worldly people (sometimes even religious people; cf., the various denominations that now embrace homosexuality) redefining the word love (cf., Isaiah 5:20; 8:20; Psalm 119:104-105; Acts 20:32). Just as in the beginning one word was changed/added; Cf., the word "not" (Genesis 3:4). So, it is today when it comes to the Sodomite community. One word is distorted. The word "LOVE." God will not allow it. One day Judgment will come (2 Peter 3:10). LOVE IS NOT LUST!!

### **HOMOSEXUALITY—WHY IS IT SIN?**

First, we must ask: What is homosexuality? What does it mean? An excellent and scholarly article addresses

this very question. Quoting from the New King James Version on 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and concerning the words “homosexuals” and “sodomites,” these authors write, “The Greek word translated ‘homosexual’ in this passage is a... term that literally means soft, and when referring to people, refers to males allowing themselves to be used sexually by other males. Again, lexicographers apply the term to the person who is a ‘catamite,’ i.e., a male who submits his body to another male for unnatural lewdness—i.e., homosexuality...[Further], ‘Sodomites’ (‘abusers of themselves with mankind’ in the KJV) is a translation of the term *arsenokoitai*. It derives from two words: *arsein* (a male) and *koitei* (a bed), and refers to one who engages in sex with a male as with a female...Paul used the same term... [in] 1 Timothy 1:9-10.” These same penmen go on to write (quoting another writer concerning Paul’s letter to Timothy), “We can see from the context that homosexual activities are classed with such sins as patricide, matricide, homicide, kidnapping, and perjury. If we accept that any of these things are sins, we must accept that all are sins. If it is a sin to be a whoremonger, to pursue a lascivious life with prostitutes, then it is likewise a sin to engage in homosexual acts.’ [Also], When Paul said to the Christians at Corinth, ‘such were some of you,’ he proved not only that homosexuals may be forgiven, but they can cease such sinful activity...We are forced to conclude that sexual activity between persons of the same sex is not a matter of genetics; but is a behavioral phenomenon...” (Miller and Harrub). Likewise, we need to understand that such sin is not a matter of biology or being “born that way.” If such is the case, then what about the thief, the murderer, the pedophile, is he, too, “born that way?” No! Sin is a choice. No one is arguing against individual struggles or even

propensities (based on various factors; cf., past environment, *etcetera*), but at the end of the day, just as normal man is not allowed to act upon some natural urge (cf., his possible attraction to another woman—not his wife; cf., Matthew 5:28f; Job 31:1), so someone tempted by homosexual urges is also without excuse before the God of Heaven. As with all SIN, temptation must be controlled (cf., James 1:13f). Jesus gave the plan for overcoming temptation—He used Scripture (cf., Matthew 4:1f; Psalm 119:9f). Additionally, in another article, “Only the Creator has the Right to Define Marriage,” Miller writes regarding the 2015 Supreme Court decision on “homosexual marriage.” Concerning this fairly recent issues, he notes, “In a 5 to 4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court has brazenly flaunted the definition of marriage that has prevailed throughout the western civilization, and most certainly in America from the beginning. This definition did not originate with men or nations. It came directly from the Creator of humanity and the Universe...[God] declared forthrightly: ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh’ (Genesis 2:24). Jesus Christ reaffirmed the same thing (Matthew 19:4-6). One man for one woman has been the bedrock of civilization for 6,000 years...” (Apologetics Press, online). We might also add that both Moses and Jesus also taught us that there are ONLY TWO SEXES—“male and female” (Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 19:4). Just as with homosexuality, “transgenderism” (whatever that is supposed to mean) is sin!

But “why” is homosexuality a sin? The simple is answer is this: Because, as with other “sins,” this action is against what God (as noted within His Word) says (Romans

4:15; 1 John 3:4; 5:17). Sin (i.e., transgression of God's law) spiritually separates an accountable person from God (Isaiah 59:1f; Romans 6:23a). In other words, we are not talking about innocent children or those born mentally incapable (cf., Matthew 18:3), but those who have reached the age of accountability. The end-result of one's sins (if not taken care of through God's saving plan—cf., Access to the redeeming blood of Christ through obedience to the Gospel, 1 Corinthians 15:1f; 2 Thessalonians 1:6f; Romans 6:1f, 16-18; Acts 8:12-13, 35f) is spiritual death and eternal condemnation (James 1:13f; Mark 16:16; John 12:48). In short, SIN IS A VERY BIG DEAL. Yet, one might ask: But all sin is the same, right? The answer to that question is: YES and NO. More explanation is needed. It is "yes," in the sense that ALL SIN separates one from God. Romans 1, Galatians 5, 1 Corinthians 6, Colossians 3, Ephesians 4 and 5, 2 Timothy 3 and many other chapters and specific passages note numerous and specific "sins"—all of which, will separate a person from the one true and living God (Jehovah). So, yes, in this sense all sin is the same. It all causes separation from God and must be forgiven through the only thing that will forgive it—namely, the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:18f; Revelation 1:5-6). Furthermore, we need to understand that EVERY SIN that a person truly repents of will be forgiven—fully forgiven (Hebrews 8:12). This is true for the alien sinner (i.e., one obeying the Gospel with initial obedience), as well as for the child of God who needs to come back to God (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 John 1:5f; Acts 8:12-13, 20-24). For this mercy, we should all be eternally thankful! Obviously, the repentance spoken of here means that one cannot continue to live in their past sins (cf., 1 Corinthians 6:11, "such **WERE** some of you"). But more on

this concept later. Additionally, while all sin is the same in one sense (as noted above), in another sense it is not all the same (cf., John 19:11; Luke 12:47-48; 2 Peter 2:20; James 3:1). If nothing else, the consequences connected with some sin is different. Common sense, as well as numerous Bible passages make this fact abundantly clear, especially a study of the Old Testament wherein certain “sins” involved the death penalty, whereas others did not (cf., Leviticus 6:1f; 18:1f, 19:1f; Numbers 15:32f; 35:1f Joshua 7:1f). We see this same concept in the New Testament, as well (cf., Acts 5:1f vs. Galatians 2:11f). Here is the point: While all sin separates one from God, all sin does not bring about the same LONGTERM EFFECTS upon an individual, his family and/or a society. Put another way, some sins impact things differently. A study of the Book of Deuteronomy as it relates to the tribes of Canaan and the judgment God brought upon them make this point, as does a study of Leviticus. As an example, note the strong words of Leviticus chapter 18. Holy Writ declares, “Defile not ye yourselves in any of **THESE THINGS**: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: Therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants” (vs. 24-25). Note, included in “these things” is the vile wickedness of homosexuality. God refers to this specific sin as an “abomination.” **Leviticus 18:22 reads, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.”** Concerning this same sin of homosexuality, Leviticus 20:13 adds, “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.” Likewise, 1 Kings 14:24 declares, “And there were also sodomites in the land: and they DID

according to all the ABOMINATIONS OF THE NATIONS which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel." The connection is very clear. Certainly, a study of verses like: Genesis 19:5, Judges 19:22, Romans 1:26f, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Timothy 1:10, Jude v. 7, and other like passages show that THIS SPECIFIC SIN has been condemned, by God. In fact, in EVERY DISPENSATION—including during the time of the Patriarchs, under the Law of Moses and within the Christian age, this "abomination" has been deemed sin/wickedness. Yes, from the early words of Genesis 19 concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, to the many condemnations of this sin under the Law of Moses (cf., Leviticus 18:22-23; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17), to its clear rebuke during the times of the Kings (cf., 1 Kings 14:24; 15:11-12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7), to the censure found within the very words of Jesus Himself (cf., His condemnation of "fornication"—which certainly includes homosexuality, Matthew 5:32; 19:1f), to the equal chastisement from various New Testament writers (cf., Galatians 5:19f; Hebrews 13:4; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7), THE SIN OF HOMOSEXUALITY has been consistently (and repeatedly) denounced by Almighty God! For anyone to try to use the Bible to justify this wickedness is almost beyond belief. However, the Devil often uses such tactics (Matthew 4:1f; 2 Corinthians 11:13f; John 8:44; 1 Timothy 3:13; 2 Corinthians 2:11). The attempts by false teachers to say that Sodom was only about the inhospitable or that Jesus never condemned it, is most ridiculous. Anyone who studies even a little knows better (Proverbs 15:28). In our day and time, it seems that Isaiah 5:20 should be posted on every billboard, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Yet, for the

faithful, the words of Isaiah 8:20 (especially when coupled with Psalm 119:104-105, Acts 20:32 and like verses) remains very strong against such worldly nonsense. This Old Testament states, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word [cf., GOD'S WORD, JBR], it is because there is no light in them." Yes, I believe homosexuality is a sin!

## **HOMOSEXUALITY—WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL?**

Why is this sin (and the allowance/promotion) of it, "a big deal?" After all, the Bible condemns many sins (cf., social drinking, dancing, biblical nakedness, malice, theft, unkindness, lying, and many others), so why does the sin of homosexuality matter? Here are a few thoughts.

First, as noted in the above sections, God's wrath comes upon nations that promote and endorse deep levels of immorality. Specifically, murder of babies (cf., Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 18:10; 2 Kings 16:3) and acceptance of Sodomy were certainly among these "deep levels" of immorality that brought about the downfall of cities and nations (cf., Genesis 19:1f; Leviticus 18:22f; 2 Peter 2:6). After all, what term does Peter use in his condemnation of homosexuality? He uses the word "EXAMPLE!" This usage is not an accident. Referencing the exact sin of Homosexuality, Peter writes, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, **making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.**" It is hard to miss this one. Jude even makes it more vivid. He says, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and GOING AFTER

STRANGE FLESH, are set forth for an EXAMPLE, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (vs. 7). The language in the original means that they are suffering now and they will continue to suffer "the vengeance of eternal fire." Let that truth sink in for a moment. Concerning this verse, it would take an atheistic postmodern deconstructionist to miss the clear point. Yet, an average third grader would see it easy. On a side note, concerning the propaganda that the situation in Sodom involves only the condemnation of homosexual rape, we would say this: 1) If there is no right/wrong (as logic would demand for an atheist), then why would it matter? In short, without God, why is rape considered wrong? In fact, how could anything be considered wrong? For an atheist to appeal to a standard is laughable at best, 2) The context from these passages shows that it is not homosexual rape that is condemned, but any/all homosexuality (rape and otherwise). Note, "First, if gang rape was the issue, why did Lot offer his daughter in exchange for the visitors? Rape would have been an issue in both cases. Second, the men of Sodom were declared wicked and guilty of 'very grievous' sin before the visitors ever came to town (Genesis 18:20). Third, Jude clinched the matter in his discussion of the sin of Sodom...Jude 7. 'Given themselves over to sexual immorality' is a translation of the compound word *ekporneusasai*, which combines the verb *porneuo* (to commit illicit sexual intercourse) with the preposition *ek* (out of). The attachment of the prepositional prefix indicates intensification, i.e., that the men of Sodom possessed 'a lust that gluts itself' [that is], their sexual appetites took them beyond the range of normal sexual activity. The idea of force or coercion is not in the meaning of the word. 'Strange' refers to 'one not of the same nature,



form, class, kind'...and so pertains to the indulgence of passions that are 'contrary to nature'...The frequent allusion to 'nature' by scholars is interesting, in view of the fact that Scripture elsewhere links same-sex relations with that which is 'against nature' (Romans 1:26-27) or unnatural, i.e., out of harmony with God's original arrangement of nature (e.g., Genesis 1:27; 2:22; Matthew 19:4-6). Summarizing, Jude asserted that the sin of Sodom was homosexual relations—not homosexual rape" (Miller and Harrub). The continually linkage of homosexuality with unnatural sin is extremely clear, as Leviticus chapter eighteen and Romans chapter one forever shows.

Second, the family (as God defines it; often referenced as the nuclear family; that is, man/woman (i.e., husband/wife) and children; cf., Genesis 2:1f; Matthew 19:1f; Ephesians 5:22f; Colossians 3:18f; 1 Corinthians 11:1f) is essential to the sustainability of any society/nation. In other words, as goes the home—so goes the nation. This has always been the case. This will always BE the case. Secularist cannot change this reality. The Marxist organization, BLM, Inc. cannot change it, either. False religious teachers will not change this fact (cf., all of those within religion that seek to authorize sodomy). A Supreme Court ruling will not alter it. Distortion of what a true civil-rights issue actually is, will not amend it. Trying to lump moral sin (i.e., homosexuality) in with racial issues will not work either. In short, propaganda and twisting of terms does not change the reality of what THE HOME IS SUPPOSED TO BE. Sadly, the attack upon the home in the United States started long before the homosexual agenda, when no-fault divorce was sanctioned. Put another way, we have been twisting God's teachings on the home for MANY

YEARS (cf., false teaching on MDR (marriage, divorce, and remarriage; Matthew 5:32; 19:1f), and the endorsement of homosexuality is simply the latest addition to that decline. Logic would demand that this wickedness will not be the last fall. What is next? Polygamy? Triads? Incest? Pedophile endorsed “marriages?” Bestiality “marriages?” If not, why not? Remember, to these radicals there is no right or wrong –it is only about (let’s see, how did the Humanist Manifesto II put it?), “the good life, here and now” (p. 17). Without the family (as God intends it) a nation cannot long exist! History is unmistakable on this point.

No, homosexuality is not the only sin that will bring down a nation. Debt, weak borders, rejection of God’s laws on economics (cf. God does not favor Communism; Acts 5:4a), a corrupt judicial system, an inept and immoral military, evil civil leaders (cf., those who support murdering babies, the transgender movement), and so forth, are certainly among other factors often involved, as well. But certainly the vile nature of homosexuality can be a key component in drawing the wrath of Almighty God (2 Kings 22:17; cf., idolatry with fornication and Sodomites, too, 1 Kings 15:11f). After all, as a simple reading of the Bible will show, we do not see “brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven” as a regular occurrence, yet we DO see such when it came to the sin of homosexuality (cf., Genesis 19:24). Further, God knew the STATISTICS on this lifestyle before the statisticians! This sin hurts minds and homes. In fact, according to the article, “This is the Way God Made Me’—A Scientific Examination of Homosexuality and the ‘Gay Gene,’” we find that “prior to 1973 homosexuality appeared in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), the official reference book used by the

American Psychiatric Association for diagnosing mental disorders in America” (Miller). How did this “mental disorder” suddenly become the opposite? Answer: It didn’t! The transgression of Sodom is not normal (natural), and even perverts like Alfred Kinsey and his distorted and biased studies from years ago—do not change this reality, nor do other flawed and propaganda driven reports. The truth is that when all the numbers are truly scrutinized, we are dealing with a very (VERY!) low percentage of people who engage in this unnatural sin, with some statistics showing it as low as half of one percent of the population. Yet, it is not only those who engage in this sin that are condemned, but also those who endorse it (cf., Romans 1:32; Psalm 50:16-18). Thus, both the ENGAGER and the ENDORSER will stand before God in Judgment (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). When such evil is engaged in, it promotes abundant problems. Study the “stats” on this vile behavior. The stats paint a sad and pitiful picture. From suicide rates to depression, this sin has terrible consequences. These people need Jesus and they need Him desperately!

Thus, what do we do about this “sin”—the sin of homosexuality? There is some things we can (and should do). Consider these suggestions:

First, live a righteous life according to God’s Word. Just as God sees the evil, He also sees the good (1 Peter 3:12). Others see it, too (Matthew 5:13f). This lifestyle of course involves a life of prayer (1 John 5:14; Hebrews 4:16), including prayers for our leaders/country “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and

honesty" (1 Timothy 2:1f), but also for opportunities to help people find the truth (Colossians 4:2f).

Second, we must work more diligently to save souls (Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15; Romans 1:14f; 2 Corinthians 2:12f; Matthew 9:37-38). The world is lost and heading to Hell (and this includes the homosexuals). Thus, we need to love them enough to teach them THE TRUTH—the way out of sin and “back” to God, finding that same innocence of childhood. They need to realize that they are able to come to Christ and obtain salvation (Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:21f; 1 John 2:25). As with all sinners, they need to obey the plan of salvation and be added to the Lord’s Church—the Church of Christ (Acts 2:1f; 8:1f; Ephesians 1:1f). Denominationalism is not what the world needs. It only brings confusion and causes the worldly to see contradiction. What they need is: JESUS and His ONE WAY (John 14:6; 17:17f; Matthew 16:13f; Acts 2:38).

Third, as good citizens, we should use our freedom to promote morality and righteousness within our families and within our communities. Start local and grow it. Paul knew his rights as a citizen and used them (cf., Acts 22:25). As Americans we have been given unprecedented freedoms and rights. Let us speak privately and publicly about God’s morality and other biblical truths (cf., Acts 2:46; 4:29; 5:42), especially how the lost can be saved (Acts 5:20; 4:12). Further, let us always vote as a Christian would vote. God is watching. Yes, one day, persecution might come, but the only way to combat error is with truth. We must open our mouths against such vileness as homosexuality. This includes in the workplace and otherwise, as needed.

Fourth, while we must flatly condemn the evils and SIN of homosexuality, never falling subject to the political correctness of the day or of a society (cf., the vernacular often used, i.e., living together vs. fornication; alternative lifestyles vs. sodomy, LGBTQ2S+ vs. SIN, and so forth), we must also remember that sinners CAN BE forgiven. Jesus did not die so that no one could be forgiven (John 3:16; Hebrews 2:9). No, the Lord suffered and died so that ALL OF THE LOST COULD BE SAVED (Romans 5:6f; John 10:10; 1 Corinthians 6:9f-11). This does not mean they will, but that they have the opportunity—the choice (Matthew 11:28f). Thus, on the one hand, we must condemn this debauchery (while never compromising the issue), while at the same time offering God’s beautiful plan of redemption to the lost (including homosexuals) with the other hand. Like those of Nehemiah’s day, we must WORK and FIGHT (spiritually speaking, of course; Nehemiah 4:6, 17; 2 Corinthians 10:3f; Ephesians 6:10f). We must fight the error AND work to save the sinner (Jude 3; John 4:35). Again, just as with other sins, homosexuals can be forgiven (Romans 6:17-18; Titus 3:3f; Ephesians 2:1f). With this forgiveness comes HOPE and a new life/start (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:12; Colossians 1:5f, 13-14, 23, 27). Put another way, when there is genuine repentance (meaning one cannot go right back into the same sin, but must change one’s life; Colossians 3:1f; 1 John 1:5f), then we must understand and explain to others: THERE ARE NO SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:15)! Just as a liar or one engaged in some other sin can become a Christian (cf., stopping his lies or getting out of heterosexual fornication), so a homosexual can also become a faithful Saint—leaving the “abominations” of the past behind. Yes, our merciful

God will cast such sins (when one comes to Him on His terms) “into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:18f). As Psalm 103:10-12 tell us, “[God] hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Let us hate the sin. Let us love the sinner. May we never compromise this most basic of moral issues. Let the sinners come to Jesus! Like our Lord, may we show the world what TRUE LOVE IS—in all that we do and teach (cf., Acts 1:1f; 10:38, 34f; Matthew 7:12). Like Paul in Athens, is our “spirit...stirred in [us]” (Acts 17:16)? Do we like him (figuratively speaking, of course) hear the world crying out, “Come over...and help us” (Acts 16:9)? Oh, how desperately the world (and certainly the world of the homosexual) needs King Jesus! May we tell them of the better way (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21). As 1 Corinthians 6:11 says, even involving those caught up in this very sin (after their repentance/obedience to God’s plan), “And such **WERE** some of you.”

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Swift, Michael, A Guest Editorial Article In "Gay Community News," on February 15, 1987.

Bailey, Kent, *Wordliness: Homosexuality*, Michael Hatcher, Editor. Pensacola, FL, 1999.

Miller, Dave and Brad Harrub. "*An investigation of the Biblical Evidence Against Homosexuality*" Article from [apologeticspress.org](http://apologeticspress.org)

## CHAPTER 6

# YOU BELIEVE IN THE SANCTITY OF LIFE?

Written by **BJ Clarke**

### INTRODUCTION

Is life sacred or not? To what authority may we turn to determine the answer? This chapter is written with complete confidence that there is a supreme God who created the Universe (Genesis 1-2; Psalm 19:1-6; 33:6-9; Daniel 2:28; Hebrew 3:4; Romans 1:20) and that He has revealed Himself to man in the Bible (1 Corinthians 2:7-16). It is our conviction that this revelation is propositional and authoritative because it is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16), and that it presents sufficient internal characteristics to establish this claim. God's Sacred Word, the Bible, is the best and most authoritative manual on all matters sacred, including matters pertaining to the sanctity of life.

Accordingly, it is the thesis of this chapter that the Bible teaches that human life is sacred in the eyes of Almighty God, Who is Himself the author of life. In addition to the Biblical data, certain evidence from the fields of science, medicine and philosophy will be offered as further proofs.

### WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

Does human life begin at conception? It is a question which authorities from virtually every discipline



and field have sought to address. The crucial nature of this question should be quite obvious, as it relates to the matter of whether abortion is morally right or wrong. To say that human life begins at conception creates a far more volatile and emotional atmosphere than does the affirmation that abortion is merely the removal of “fetal tissue.” If we admit that human life begins at conception, then we must also admit that abortion involves the termination of human life. To admit this is tantamount to admitting that abortion is the premeditated killing of a human being. And this is precisely what abortion advocates must avoid. An admission that abortion involves the killing of innocent human beings would be a death-knell to the pro-choice movement. Hence, euphemisms and clever semantics are employed to refer to that which is within the mother’s womb: “It is not a baby--it is a fetus. It is not a child--it is the product of conception. It is not a human being--it is medical tissue.”

We now present a two-pronged argument to prove that human life begins at conception, and that abortion is, therefore, equivalent to killing an innocent human being. First, we will look at medical evidence which proves that human life begins at conception. Second, we will look at the most compelling evidence of all--the testimony of the author of life Himself--God’s Word.

**1. Medical Evidence That Human Life Begins At Conception.** The average American probably believes that medical science is largely ambiguous as to when human life begins. Actually, the opposite is true. A panel of prominent scientists and medical authorities testified before a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee. Among them was

Dr. Micheline M. Matthews Roth who testified, "In biology and in medicine, it is an accepted fact that the life of any individual organism reproducing by sexual reproduction begins at conception, or fertilization" (Geisler 149).

Professor and Doctor Hymie Gordon, one time chairman of the Department of Medical Genetics at the Mayo Clinic, said:

But now we can say, unequivocally, that the question of when life begins is no longer a question for theological or philosophical dispute. It is an established scientific fact. Theologians and philosophers may go on to debate the meaning of life or the purpose of life, but it is an established fact that all life, including human life, begins at the moment of conception (Ibid.).

Add to this the decisive testimony of Dr. Jerome LeJeune, a professor of fundamental genetics at the University of Descarte, in Paris, France:

When does a person begin? I will try to give the most precise answer to that question actually available to science. Modern biology teaches us that ancestors are united to their progeny by a continuous material link, for it is from the fertilization of the female cell (the ovum) by the male cell (the spermatazoa) that a new member of the species will emerge. Life has a very, very long history but each individual has a very neat beginning, the moment of its conception...To accept the fact that after fertilization has taken place, a new

human has come into being, is no longer a matter of taste or of opinion. The human nature of the human being from conception to old age is not a metaphysical contention, it is plain experimental evidence (Powell 70).

The fact of the matter is that all but one of those who testified before the Senate affirmed that human life does begin at conception. Strangely enough, the pro-choice camp could not and did not produce even one expert witness who would decisively state that life begins at any time other than conception. Even the one "pro-choice" witness who did appear before the Senate stopped short of denying that life begins at conception. Rather, the witness suggested that no one knows when life begins.

Dr. Landrum Shettles, a pioneer in sperm biology, fertility and sterility has done as much as anyone to provide us with a window whereby we can look into the womb. His intrauterine photography is on display in over fifty medical textbooks. In his book, "Rites of Life: The Scientific Evidence of Life Before Birth," he writes:

No knowledge has emerged since the sixties that would cause Planned Parenthood to alter its view on scientific grounds, though alter its view it has. Indeed, all the new knowledge we have about the unborn only further supports the idea that it is meaningful human life. The biological facts have not changed direction. But society has (112-13).

Research and photography by men such as Dr. Shettles has provided us with incredible insight concerning the growth and development of the unborn child.

Interestingly, descriptions and pictures of fetal development are conspicuously absent from pro-choice literature. Why is this so? Perhaps it is because they do not want America to know the well-established medical facts of what is going on inside the mother's womb. They do not want it known that by 18 days after conception the heart is forming, and eyes are starting to develop. At 20 days the foundations of brain, spinal cord and nervous systems are laid. At 24 days the heart begins to beat. Arms and legs have budded by 28 days. At 30 days blood flows in veins but stays separate from the mother's blood. At approximately 43 days after conception brain waves can be recorded. By 8 weeks the child appears as a well-proportioned small-scale baby. Every organ is present. The stomach produces digestive juices, the liver makes blood cells, kidneys begin to function and taste buds are forming.

In connection with the foregoing facts, it should be observed that it is often the case that pregnancies are not detected until around the sixth week. Some clinics refuse to even perform an abortion until the eighth week, fifty-six days into development (Alcorn 14). By this time the heart has been beating for about five weeks and brain waves have already been recorded. Hence, even early term abortions kill a living, thinking human being with a beating heart. Usually the moment of "quickening" (the time when the mother first feels the movement of the baby) does not occur until the fourth or fifth month. However, this moment does not signal the beginning of life. A human life has

been present since the moment of conception. John Whitehead observes:

With a fuller understanding of genetics, the technology concerning the emission of brain waves, and the intrauterine photography of fetuses (which has provided a close-up look at the developing baby), there is much less of an excuse today than there might have been in 1973 for a sweeping and arbitrary ruling such as *Roe v. Wade* (126).

Robert Wennberg effectively summarizes the medical evidence concerning the nature of life in the mother's womb:

It does seem incontestable, for instance, that from the point of conception there exists a living organism (by any standard biology textbook definition of life) that can die and consequently can be killed. Therefore, this much has to be recognized: abortions kill, for where there is no killing there is no abortion. Further, it is human biological life that is terminated. For just as I am a human adult, so the zygote is a human zygote, the embryo a human embryo, and the fetus a human fetus; they are not canine or feline. Nor is this human life simply a part of the woman's body like her kidneys or gall bladder. To be sure, it is dependent upon the nurture provided by her body, but it is not an organ of that body. Fetal life has its own genetic makeup, its own

blood supply and circulation (the blood of the mother and fetus do not intermingle), and its own principle of growth. Developing fetal life is nourished and sustained by the means of the placenta, but the growth principle is its own and not the mother's (26-27).

Incidentally, the truth expressed in this quotation means that it is also immoral to use the so-called "morning after" pill, for it terminates the life of a human being, tiny though it may be.

The evidence is clear. Proponents of the idea that life begins at conception are not confined to what some would label as "rabid, right-wing, fundamentalist, pro-life movements." It is remarkable, but true, that in the 1960's, even *Planned Parenthood's* Dr. Alan Guttmacher frankly confessed that a human baby was present at the point of conception. *Planned Parenthood* literature from this era even warned women about the dangers of abortion and stated that abortion "kills the life of the baby" (Shettles & Rorvik 112).

**2. Biblical Evidence That Human Life Begins At Conception.** Years ago, a liberal Protestant clergyman was a guest on a Sioux City, Iowa radio talk show. He took a decidedly pro-choice position and when one of the callers confronted him about the Bible, he emphatically declared, "The Bible doesn't say anything about abortion" (Eidsmoe 355). Unfortunately, this view is shared by many in the religious world. However, we need not mistake the lack of an explicit "Thou shalt not have an abortion" in Scripture with the idea that there is no teaching on the subject at all.

The Bible can condemn an action without having to refer to it in explicit terms. Where does the Bible explicitly say, "Thou shalt not inject heroin into your veins"? Yet, who would deny that the principles of Scripture militate against such? Interestingly enough, neither does the Bible explicitly condemn infanticide. However, the implications of Exodus 20:13, "Thou shalt not kill," would certainly condemn such. With reference to this passage, Professor Harold O. J. Brown wrote, "If the developing fetus is shown to be a human being, then we do not need a specific commandment against feticide any more than we need something specific against uxoricide (wife killing). The general command against killing covers both" (119). Moreover, if the Bible teaches that life in the womb is sacred, then it is immoral to terminate this life intentionally. Thus, the implicit teaching of the Bible provides us with ample information to ferret out the basic issues surrounding sanctity of life issues, such as abortion.

Genesis 1 teaches that seed produces after its own kind. Thus, the seed of a human man when joined with the seed of a human woman will produce what fruit? One human seed + another human seed = a new human being. Is this new human alive? Obviously so, else there would be no need to perform an abortion! If that which is in the womb is not alive, then leave it be! If it is alive, then it is obviously human life for it came from two humans. Therefore, to perform an abortion is to intentionally terminate an innocent human life.

Almost everyone would agree that it is immoral to deliberately kill an innocent human being. Abortion is the killing of an innocent human being. Therefore, abortion is

immoral. No doubt, some would view this as an oversimplification of the complexities involved in the abortion controversy. They would freely admit that it is wrong to kill an innocent human being, but would just as quickly argue that abortion does not necessarily terminate the life of a human being. Clifford E. Bajema observes:

There are three possible positions on the question of when the human being (person) begins, all of which involve doing some kind of defining of what a person is: (1) The human person begins at birth or at some later point; (2) The human person begins at some point during the period of gestation; (3) The human person begins at conception (16).

Proponents of abortion argue that it is not equivalent to the killing of an innocent person, because the majority of abortions take place in the first two trimesters of pregnancy and thus do not involve the killing of a human being. They do not believe that the status of personhood is conferred automatically at the moment of conception. They argue that the quality of becoming a human being does not occur any sooner than the time the fetus has reached the point of viability, i.e., the time when the fetus has sufficiently developed to survive outside of the womb.

Others would argue that humanity is not established until the first breath taken at birth. Believe it or not, some even cite Genesis 2:7 as a proof text for this conviction. The fact of the matter is that appealing to Adam and Genesis 2:7 is not exactly parallel to our present situation.



Since Adam was directly created by God, he was a special case...the fact that Adam was not human until he began to breathe no more proves when individual life begins today than does the fact that he was created as an adult prove that individual human life does not begin until we are adults (Geisler 139).

Furthermore, if breathing is the sign of personhood and humanity, then what can be said of the status of animals who breathe? Does the fact that they breathe prove that they are human? And what about the polio victims of yesteryear who had to rely upon iron lungs in order to breathe? Did they cease to be human beings the moment they lost their ability to breathe on their own? If someone today is placed on a machine to breathe for them while they undergo surgery, does this mean that they cease to be human during the surgery, and that they regain their humanity when they start breathing on their own after surgery? Finally, if breathing is the litmus test for personhood, then what about the late-term abortion method known as a hysterotomy in which the fetus is extracted from the womb by a C-section, and then set aside to die? Almost all of these babies breathe before they are summarily set aside to die. Why isn't this method of abortion soundly condemned by those who take the position that life begins at the first breath outside of the womb?

From the Scriptures we learn that shedding the blood of a human being is no small matter in the sight of God. Genesis 9:6 declares, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God

made he man." Shedding innocent blood is an abomination in the sight of God (Proverbs 6:16-17). The implications are obvious. If the mother/father of a child decides to terminate the life of their innocent child by abortion, then they are guilty of shedding the blood of an innocent human being. Their actions are thus immoral because they have violated the revealed moral code of God.

## **GOD'S VIEW OF LIFE IN THE WOMB**

We do not have to speculate about how God views life in the womb. A study of the original languages in which the Scriptures were authored tells us everything we need to know regarding the nature and quality of life within the womb. Neither the Hebrew language of the Old Testament nor the Greek language of the New Testament makes any distinction between the unborn child and children who are already born. For example, the Hebrew word *ben* is used hundreds of times in the Old Testament; it almost always to refer to a child already born. However, in Genesis 25:21-24, Jacob and Esau are spoken of in their mother's womb and identified as "children." The Hebrew word employed is the word *ben*, the same word used to describe Ishmael at age 13 (Genesis 17:25) and Noah's adult sons (Genesis 9:19).

The book of Job affords us further evidence. In his suffering, Job bemoaned the fact that he had been born. In fact, he expressed the wish that he had been "as infants which never saw light" (Job 3:16). The Hebrew word translated "infant" is *gohlahl*. It is apparent in the context that Job is wishing that he had been miscarried, i.e., never brought forth from the womb to see the light of day. The

word *gohlahl* is used twenty times in the Old Testament and in every other instance it describes a child already born. Hence, inspiration uses the same word to describe an infant in the womb as it does to describe young children asking for bread (Lamentations 4:4).

Linguistic evidence from the New Testament is also available. In Luke 1:41 and 44, the Greek word *brephos* is employed to refer to John the Baptizer in Elizabeth's womb. In the very next chapter, the same Greek word is used with reference to "the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). Furthermore, when Luke records that the people brought infants unto Jesus in order that he might touch them, again, the Greek word *brephos* is utilized. It is also used in Acts 7:19 to refer to young children and is applied in 2 Timothy 3:15 to a child old enough and intelligent enough to know the Scriptures. Accordingly, the authors of Scripture make no distinction in their use of the word *brephos*. It is used for an unborn child in Luke 1, for a newborn child in Luke 2, for infants in Luke 18, for young children in Acts 7, and for a child old enough to grasp a knowledge of the Sacred Writings in 2 Timothy 3.

A different Greek word of importance is the word *huios*, commonly translated "son" in the New Testament. In Matthew 7:9 it is used of a son asking his father for bread. It is also used to refer to Zebedee's adult sons (Matthew 20:20; 26:37). Jesus used this word to describe the two sons in the Parable of The Loving Father in Luke 15:11-32. But the word is also assigned to John the Baptizer while he was in Elisabeth's womb. The angel told Mary, "And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son

(*huios*) in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren" (Luke 1:36). What was it that Elisabeth had conceived? Was it merely medical tissue? Did the Holy Spirit see any qualitative difference between a child already born and that which is within a mother's womb? According to the Holy Spirit, Elisabeth had conceived a *huios*, i.e., a son. At the moment of conception, a *huios* lived within Elisabeth. Later in Luke 1 we read, "Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son" (Luke 1:57). What did Elisabeth conceive? A *huios*. What did Elisabeth bring forth at birth? A *huios*. Hence, the distinction made between the zygote, the embryo, the fetus and a newborn baby is not one of nature but of environment, growth and development. To shed such innocent blood is abomination in the sight of God (Proverbs 6:16-17).

Some religious authors, such as John Swomley, disagree that life within the womb is equivalent in nature and quality as life outside of the womb. He points out that the incarnation was not celebrated at the time that Mary conceived Jesus, but rather at His birth. Swomley also argues that age is counted from the date of birth and not the moment of conception. After all, there is no such thing as a certificate of conception. Furthermore, Swomley avers that the idea that life begins at conception is a "Vatican assumption" which came from Greek philosophy rather than the Bible (Jersild & Johnson 341).

In response, it should be observed that Joseph was told not to be afraid to take Mary to be his wife, "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20). If the "product of conception" has no intrinsic value,

then would it have been a matter of little consequence for Mary to have removed the Holy Spirit's "product of conception" from her womb? Let us not forget that the product of Divine conception within Mary was none other than the *huios* of God (Luke 1:32-35). The Bible often records the Divine involvement of Jehovah in matters relating to conception (Genesis 29:31-35; 30:17-24; Ruth 4:13; 1 Samuel 1:19-20).

Scripture also demonstrates that God is personally involved in the formation and development of the human baby in the mother's womb. The words of Psalm 139:13-16 decisively demonstrate this:

For You formed my inward parts; you covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them (NKJV).

This text most certainly shows that God's love and concern for the unborn is not limited to the advanced stages of pregnancy or only after some alleged and mysterious "viability" point has been reached. In fact, the English term "unformed substance" is from the Hebrew *golem*, the word which has to do with the embryonic state, i.e., the first eight weeks after conception, long before the mother can feel

life in the womb (Davis 149). Hence, David acknowledged that God took interest and care in David's embryo. Professor of Hebrew Exegesis, Ronald Allen, highlights the significance of Psalm 139:13-16 when he writes:

The Bible never speaks of fetal life as mere chemical activity, cellular growth, or vague force. Rather, the fetus in the mother's womb is described by the psalmist in vivid pictorial language as being shaped, fashioned, molded, and woven together by the personal activity of God (6).

Well-known author John Stott observed, "Although the Bible makes no claim to be a textbook of embryology, here is a plain affirmation that the growth of the fetus is neither haphazard nor automatic but a divine work of creative skill" (50).

While it is true that Psalm 139:13-16 demonstrates that God takes special note of that which is within the womb, this passage falls short of explicitly teaching that "ensoulment" (the moment the soul is received by man) occurs at the moment of conception. In fact, there is no explicit passage which comes right out in so many words and affirms that "ensoulment" occurs at the moment of conception. However, the implicit teaching of Scripture indicates that such is the case. The Scriptures do reveal clearly the moment at which the soul departs from the body. Consider the force of the following passages:

And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his

name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin (Genesis 35:18).

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? (Luke 12:20).

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost (Luke 23:46).

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (Acts 7:59).

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (James 2:26).

These Scriptures definitely equate the departure of the soul with the moment of death. Hence, since the moment of death is the moment at which the soul departs from the body, it is logical to conclude that the moment life begins is the same moment at which the soul enters the body. Thus, the implication of Scripture is that "ensoulment" takes place at the moment life begins, the moment of conception, just as "desoulment" of the human body takes place at the moment life ends. Therefore, induced abortion involves the killing of a soul-possessing human being made in God's image.

## DO HARDSHIP CASES CANCEL OUT THE SANCTITY OF LIFE?

What happens to the sanctity of life in hardship cases? In other words, are there cases wherein circumstances are so difficult that the sanctity of life inside the mother's womb becomes less sacred? Emotional arguments are often presented in an attempt to justify the killing of the unborn.

**1. What about rape?** If a woman becomes pregnant as the result of rape, should we really expect her to carry the child to term and delivery? Whereas our hearts sincerely go out to victims of rape, because of their physical and emotional trauma, we should maintain our reason and look at the whole picture. In the first place, it is extremely rare for pregnancy to occur as a result of rape. Statistics vary somewhat, but several studies have been conducted to document the actual ratio of rape-related pregnancies. The findings have ranged from zero to 2.2 percent of the victims involved (Davis 154). *The Commercial Appeal*, February 18, 1992, reported that only about 1 percent of the 1.6 million abortions performed each year stem from sexual assault. The article further states, "Three-fourths of women who have abortions say a baby would interfere with work, school, or other responsibilities. Two-thirds say they cannot afford to have a child. One-half say they don't want to be a single parent or have problems in their relationships" (Branson & Davis A6).

A study in the *Illinois Medical Journal* reported that there were no pregnancies resulting from rape in a nine-year period in Chicago. Other reports reveal no rape-



related pregnancies in over thirty years in Buffalo, New York, and none in over a decade in both St. Paul, Minnesota and Philadelphia. The New England Journal of Medicine believes that these figures are so small because of sexual dysfunction occurring during the rape (Eidsmoe 366-67). Furthermore, even under normal circumstances a woman is able to conceive on only two or three days between each menstrual cycle. In fact, one study affirms that a woman raped on her day of ovulation still has only a one in ten chance of conception (Davis 154). It takes several hours for the sperm to reach the ovum in the fallopian tube. A trip to the Emergency Room for treatment with a spermicidal can prevent conception from occurring. There is a vast difference between preventing conception and destroying new life already conceived.

But what if it is too late? What if conception has already occurred?

Geisler aptly notes:

The rape of the mother does not justify the murder of the child. If the unborn is a human, then intentionally taking its innocent life is murder. So here again the real issue is the human status of the unborn. But appealing to sympathy for the rape victim does not avoid the question of justice for the abortion victim. Abortion does not take away the evil of the rape; it adds another evil to it. The rape problem is not solved by killing the baby. We should punish the guilty rapist, not the innocent baby...Adoption, not abortion, is the better alternative (141-42).

## **2. What about the deformity of the fetus?**

Because of the advent of medical techniques such as amniocentesis, it is now possible more than ever to detect abnormalities of the fetus and to report such to the parents. Should the parents have the right to terminate the fetus if defects are detected? The argument is often made about how it would be better for the deformed child to be aborted than to have to live with a handicap. One can't help but wonder whether the welfare of the child is really the paramount concern or whether it is mentioned as a smokescreen to mask the fear of inconvenience a special needs child would create for the parents.

One thing is certain: abortion for special needs children is not supported by special needs children. Neither is there any organization of parents for special needs children on record as supporting abortion for those with special needs (Geisler 141). The real crux of the matter is this: Are the unborn human? If so, then we can no more exterminate them for their deformities than we can the newborn who enter into the world with the very same condition. And if we decide to eliminate those whom we consider to be "imperfect" then just how perfect will one have to be in order to have a right to life, and who will have the power to make these decisions? This survival of the fittest philosophy is barbaric and reminiscent of Nazism. The Biblical ethic upholds the dignity and worth of every human being, regardless of the state of development or physical dependency, from the moment of conception until death (Davis 157).

### **3. What if the life of the mother is threatened?**

What if a doctor is faced with either aborting the child or losing the mother's life by progressing with the delivery? In the first place, it should be noted that very few abortions are either/or situations such as this. The following statement emphasizes the importance of intent in these situations:

Operations, treatments and medications, which do not directly intend termination of pregnancy, but which have as their purpose the cure of a proportionately serious pathological condition of the mother are permitted when they cannot be safely postponed until the fetus is viable, even though they may or will result in the death of the fetus (Jersild & Johnson 342).

Inherent within the above statement is a principle known as "The Principle of Double Effect." Essentially, this principle affirms that an action might be taken which produces side effects, but that this is not the purpose of the action. For example, a terminal cancer patient might be given a large dose of morphine to alleviate pain. A byproduct of this action might be the hastening of death. Yet, this side effect would not be the purpose of the action.

In a similar way, a doctor may perform a function which is designed to save the life of the mother which may unintentionally cause the death of the fetus. There is a vast difference between a situation where a mother goes into delivery fully expecting to give birth to a child, only to suffer unforeseen complications, and a situation where a

woman walks into an abortion clinic with premeditation and determination to kill the life that is within her. On the one hand, the intent is to save as much life as possible. On the other hand, the intent is to kill life. Thus, when faced with a situation that threatens the life of the mother, the doctor should attempt to save as much life as possible, knowing that it will not always be possible to save both.

## **SANCTITY OF LIFE AT THE END OF LIFE**

Sadly, but surely, like a steady drip, respect for human life is eroding within the Western world. Consider the statements of Ingrid Newkirk, founder of the controversial organization, People For Ethical Treatment Of Animals (PETA). She said, "There is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights.... A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy" (Geisler 144). Unbelievably, Newkirk told the *Washington Post* that the atrocities of Nazi Germany pale by comparison to the killing of animals for food: "Six million Jews died in concentration camps, but six **billion** broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses" (B-10).

It would be comforting to believe that these statements reflect the thinking of a single "crackpot." However, even some in positions of prestige have made statements which reflect a deplorably low view of human life. In April of 1984, Governor Richard Lamm of Colorado declared that the elderly "have a duty to die and get out of the way." Nobel prizewinner, Dr. James Watson proposed:

If a child were not declared alive until three days after birth, then all parents could be

allowed the choice only few are given under the present system. The doctor could allow the child to die if the parents so chose and save a lot of misery and suffering (Geisler 159).

These are not isolated examples. Peter Singer, a bioethicist from Australia, is a professor at Princeton University. In fact, a new position was created for him to direct the Center For Human Values at Princeton. His appointment was not without controversy, because Singer aggressively argues that the law should permit the killing of disabled infants up to 28 days after birth (Catholiceducation.org). He has written that “the life of a fetus is of no greater value than the life of a nonhuman animal at a similar level of rationality” and that “the life of a newborn baby is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee” (Feinberg). The following quotations are every bit as shocking:

Before a presidential commission appointed to study biomedical ethical 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 (Ibid.).

A 1982 Newsweek article proclaimed in large print, ‘Biologists say infanticide is as normal as the sex drive—and that most animals, including man, practice it’ (Ibid.).

The *Humanist Manifesto*, signed by famous and influential educator John Dewey, demands “an individual’s right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.” On the worldwide web you can find “The Church of Euthanasia.” Their website promotes decreasing the human population by the means of abortion, cannibalism, suicide and sodomy. The site even gives detailed instructions on how to commit suicide. Members of this “church” are told that there is one commandment they are required to obey: “Thou shalt not procreate.” Allegedly, the Church of Euthanasia boasts thousands of members, all of whom paid a ten-dollar membership fee.

What is the moral decision to make in these scenarios? Does the Bible give us any principles whereby we can make such decisions? Matters of life and death belong to the Giver of life, Almighty God. Furthermore, God gave us a clear indication of the sanctity of life when He prohibited man from taking another man’s life. Numerous passages condemn the act of killing human life (Exodus 20:13; Matthew 5:21; 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Romans 13:9). The only Scriptural exceptions to this would be capital punishment, involvement in a just war of self-defense or defense of the defenseless, and killing in self-defense. There are no exceptions anywhere in the entirety of God’s Word to the prohibition against the deliberate, intentional taking of **innocent** life. In most cases, euthanasia is the deliberate taking of innocent life. Biblical teaching renders those cases morally unacceptable.

Life is sacred as well because God has given it and sustains it. Because it is his gift, we must treat it with care and not discard it. To treat it

lightly is a supreme act of ingratitude, but it also suggests that we think we own our life, when in fact God gave it and owns it. Christians have traditionally used this argument against suicide. It seems relevant as well to euthanasia in general (Feinberg).

Geisler remarks:

Euthanasia proponents assume that there is a moral right to intentionally kill an innocent human. But the Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13 KJV). They believe that man is sovereign over human life, but Scripture declares that God is. "I put to death and I bring to life...and no one can deliver out of my hands" (Deuteronomy 32:39). As Job declared, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away" (Job 1:21). God created human life (Genesis 1:27) and he alone has the right to take it (Hebrews 9:27). So the basic fallacy of active euthanasia is to presume upon the sovereign right of God over human life. The proponents presume to play God rather than simply to be man (160).

## **CONCLUSION**

The Bible teaches that life is sacred "from the womb to the tomb." God, and God alone, has the authority to give life and to take it away. The value of human beings is not measured by their physical or mental prowess, but by the

fact that they are human beings, made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26).

We are at a crucial time in our history. It is not an exaggeration to say that the manner in which we deal with the issues of abortion and euthanasia will in large measure determine the future of our nation.

A society cannot engage in the wholesale slaughter of innocent life without paying a sobering price. The value of life is significantly cheapened by such callous disregard for human beings. When we do not respect life before birth, it affects our attitude toward life after birth. When we do not respect the dying, it affects our attitude toward the living. Human life is a continuous and communal web. "For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone" (Romans 14:7). Hence, what affects one member of the race affects all (Geisler 166).

We would do well to heed the words of Proverbs 24:11-12, which warns, "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" We cannot afford to remain neutral regarding these matters!

When innocent people are being led off to gas chambers, ovens, and other modes of



execution—when unborn babies are destroyed in abortion mills—it is inexcusable to stand by and not seek to rescue them. It is also useless to plead ignorance. As Dante said, 'The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in a time of great moral crisis maintain their neutrality' (MacDonald & Farstad).

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alcorn, Randy C. *Is Rescuing Right?* Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1990.
- Allen, Ronald Barclay. *In Celebrating Love of Life*. Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1977.
- Bajema, Clifford E. *Abortion And The Meaning Of Personhood*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974.
- Branson, Reed and Anna Byrd Davis. "Opinions on Abortion." *The Commercial Appeal*. [Memphis, TN] 18 February 1992.
- Brown, Harold O. J. *Death Before Birth*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1977.
- Davis, John Jefferson. *Evangelical Ethics: Issues Facing The Church Today*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1985.
- Eidsmoe, John. *The Christian Legal Advisor*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984.
- Feinberg, J. S. and P. D. Feinberg, and A. Huxley. *Ethics For A Brave New World*. electronic ed. (1996, c1993).
- Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.
- Jersild, Paul T. and Dale A. Johnson. *Moral Issues & Christian Response*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1993.
- MacDonald, W. & A Farstad. *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Electronic ed. 1997, c1995).
- Newkirk, Ingrid, cited by Chip Brown. "She's a Portrait of Zealotry in Plastic Shoes." *Washington Post*. 13 November 1983.
- Powell, John. *Abortion: The Silent Holocaust*. Allen, Texas: Argus Communications. 1981.

Shettles, Landrum B. and David Rorvik. *Rites of Life: The Scientific Evidence For Life Before Birth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.

Stott, John R. W. "Does Life Begin Before Birth?" *Christianity Today*. September 5, 1980.

Wennberg, Robert N. *Life in The Balance: Exploring The Abortion Controversy*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1985.

Whitehead, John W. *The Second American Revolution*.

Elgin, Illinois: David C. Cook Publishing, 1982.

## CHAPTER 7

# YOU BELIEVE THAT ALL ALCOHOL IS SIN?

Written by **Joshua Cantrell**

### INTRODUCTION

As we look out into the world it is faced with many problems. There is the problem of selfishness, pride, envy, and many others. For every problem, there is also a solution. I do not believe that God gives us challenges and problems which we cannot overcome. They can be controlled by God if we allow Him to help us. One of the greatest problems in our world today is alcoholic drinking. Because we live in the world, we all have friends and family members who drink alcohol every day. Their lives are surrounded by the fact that they can enjoy a nice beverage after a long day of work. It would be one thing if this was just a problem in the world. Unfortunately, those in the kingdom of God not only struggle with this, but believe the Bible makes a case for us to do it. Many use the argument, "Jesus turned water into wine." Before long, you see that people have a misunderstanding of scripture. Why would Jesus give an entire wedding party an alcoholic drink, and the Apostles tell us not to drink? Many claims there is a contradiction, and I agree with them. It is not on the part of the Bible, but it is on the part of man.

Studies have shown that in 2018 alone, US alcohol beverage spending exceeded \$253.8 billion dollars. That number was up +5.1% from 2017. The average American

consumes \$484 in alcohol per year. At first glance, that does not seem like a high number, until you break it down. That's over 35 bottles of alcohol per year - or roughly three bottles per month. Certain regions spent significantly more in 2016 than they did 20 years before: In the Northeast and Midwest, alcohol expenses surged more than 100 percent. Interestingly, those who earned more than \$200,000 annually spent more than \$1,600 on alcohol each year on average, but these costs represented a smaller portion of this group's income than in lower income brackets. These findings remind us that alcohol spending must always be judged in light of one's means: If your funds are limited, even modest spending on drinks can prove problematic (Delphi behavioral health group). What hinders many from properly understanding this topic is their failure to understand that the Bible was not written in English. If you were to go to a store today and someone asked, "can you show me the wine?" The worker would certainly take you to the intoxicated part of the store, where the wine is located. We consider the word "drink" as well, depending on how it is used will give you the definition of the word. I could say I had something to drink, and for me that could be talking about a soda. Right after working out, I could look for something to drink, which means water. As you go to dinner with your family the waitress may ask "can I get you something to drink?" They could very easily be talking about an alcoholic drink or regular soda. Typically, that same line of thinking brings people to the understanding that we can drink alcohol.

Anytime we read the Bible we must understand that if our studies do not line up with scripture, we are wrong. To suggest that alcohol is approved by God is to suggest

that God instructs us to pray to enter the kingdom of God. We could even go on to say that faith only is what God requires of us. Many Bible passages have been taken so far out of context and many brethren are failing to understand what our Lord and Apostles taught. There are words in the Hebrew (Old Testament) and the Greek (New Testament) that are simply genetic terms. Just because we see the word "wine" in our Bibles does not mean that it is intoxicated wine.

## **AN UNDERSTANDING OF WORDS**

Three main words in Hebrew and two words in Greek will help us going forward with our study. The first word is *shêkâr*. The word is used 23 times in the Hebrew text. Of course, the context of the word will determine how it is being used. The word is normally translated strong drink and is normally condemned in the Bible. Sweet syrups (the term related to our words "sugar" and "saccharine"), such as the honey of dates or palm syrup. It was employed for sweet drinks and articles for food. "Date of palm wine in its fresh and unfermented state" (Frederick Lee, Ph.D.). Intoxicating beverages from non-grape products (date palm juice and grains).

There is the word *Tirosh*, afterword defined as "must or fresh grape juice." By implication (rarely) fermented wine (Strong's Hebrew). Proverbs 31:10, says "So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine." The context in both these verses shows that they are talking about fresh grape juice, in the cluster or just pressed out before it had time to ferment. The first meaning of *tirosh* is in Genesis 27:8. The verse is talking

about Issac's blessing to Jacob and says, "Therefore may God give thee the dew of Heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." The context shows that is speaking of grape juice, not alcoholic wine. Isaac is blessing Jacob with the bounty of the earth which God provides; not something that is fermented and manmade. We can also note Isaiah 65:8, "Thus said the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not; that I may not destroy them all." The context again shows that the word "wine" does not refer to alcoholic wine. We also see the word in Deuteronomy 11:13-14, "And it shall come to pass if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, that first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil." It is important to note that grapes and grape juice are a major part of the Old Testament economy. Other verses also use the word *Tirosh* (Deuteronomy 33:28; Hosea 2:8; Joel 1:10; Jeremiah 31:10-12; Micah 6:15; Numbers 18:12; Psalm 4:7). This is the normal use of the word in the Old Testament.

There is the word *Yayin*. It is found over 130 times in the Old Testament. It can mean grapevine (Numbers 6:4); Products of the vineyard that can be gathered, drunk, or eaten (Deuteronomy 28:39; Jeremiah 40:10, 12); The liquid that comes from the winepress (Jeremiah 48:33); or, fermented grape juice (Proverbs. 2:31). *Yayin* is thus a general term referring to a variety of products from the grapevine (Nehemiah 5:18), and the context in which the

term is employed will determine the meaning in a given circumstance.

As the Bible records in Acts 2, the Apostles were preaching on the day of Pentecost. Many claimed the Apostles were drunk with “New wine” (Acts 2:13). They were sarcastically accusing them of being drunk on grape juice. The Greek word is *Gleukos*. This word is equivalent to the word *Tirosh* in Hebrew with both meaning grape juice.

There is the word *Oinos*, which is used 33 times in the New Testament. This is the generic or general word for wine in the New Testament. The usage of these words is seen in both Testaments and can refer to either alcoholic or nonalcoholic grape juice. The claim is often made, that in the Bible there was no method for preserving grape juice in an unfermented state. Therefore, “wine” must have some alcoholic content. That is not true. The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary cites ancient skills for the preservation of grape juice all year long. Secular writings from the New Testament period indicated grape juice could be preserved without fermenting for up to a year. The Roman writers of Pliny (Natural History) and Columella documented for the juice being bottled in a specific way and immersed in a state for thirty days. Another method, according to Polybius, was to boil down juice into syrup. When needed, the syrup was diluted similar to the frozen concentrate of today. Ancients would also boil old fermented wine. Alcohol will boil at a lower temperature than water, allowing the alcohol to be boiled away. Adding salt or salt water to the juice would also prevent alcoholic fermentation. The addition of salt causes lactic fermentation which forms cultures that are similar to what



would be in today's yogurt or buttermilk. Pliny and others also mentioned using sulfur for preservation. Sulfur prevents yeast and bacteria growth which causes alcohol fermentation. Sulfur is still a modern-day preservative.

## **MISUNDERSTOOD PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE**

Amongst the discussions throughout history, John 2 has certainly come up numerous times. Each time we are in a conversation about alcohol, and its dangers, the question is "Didn't Jesus turn water into wine?" Let's examine the text;

And on the third day, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine. Jesus said unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterspouts of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus said unto them, fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he said unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine and knew not whence it was: (but the servants who drew the water knew;) the governor of

the feast called the bridegroom. And saith unto him every man that the beginning both set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed in him. After this, he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there name many days (John. 2:1-11).

Albert Barnes writes, "We should not be deceived by the phrase 'good wine.' We often use the phrase to denote that it is good in proportion to its strength and its power to intoxicate, but no such sense is to be attached to the word here. Pliny, Plutarch, and Horace describe wine as 'good,' or mention that as the 'best wine,' which was harmless or 'innocent.' The most useful wine was that which had little strength, and the most wholesome wine was that which had not been adulterated by the addition of anything to the must of juice." We cannot, nor should we justify that Jesus made 180 gallons of intoxicating wine for people who had already been drinking such for some time. No one who has any respect for the New Testament would suggest something so erroneous.

Another text that is taken out of context is 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul writes "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." Timothy was afflicted with a stomach ailment, the nature of which is not precisely known. Paul is not instructing Timothy

to abstain from water, but rather, for medicinal purposes to have a "little wine." The use of wine was a widely recognized remedy for some illnesses among both Jews and Greeks, as reflected in the Hebrew Talmud, the writings of Hippocrates, Plutarch, and Pliny. "Wine was often helpful in settling stomachs and preventing dysentery" (Keener, p. 619).

In 1 Timothy 3, Paul gives the qualifications for Elders and Deacons in the Lord's church. Elders are to be "not given to wine," literally "at or near wine." Deacons are not to be "given to much wine," literally holding near much wine. Like many of the qualifications for elders and deacons, the same is required for Christians. Under the Levitical system, the priests were forbidden the use of any fermented beverages as they ministered in their priestly functions. The Bible records, "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Saying, Do not drink wine or strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations" (Leviticus 10:8-9). Under the Law of Christ, all Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6) and we are continually functioning in the capacity of offering spiritual sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 2:5). How ought Christians to conduct themselves as ministers of a greater priesthood?

Paul also writes, "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:6). If one is socially drinking, he is not obeying the command to be sober, but is getting drunk. Alcohol doesn't have to be digested, it goes straight to the

bloodstream and immediately to the brain. The first effect of alcohol is on judgment and self-control. Just one of two drinks will cause you to say and do things you would never before. Every condemnation of drunkenness in the Bible (Luke 21:23; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:21) is a warning not to drink because drinking causes drunkenness. With every drink, we become drunker.

Solomon would write, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). He writes as well, "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 color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. And that last it biteth like a serpent, and strength like an adder" (Proverbs 23:30-32).

## **CONCLUSION**

As we live in this world, we know certainly we are not of this world. The more we live in this world, the more enticing things will be brought before us. I have been in many homes, and have seen members hide alcohol because "the preacher" is in their home. That is not the right attitude. We ought to always seek to please our God, not just man. John encourages us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves 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." (1 John 2:15-16).

Our culture has made alcohol look so appealing. James records, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither he tempteth any man: But every man is tempted, when is he drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death" (James 1:13-15). As Christians, we have to guard and protect ourselves, and our loved ones from this. It will promise us a good time and ultimately destroy our lives.

There may be many who are not members of God's Kingdom and don't understand the context of scripture. Upon research, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gives clear evidence why a person's physical body should not have alcohol. Excessive alcohol use led to more than 140,000 deaths and 3.6 million years of potential life lost (YPLL) each year in the United States from 2015-2019. Shortening the lives of those who died an average of 26 years. Further, excessive drinking was responsible for 1 in 5 deaths among adults 20-49 years. The economic costs of excessive alcohol consumption in 2010 were estimated at \$249 billion, or \$2.05 a drink. Over time excessive alcohol use can lead to the development of chronic diseases and other serious problems including high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, and digestive problems, weakening the immune system, increasing the chances of getting sick. Alcohol destroys us from the inside out. We cannot see the immediate results, but over time they will come forth.

While alcohol destroys us from the inside, sin destroys us from both. Jesus made it clear He wants us to

follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21). Scripture makes it abundantly clear that alcohol should have no part in the believer's life. The question is asked, "You believe that all alcoholic drinking is a sin?" We can answer that question with all clarity, especially with the word of God. My prayer is that we continue to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, especially on the subject of alcohol.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Holiness & Social Drinking*. (n.d.). Northwest Church of Christ. <https://www.northwestcofc.org/holiness--social-drinking.html>

*What About Moderate Social Drinking?* (n.d.). Christian Courier. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/what-about-moderate-social-drinking>

Drinking too much alcohol can harm your health. Learn the facts | CDC. (n.d.). <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm>

The Holy Bible, King James Version. Print

The Holy Bible, New American Standard Bible. Print.

The Holy Bible. English Standard Version. e-Sword file.

## CHAPTER 8

# YOU BELIEVE IN HELL?

Written by **Wayne Rodgers**

### INTRODUCTION

There are few things that cause people to shutter when given the proper amount of thought as does the topic of hell, with the exception of course of those who either have never even considered it or have bought into the false narrative that there is no hell. So, some will ask, “do you really believe in hell?”

Pew Research notes:

While most U.S. adults also believe in hell, this belief is less widespread than belief in heaven. Roughly six-in-ten American adults (62%) say they believe in hell.

Roughly a quarter of all U.S. adults (26%) say that they do not believe in heaven or hell, including 7% who say they do believe in some kind of afterlife and 17% who do not believe in any afterlife at all.

So even in a heavily “churched” area, there are plenty who do not believe in Hell and even less than those who believe in Heaven though the actual descriptions and thoughts of both Heaven and Hell are often skewed among those polled (Pew Research web).



The American Humanist Association claims:

Traditional moral codes and newer irrational cults both fail to meet the pressing needs of today and tomorrow. False “theologies of hope” and messianic ideologies, substituting new dogmas for old, cannot cope with existing world realities. They separate rather than unite peoples (AHA web).

This claim of “existing world realities...separate rather than unite” seems to be part of the driving force of newer humanistic beliefs pushing back as always on belief in God and eternal realities of the soul. As they purport their belief system on the back of the Humanist Manifesto I & II, in order to unite humanist (in their minds, humankind), they make this statement:

FIRST: In the best sense, religion may inspire dedication to the highest ethical ideals. The cultivation of moral devotion and creative imagination is an expression of genuine “spiritual” experience and aspiration. We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so. Even at this late date in human history, certain

elementary facts based upon the critical use of scientific reason have to be restated. We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race. **As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.** Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural.

Some humanists believe we should reinterpret traditional religions and reinvest them with meanings appropriate to the current situation. Such redefinitions, however, often perpetuate old dependencies and escapisms; they easily become obscurantist, impeding the free use of the intellect. We need, instead, radically new human purposes and goals.

We appreciate the need to preserve the best ethical teachings in the religious traditions of humankind, many of which we share in common. But we reject those features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities.

Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full potentialities. Such institutions, creeds, and rituals often impede the will to serve others. Too often traditional faiths encourage dependence rather than independence, obedience rather than affirmation, fear rather than courage. More recently they have generated concerned social action, with many signs of relevance appearing in the wake of the "God Is Dead" theologies. But we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. **No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.**

**SECOND: Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the "ghost in the machine" and the "separable soul."** Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total

personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny and in the way that our lives have influenced others in our culture.

Understanding some where these arguments of infidelity come and where they are ultimately leading individuals brings us to our task.

Brother Robert Taylor, Jr. in his book on The Bible Doctrine of Final Things makes this assessment: "To reject the reality of hell, as Voltaire, Ingersoll, Pain, Hume, Bertrand Russell and a host of others have done, is to ignore the testimony of the entire Godhead and many of the inspired scribes of the Bible" (Taylor 235).

## **THE REALITY OF HELL**

Both Old and New Testament writers were convinced of the reality of Hell, as evidenced in the many verses following in word or in concept.

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God (Psalm 9:17).

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2).

Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye (Ezekiel 18:31-32).

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit (Isaiah 14:15).

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell (James 3:6).

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15).

## **JESUS TAUGHT THE REALITY OF HELL**

In fact, Jesus taught more about it than any other writer. Consider why Jesus would come to the earth if there was no Hell. He came to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10). He came to “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). He came giving “His life a ransom for many

(Matthew 20:28). He came in purpose to die on the cross (John 3:14; 12:32-33). He came to shed His blood “for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). If there was no Hell, why would Jesus do any of this?

We find the word *Gehenna* twelve times in our New Testaments. Of those twelve times, Jesus uses the word eleven times. Jesus taught that Hell was real and warned people of it. The Valley of Hinnom was originally named for the place where ancient idolaters would sacrifice their children to the god of Molech. Later, it was the refuse area where constant fires burned outside the gates of Jerusalem. Jesus used this word, *Gehenna*, to help in describing the reality of Hell and warned the unfaithful and the unbeliever of an eternal destiny far worse than the fires that burned trash continually outside of Jerusalem.

Brother Taylor wrote concerning the word *Gehenna*:  
Without exception it refers to eternal punishment – never to the grave. Does it not strike you as significant indeed that during His personal ministry Jesus used this term eleven of the twelve times Inspiration employs it? Matthew records His using the term seven times (Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33). Mark records His using it three times (Mark 9:43-47). Luke records His using it once (Luke 12:5). The word does not occur in John’s Gospel record. James, the Lord’s brother, is the only other person in the Bible to use this term (James 3:6). Yet,

we have have preachers in a number of religious bodies today who claim to represent Jesus when they ascend to the pulpit, and at the same time they deny what Jesus taught in these eleven passages plus His other numerous declarations that there is future punishment for the wicked (Taylor 236-237).

## **JESUS TAUGHT OF A PLACE OF CONDEMNATION, PUNISHMENT AND LOSS**

Jesus spoke of those who have been sentenced to Hell are “condemned” (NKJV), “judged” (ASV), and “damned” (KJV) – Jesus asked the Pharisees and Scribes “How can you escape the damnation of hell?” (Matthew 23:33).

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:29).

For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matthew 12:37).

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Jesus spoke of Hell as “everlasting punishment” (Matthew 25:46). The very idea of one receiving punishment indicates that one’s actions resulted in that consequence which in this case is eternal also implying a consciousness of both the sin and the end result of it.

When Jesus spoke of loss concerning Hell, He described it with words like “destruction” or “destroyed.” Jesus said: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). The word “destroy” is the same word translated “lose,” “lost,” and “perish” in Luke 15 from three stories of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son.

Notice:

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he **lose** one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is **lost**, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was **lost**. I say unto you, that



likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance (Luke 15:1-7).

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she **lose** one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had **lost**. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth (Luke 15:8-10).

And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have

filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I **perish** with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was **lost**, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath

killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was **lost**, and is found (Luke 15:11-32, emphasis, WR).

The same word is used to describe the disciples who were “perishing” in a storm (Luke 8:24). The idea from the original word is one who is suffering the ultimate loss of one’s well-being. This is the word Jesus would use in describing hell as the ultimate loss of a person’s well-being eternally.

## **JESUS TAUGHT OF A PLACE OF FIRE, TORMENT, AND SEPARATION**

Jesus used the word “fire” sixteen times in reference to Hell, describing it as “hell fire” (Matthew 5:22; 18:9; Mark

9:47), a “furnace of fire” (Matthew 13:42, 50), an “everlasting fire” (Matthew 18:8; 25:41), and a place where “the fire shall never be quenched” (Mark 9:43, 44, 45, 46, 48). In describing the tormenting nature of this eternal place, Jesus said that those who are there are “burned in the fire” (Matthew 13:40). There will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28). Jesus says that in Hell, “their worm dieth not” (Mark 9:44, 46, 48), and they are “tormented in flame” (Luke 16:24).

On the day of judgment, Jesus will declare to some: “depart from me, I never knew you” (Matthew 7:23; cf. 25:41). Those will be “cast into” hell (Matthew 5:30; 13:42, 50; 18:8-9; 22:13; 25:30; Mark 9:45, 47; Luke 12:5; John 15:6). Jesus describes those in hell as having “died in their sins” (John 8:24), those who have gone “away into” hell (Matthew 25:46), those who now are dwelling in “outer darkness” (Matthew 25:30), those whom He has separated “the wicked from among the just” (Matthew 13:49), and those who will be exiled eternally from the presence of God (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

## **JESUS TAUGHT FOR WHOM HELL WAS MADE AND HOW TO AVOID IT**

Jesus said that Hell was a place “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). His angels may be literally his messengers, those who would carry his message of a rejection of Christ’s authority (Matthew 7:21-23). There will be those in Hell who continue with their unbelief (Matthew 11:20-24), those who will not give up their vices or those things keeping them from following

God (Mark 9:43-48), those hypocrites pretending to follow Christ (Matthew 23:13ff), the self-serving and unloving (Matthew 25:41-46), the false teachers (Matthew 15:13-14), and those who do not believe and are not baptized into Christ (Mark 16:16).

Jesus came "to seek and save the lost" from Hell. He made "the way" of salvation available to all mankind. To avoid Hell, we must "obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9-10; 6:3-4; Acts 17:30-31; Matthew 28:18-20).

## **CONCLUSION**

Do we believe in Hell? Absolutely, for the same reason that I know that Jesus loves me, for the Bible tells me so!

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

[https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/  
manifesto2/](https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto2/)

[https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/11/23/views-  
on-the-afterlife/](https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/11/23/views-on-the-afterlife/)

Taylor, Robert R, Jr. *The Reality of Hell*. The Bible Doctrine of Final Things. Lambert Book House, Inc. Shreveport, LA. 1977. Chapter 9

# YOU BELIEVE IN HEAVEN?

Written by **Steve Miller**

## INTRODUCTION

"We read of a place that's called heaven, it's made for the pure and the free; these truths in God's Word He has given, How beautiful heaven must be" (Mrs. A.S. Bridgewater; A.P. Bland). "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through, my treasures are laid up, somewhere beyond the blue, the angels beckon me from heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore" (Albert E. Brumley).

Extreme views exist in every topic and Heaven is no exception. Statements like "It does not exist," to "Everyone will be in Heaven." Like many preachers I have preached, "Why am I a Christian?" Common denominators include: I *want* to go to Heaven and I *don't* want to go to hell (Matthew 13:41-42; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9). Heaven can only be attained by being obedient to the will and ways of Christ (Matthew 7:21). Heaven is where I want to spend eternity. Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations" (Hebrews 11:10-16). Paul is a false teacher if Heaven does not exist (2 Corinthians 12:1-2). The world passes away, but he that is obedient to God's word endures forever (1 John 2:15-17).

Heaven is referred to as "the Paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7); "a city" (Hebrews 11:10, 16; 13:14); "the

new Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:1, 2); "My Father's house" (John 14:2); the "Father's kingdom" (Matthew 13:43); "eternal kingdom" (2 Peter 1:11) and "new heaven and earth" (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1). We are continually encouraged to seek that which is above:

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 (Colossians 3:1-4).

We can say that Heaven's definition is: "that which is above."

## HEAVEN

The word Heaven generally has three meanings in the Bible. 1. Atmosphere (which is immediately above us) (Jeremiah 4:25; Genesis 1:6-8). 2. Region of stars (Stellar heavens, include the entire universe) (1 Chronicles 27:23). 3. Place of God's throne (Celestial) (Heaven of heavens) (Psalm 11:4), where Jesus is seated (Colossians 3:1).

Consider some examples of those who have had a glimpse into Heaven: **Isaiah** (6:1-7); **Ezekiel** (1:1, 26-28); **Jesus** (Matthew 3:16-17; Acts 1:9-11); **Stephen** (Acts 7:54-60); **Paul** (2 Corinthians 12:1-6); and **John** (Revelation 4:1-4). Jesus has prepared a place for us (John 14:1-3; Acts



2:32-35; Hebrews 1:3). Heaven is where Jesus is. As Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) memorably explained,

Heaven is not heaven without Christ. It is better to be in any place with Christ than to be in heaven itself without him. All delicacies without Christ are but as a funeral banquet. Where the master of the feast is away, there is nothing but solemnness. What is all without Christ? I say the joys of heaven are not the joys of heaven without Christ; he is the very heaven of heaven (1:339).

This is the greatest answer for He is at the center of our attention. To be in heaven is to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 9:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Peter 3:22), and to be with Christ is far superior (Philippians 2: 21-23).

Heaven is a **real** place (Hebrews 11:10-16; Psalm 23:6; John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 12:1-2; Philippians 3:20). Heaven is a **reachable** place (John 13:3; Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 7:9; 19:6). Heaven **remains** (Matthew 6:19-21; 2 Peter 3:10-12; 1 Peter 1:3-4; 1 John 2:15-17). It has been said many times, "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people."

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a

country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city (Hebrews 11:13-16).

Commenting on this text, John Owen (1616-1683), reminds us that Heaven has been the goal of the people of God through the ages:

It is plain that this was the ultimate object of the faith of Abraham, the sum and substance of what he looked for from God, on the account of His promise and covenant. To suppose that this was only an earthly city, not to be possessed by his posterity until eight hundred years afterward, and then but for a limited time, is utterly to overthrow his faith, the nature of the covenant of God with him, and his being an example unto gospel believers: as he is here proposed to be. This city, therefore, which Abraham looked for, is that heavenly city, that everlasting mansion, which God hath provided and prepared for all true believers with Himself after this life, as it is declared in Hebrews 11:16...With the expectation hereof did Abraham and the following patriarchs support, refresh, and satisfy themselves, in the midst of all the toil and labor of their pilgrimage. For a certain expectation of the heavenly reward,

grounded on the promises and covenant of God, is sufficient to support and encourage the souls of believers under all their trials in the whole course of their obedience...Of this city it is said that Abraham by faith looked for it; that is, he believed in eternal rest with God in heaven, whereon he comfortably and constantly sustained the trouble of his pilgrimage in this world. This expectation is an act and fruit of faith, or it is that hope proceeding from faith whereby we are saved; or rather, it is a blessed fruit of faith, trust, and hope, whereby the soul is kept continually looking into and after the things that are promised (VII, 70-72).

## **HEAVEN: THE SPECIAL DWELLING PLACE OF GOD**

It is God's dwelling place (Deuteronomy 26:15; 1 Kings 8:30; John 14:2), the Father's house, a building of God (2 Corinthians 5:1). It is the Christian's home. It is our home because the One we love best is there and all who love Him best will be there (1 Peter 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

The Bible teaches that "the heavens of heavens cannot contain" God (1 Kings 8:27) and that God is omnipresent (Psalm 139), still there is a special dwelling place of God which is also called "Heaven." For example, in Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the high and lofty One That inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, With him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to

revive the heart of the contrite ones." The Israelite was to pray, "Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven" (Deuteronomy 26:15). Jesus said, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:45); "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21); "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" (Nehemiah 9:6).

Since we can know where God dwells, and we love Him with all of our being (Mark 12:30), we should desire with all of our heart to be in His presence for eternity. Should this not be one of our strongest reasons for wanting to go to Heaven?

## **ETERNITY: THE SATISFACTION OF OUR SOULS**

"...he has put eternity into man's heart..."  
(Ecclesiastes 3:11, English Standard Version).

C.S. Lewis observed, "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world" (*Mere Christianity*. 136-37). Lewis cites what most humans realize in their lives at some point, that there is a dissatisfaction in this world and its components, something that is missing in our daily existence. He also makes the point: "There have been times when I think we do not desire heaven; but more often I find myself wondering whether, in our heart of

hearts, we have ever desired anything else" (*The Problem of Pain*, 150). Lewis calls this core desire "the secret signature of each soul, the incommunicable and unappeasable want, the thing we desired before we met our wives or made our friends or chose our work, and which we shall still desire on our deathbeds, when the mind no longer knows wife or friend or work" (152).

You may have noticed that the books you really love are bound together by a secret thread. You know very well what is the common quality that makes you love them, though you cannot put it into words - Again, you have stood before some landscape, which seems to embody what you have been looking for all of your life - Are not all life-long friendships born at the moment when at last you meet another human being who has some inkling of that which you were born desiring, and which, beneath the flux of other desires and in all momentary silences between the louder passions, night and day, year by year, from childhood to old age, you are looking for, watching for, listening for? You have never had it. All the things that have ever deeply possessed your soul have been but hints of it - tantalizing glimpses, promises never quite fulfilled, echoes that died away just as they caught your ear. But if it should ever really become manifest - if there ever came an echo that did not die away but swelled into the sound itself - you would know it. Beyond all possibility of doubt you would

say, 'Here at last is the thing I was made for.' We cannot tell each other about it. It is the secret signature of each soul, the incommunicable and unappeasable want, the thing we desired before we met our wives or made our friends or chose our work, and which we shall still desire on our deathbeds, when the mind no longer knows wife or friend or work. While we are, this is. If we lose this, we lose all (Lewis, 150-151).

This desire is strong in the hearts of people who understand that God Himself is "the fountain of living waters;" anything else will leave us dry (Jeremiah 2:13). God is the only One who can quench our deepest thirst (John 4:14). Our unappeasable want is a desire for God: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: My soul thirsteth for thee, My flesh longeth for thee In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, So as I have seen thee in the sanctuary" (Psalm 63:1-2). "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:25-26). God was their "exceeding joy" (Psalm 43:4).

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield: The Lord will give grace and glory: No good thing will he withhold from them that

walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee (Psalm 84:10-12).

We see this desire in the prophet Moses, who “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:26-27).

We see this desire in the apostle Paul, who said: “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” the one prize he really valued (Philippians 3:14). “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Philippians 3:20-21).

The Lord Jesus Himself stated: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). God is the source of eternal life: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (John 11:25-26).

God is the highest good of the reasonable creature, and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. - To go to heaven fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant

accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows. But the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean. . .Why should we labor for, or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end, and true happiness? (Edwards, 244).

Under the heading of, *The Appropriateness of a Heavenly Life*, Richard Baxter wrote in 1650:

It is entirely fitting that our hearts should be set on God when the heart of God is so much set on us. If the Lord of glory can stoop so low as to set his heart on sinful dust, surely one would think we should easily be persuaded to set our hearts on Christ and glory and to ascend to him in our daily affections! Does he not bear you continually in the arms of love, promise that all will work together for your good (Rom. 8:28), suit all his dealings to your greatest advantage, and give his angels to guard you in all your ways (Ps. 91:11)? And will you let your heart cast him by, be taken up with the joys below, and forget your Lord who does not forget you? What ingratitude! Is this not the sin that Isaiah so solemnly calls both heaven and earth to witness against? "The ox knows his owner and the donkey his master's



crib. But Israel does not know; my people do not consider" (Isa. 1:3). If the ox or donkey lags behind during the day, it still comes home at night, but we will not so much as even once a day by our serious thoughts ascend to God. Moreover, our house and home are above (2 Cor. 5:1-2). If you were banished to a strange land, how frequently would your mind return to thoughts of home? How often would you think of your old companions? You would even dream that you were at home, that you saw your father, mother, or friends, and that you were talking with your wife, children, or neighbors. Why is it not like this with us in respect of heaven? Is that not more truly and properly our home, where we must take up our everlasting abode? Here we are strangers; there is our country (Heb. 11:14-15). We are heirs, and that is our inheritance, even an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that does not fade away, reserved for us in heaven (1 Pet. 1:4). Here we are in continual distress and lack; there lies our substance, even that better and more enduring substance (Heb. 10:34). Here we are beholden to others; there lies our own perpetual treasure (Matt. 6:20-21). Yes, the very hope of our souls is there: all our hope of relief from our distresses; all our hope of happiness when we are here miserable; all this hope is laid up for us in heaven (Col. 1:5). Why, beloved Christians, do we have so much interest in earth and so few

thoughts of heaven? Have we so near a relation and yet so little affection? Are we not ashamed of this? Lastly, consider that there is nothing else that is worth setting our hearts on. If God does not have our hearts, who or what will have them? (Baxter, 102-103).

## **RECOGNITION AND REUNION**

What makes Heaven so desirable? It is where God dwells (Matthew 23:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 21:3) and where we will have perfect and complete fellowship with Him. God's people will dwell in Heaven.

Let us ask who will be in Heaven? The Godhead (Matthew 6:9; Acts 2:11; 1 John 5:16). A host of angelic principalities (Matthew 18:10; Luke 5:10; Revelation 5:17). Saved sinners: those redeemed by blood (Revelation 5:9; 1:6); Those born again (John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23); Those converted (Matthew 18:4); Those in the Lamb's book (Revelation 20:15); and the saved from all nations, tribes, and tongues (Revelation 5).

We will recognize and be reunited with our loved ones in Christ. God's Word gives us evidence of recognition in the heavenly realm. The rich man recognized Lazarus and Abraham (Luke 16:19-31). Paul had the expectation of being united with his converts in the afterlife (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 2 Corinthians 4:14). "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11). After the death of his son, David said, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I

fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Samuel 12:23). What a reunion it will be in the presence of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and those in Christ who we are temporarily separated from at the present time.

## **NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH**

See 2 Peter 3:11-13. We understand that this world will be totally destroyed. There will be no new kingdom on earth. We must remember that this will not be a similar physical realm (John 4:24; 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

On the phrase, "New heavens and a new earth" (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:12), consider what Peter wrote. First, the "heavens and earth" of the present are reserved for "fire against the day of judgment" (2 Peter 3:7). Second, the Judgment will come unexpectedly and suddenly. The heavens and earth will "*pass away with a great noise, the elements will dissolve with fervent heat, and the earth and its works shall be consumed*" (2 Peter 3:10, 12). Third, after the Judgment, there will be the "new heavens and new earth." Notice what Peter did *not* say. He did not say that the earth would be refurbished to be an earthly paradise. He did not say that the Lord would reign upon the earth. He did not say that anyone would inhabit earth after the Second Coming. No biblical writer affirms *any*

of these ideas (Jackson, [www.christiancourier.com](http://www.christiancourier.com)).

## **DESCRIBED IN NEGATIVES**

Revelation 21:1-22:5 gives us a glimpse of the eternal abode of God's people. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

"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" (Revelation 21:4). There will be no sorrow, no mourning, no crying, "No tears in Heaven" (Isaiah 25:7-8; 35:10; Jeremiah 31:16). There will be no sickness, pain or death (1 Corinthians 15:26) in Heaven (Romans 5:12-21). There will be no separation ever again. In this world, jobs, families, wars and death constantly separate us (Luke 20:36; 1 Peter 1:3-4). There will be no more night, sun or moon (Revelation 21:23, 25; 22:5; 7:16). We will rest (i.e., have relief) from our grueling battle against Satan (Hebrews 4:1-11; Revelation 14:13; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). "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" (See 2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

## **CONCLUSION**

"In the New Jerusalem, there shall be the absence of everything that afflicts, and torments, and chaffs. No more

tears! God shall wipe away every tear... And there will be no graves on the hillsides of glory. We will never again sit by the bedside of the dearest to us, and see the filmy, closing eyes; we shall never again hear the terrible death-rattle; we shall never more feel the horrible vacancy, and know the feeling of awful lamentation, when one close to our heart flies far away beyond our reach, and the warmth of our love. One of the great desolations of the world that now is, and the atmosphere that surrounds it, is the specter of the slow funeral procession, and the casket, and the wailing, and the mourning, and the anguish, and the unspeakable sadness. But in the heavenly city, when the bride is given to the bridegroom, there shall be no more weeping. Christ hath abolished death" (Dobbs, 287).

It is imperative that each individual count the cost. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it?" (Luke 14:28). What can it cost us to live in such a way as to make Heaven our home? Time, friendships, family relationships, a career, marriage, life. Have you counted the cost? Do you want Heaven more than anything (Matthew 6:33)? Let the Bible be your only guide to Heaven (Psalm 119:105).

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baxter, Richard. *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022.

Dobbs, H.A. Buster. "How Beautiful Heaven Must Be." *Whatever Happened to Heaven and Hell?* Edited by Terry M. Hightower. San Antonio, TX: Austin McGary and Co, 1993.

Edwards, Jonathan. *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 2*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979.

Jackson, Jason. "What Are the New Heavens and New Earth?" [www.christiancourier.com](http://www.christiancourier.com).

Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: HarperOne, 2001.

Lewis, C.S. *The Problem of Pain*. New York: HarperOne, 2001.

Owen, John. *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Vol. 4*. Marshallton, Delaware: The National Foundation for Christian Education. 1969.

Sibbes, Richard. Christ Is Best, Or St. Paul's Strait, in *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes, Vol. 1*. Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1862.

The Holy Bible. *English Standard Version*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016.

## CHAPTER 10

# YOU BELIEVE IN THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE?

Written by **Jameson Steward**

### INTRODUCTION

A Gallup poll from 2022 discovered that something significant has happened in the United States regarding how people see the Bible.

A record-low 20% of Americans now say the Bible is the literal word of God, down from 24% the last time the question was asked in 2017, and half of what it was at its high points in 1980 and 1984. Meanwhile, a new high of 29% say the Bible is a collection of "fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man." This marks the first time significantly more Americans have viewed the Bible as not divinely inspired than as the literal word of God. (Gallup.com)

People who believe that the Bible is the very words of God (2 Timothy 3:16) are currently in the minority in the United States. As Christians, we need to know why the Bible is God's Word, and we need to be able to explain to others why the Bible is God's Word. This will be an ongoing challenge to the faith of Christians in the coming years, especially in the United States.

Since this manuscript is limited in its scope of the question, "Why do you believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God," we would benefit the most by focusing on one particular area. We will consider the fulfillment of prophecy and study Psalm 22 - The Crucifixion Psalm. As we consider Psalm 22, which was written about 1,000 years before Jesus walked the earth, we will find abundant evidence that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

## **JESUS CALLED ATTENTION TO PSALM 22**

As Jesus was dying on the cross, He said something which would have called people's minds to a portion of Scripture. Remember that the Bible was not divided into chapters until the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and verse divisions were not added until 1551 (bible.org). During the first century A.D., you had to start quoting or reading a well-known verse from a section to direct people to a particular passage of Scripture. This is precisely what Jesus did while on the cross.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)

While the cross was an agonizing moment for the Lord (Matthew 26:37-39), and no doubt He felt very alone, He was doing more than simply expressing despair. I believe He was directing the minds of the many Jewish people (Matthew 27:39-44) gathered around Him to Psalm 22 - because what He said is the opening phrase of that psalm.



When Jesus quoted the first phrase of Psalm 22, the people's minds would have immediately started going through the psalm. Their minds would have compared the words of Psalm 22 with what their eyes saw as Jesus hung on the cross. So we will follow the same path that Jesus took the crowd down while He hung on the cross.

### **A CONTRAST (PSALM 22:1-5)**

Psalm 22 opens with a contrast between those who trusted God in the past and the speaker of the psalm.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. (Psalm 22:1-5)

The speaker of the psalm is not speaking against the goodness and holiness of God because he praises God for His holiness and worthiness to be praised. The psalmist points out that others had trusted in God before and were delivered. However, although he also trusts in God, he's **not** being delivered from what he's facing.

This sounds like our Lord when He said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27). Also, when He fell on the ground in Gethsemane

and prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*...O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matthew 26:39, 42). Though Jesus trusted in God, He had to endure death on the cross.

### **THE RIDICULE (PSALM 22:6-10)**

The psalmist speaks of the ridicule he faces, despite his faithfulness to God and his trust in Him.

But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. (Psalm 22:6-10)

The Hebrew word used by David for "worm" in Psalm 22:6 referred to a specific insect used by the Israelites. It was known as the "Crimson Worm" because of the red dye extracted from its body. This worm was where the Jews got the red dye for the curtains of the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:1), the garments of the high priest (Exodus 39:2); it was used in the purification rites for lepers (Leviticus 14:4-6), and their houses (Leviticus 14:51-52); it was also added to the ashes of the red heifer (Numbers 19:6) (encyclopedia.com). Using this word for "worm" was no accident, since the blood of Jesus Christ "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

The speaker describes how he is being ridiculed and insulted for his trust in God. This is precisely what Jesus faced on the cross.

Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. (Matthew 27:41-43)

The Jewish leaders believed that Jesus' suffering on the cross was evidence that God had rejected Him - which is what the speaker in Psalm 22 experienced as well. But the reality was that He had always been faithful to God (John 5:19). What Jesus endured was not because of His unfaithfulness to the Lord (1 Peter 2:21-24). He suffered for us and died in our place (2 Corinthians 5:21).

### **THE SCENE (PSALM 22:11-21a)**

The psalmist describes what's happening around him and what he is experiencing.

Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my

tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth (Psalm 22:11-21a)

Animals were often used in Hebrew poetry to illustrate people. The “strong bulls of Bashan” refer to strong, influential people. Think of all the powerful people who were involved in the death of Jesus on the cross: the Jewish leaders (Luke 22:66-71), Herod (Luke 23:6-12), and Pilate (Luke 23:18-25). While Jesus was on the cross, some of the Jewish rulers stood around Him (Luke 23:35). The “dogs” who surrounded Him would have referred to the lower rung of society – perhaps like the criminals crucified on either side of Jesus (Luke 23:33).

The psalmist also describes what he is experiencing, and the combination of these physical conditions points to the crucifixion of Jesus. Being “poured out like water” refers to the life being drained from the body. Think of all the blood that would have dripped from the body of Jesus as He was beaten (Luke 22:63-65), scourged (Mark 15:15), had a crown of thorns shoved into His head (Mark 15:17-19), and ultimately crucified (Matthew 27:35). After He died, a spear was thrust into Jesus’ side, and blood and water poured out (John 19:34).

His “bones” being “out of joint” describes the excruciating strain crucifixion placed on the human body. As the full weight of the individual’s body pulled down on the nailed wrists, the elbows and shoulders would dislocate (apu.edu).

His heart being “like wax” references the strain on the heart. Dr. C. Truman Davis wrote that Jesus likely died not from suffocation, which was the usual way people died on a cross, but of heart failure, evidenced by the water pouring from His side when it was pierced (ywammadison.org).

The tongue clinging, or sticking, to the jaws is a common symptom of dehydration. If a person loses a massive amount of blood - as Jesus did - that quickly leads to dehydration. On the cross, Jesus said, “I thirst” to fulfill the Scripture (John 19:28).

His hands and feet were pierced. Crucifixion involved nail spikes being driven through the person’s wrists and feet (christianity.com). This process would have been excruciatingly painful.

The psalmist wrote that people were looking and staring at him and that all his bones could be counted. Crucifixion wasn’t just about killing a person - it was about completely humiliating them before they died. Most people would have been stripped naked before being crucified. To add to their humiliation, they got to watch as the soldiers would gamble for their clothing. Jesus was treated no differently (Matthew 27:35).

The psalmist says that he had been brought “into the dust of death.” Do you remember what God said to Adam?

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19). He was staring death directly in the face. Jesus died on the cross (Matthew 27:50).

After describing the scene, the psalmist pleads with God to help and save him (Psalm 22:19-21a). What would God’s answer to this plea look like? It could only be one of two things. Either God would save the speaker from dying or bring them back to life after they die.

### **THE ANSWER (PSALM 22:21b)**

The “hinge” point of Psalm 22 is the last phrase of verse 21. The KJV says, “for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.” The NKJV translates this phrase a little more clearly: “You have answered Me.”

God answered the call of the speaker to be delivered. This is what God did for Jesus. God raised Him up and did not leave His soul in Hades (Acts 2:24, 27, 31-32). Jesus died on the cross, but He was delivered from death by His resurrection (Romans 1:4).

After this point in Psalm 22, the tone of the psalm changes drastically.

### **THE RESULTS (PSALM 22:22-31)**

The psalmist describes what would be done and what would happen as a result of God answering and delivering him.

I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise

thee. Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this. (Psalm 22:22-31)

The psalmist declares that God is worthy of praise for what He has done in delivering him. Note the significance - a Jewish writer wrote that "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD." After the one the psalmist wrote about had suffered and been delivered, people worldwide would turn to the Lord God. This is precisely what happened after Jesus rose from the dead (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

The psalmist describes how those “that go down to the dust shall bow before him.” This appears to be a reference to an afterlife or a resurrected life. The one who suffered in the psalm opens the door of life after death to all people. It is through Jesus Christ that we are given victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 51-57).

The psalmist concludes by stating that the events discussed in Psalm 22 would be told repeatedly down through the generations.

## **CONCLUSION**

Remember that Psalm 22 was written about 1,000 years before Jesus walked the earth. And yet, Psalm 22 speaks so clearly and specifically about what Jesus would endure on the cross, and what would happen after His death.

Psalm 22 couldn't be about anything other than the crucifixion of Jesus and the message of “good news” that would go out into all the world because of His resurrection – and it was written 1,000 years before it happened.

Psalm 22 is powerful, undeniable evidence that the Bible is God's Word. Not only does Psalm 22 strengthen the faith of the Christian and provide evidence for the skeptic, but it also teaches what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed through Psalm 22.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

All Scripture quotations are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.

“Crimson Worm” <https://www.encyclopedia.com> (Accessed 31 January 2023).

Davis, Dr. C. Truman. “Jesus Died of a Broken Heart: A Physician’s Analysis of the Crucifixion” <https://ywammadison.org> (Accessed 31 January 2023).

“How and when was the Bible divided into chapters and verses?” <https://bible.org> (Accessed 31 January 2023).

Mooney, Britt. “What Do We Know about the Nails Used to Crucify Jesus?” <https://www.christianity.com> (Accessed 31 January 2023).

Newport, Frank. “Fewer in U.S. Now See Bible as Literal Word of God.” <https://news.gallup.com> (Accessed 31 January 2023).

Shrier, Cahleen, Ph.D. “The Science of the Crucifixion” [www.apu.edu](http://www.apu.edu) (Accessed 31 January 2023).

## CHAPTER 11

# YOU BELIEVE THAT ADULTERY IS THE ONLY CAUSE FOR DIVORCE?

Written by **Craig Simon**

### INTRODUCTION

It matters not what one believes, feels in his heart, or holds dear; it only matters what the Bible teaches on any given subject. This is especially true when given the personal and emotional attachment that often surfaces when faced with the assigned topic of marriage, infidelity, and divorce. How many sound gospel preachers have “restudied the issue” after having it hit “too close to home?” How many preachers have committed adultery, divorced the wife of their youth, and moved to a part of the country where their situation is obscure, or the brethren are more “accepting?” How many elderships have cowered and caved on the truth because of the confrontational nature of corrective discipline in the Lord’s Church? It is not within the scope of this assignment to provide a basis for biblical authority, but it must be briefly addressed in the introduction.

First, one must begin with the firm understanding that God has furnished mankind with all things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). If one does not hold fervently to this view, every precept in the realm of religious authority desperately crumbles beneath him. Second, one must understand that the Holy Spirit did not take mankind’s

“personal preferences” into consideration when penning Holy Scripture. One will not be judged by his preferences, but rather by the words of Christ (John 12:48). Third, this is a serious moral deficiency that is plaguing the Lord’s church in real time. It has been plaguing the Lord’s church for decades! No person named a brother or sister in Christ will be in heaven with unrepentant sin, including divorce that is prohibited in the eyes of God, and remarriage that is in keeping with cultural defiance, not church doctrine. This topic speaks to one’s intense craving for earthly, sexual pleasure and highlights one’s lack of self-control. This manuscript will address the dangerous shift of the contemporary culture and the church’s attempt to follow suit and will examine the topic from the teaching of Jesus and Paul’s epistle to the Corinthian brethren.

## **THE CULTURE’S DANGEROUS SHIFT**

Polling centers, such as the Pew Research Center, the Barna Group, and the Cultural Research Center of Arizona Christian University, have documented the downfall of religiosity in the United States. A recent poll from the Cultural Research Center discovered this about American “pastors:”

Their prevailing worldview is best described as Syncretism, the blending of ideas and applications from a variety of holistic worldviews into a unique but inconsistent combination that represents their personal preferences. More than six out of 10 pastors (62%) have a predominantly syncretistic worldview (quoted from Ham, online).

When men stand up in the pulpit week after week and do not hold a Biblical worldview, but rather form a patch-work theological ideology based on their own experiences and preferences, the Lord's church is in BIG trouble! It is no wonder then, that this worldview shift has found its way into the Lord's church; after all, it always does!

Our contemporary society no longer defines marriage in the "traditional" sense. A man may "marry" a man. A woman may "marry" a woman. There was a story released a couple of years ago where a man "married" a robot. What's next? Trees, animals, children? Do not chuckle too hard, because that is exactly where this country is headed: the legalization of bestiality and pedophilia (among other things). Polyamory is recognized as a "viable option" for marriage, because, after all, the concept of one man, one woman, for life is too restrictive. Some might say, "But the divorce rate is down in the United States." Yes, that is true. However, it is because young people are choosing to cohabit (live together outside of marriage) and commit fornication, rather than getting married, so the statistics are mostly swayed. Sexual sin is rampant: immodesty, fornication, adultery, pornography, homosexuality, and transgenderism. It has been since the 60's, and it is dangerously influencing the Lord's church.

Divorce has been a big problem for a long time! The history of no-fault divorce in the United States began with President Ronald Reagan, before he was President. As the governor of California, Reagan signed into law the first strides toward no-fault divorce in 1969. Wilcox (online) observes:

The new law eliminated the need for couples to fabricate spousal wrongdoing in pursuit of a divorce; indeed, one likely reason for Reagan's decision to sign the bill was that his first wife, Jane Wyman, had unfairly accused him of "mental cruelty" to obtain a divorce in 1948.

Did you catch that? The legalization of no-fault divorce stemmed from Reagan's personal experience, as it often does. How embarrassing it must be to be accused of "mental cruelty" even if it is fabricated. He decided to spare others the same embarrassment that he endured. He was able to change the law; and change the law he did. Unknowingly, he sent our country into the sinful spiral that it is in now; the decimation and dismantlement of the American family unit. Within the next fifteen years, every state in the Union had a comparable "no-fault" divorce law. Reagan later admitted that signing this law was one of the biggest regrets of his political career. However, the irrevocable damage to the Nation had been done. The statistics and the toll taken on the American family are staggering, both in scale and in scope:

From 1960 to 1980, the divorce rate more than doubled – from 9.2 divorces per 1,000 married women to 22.6 divorces per 1,000 married women. This meant that while less than 20% of couples who married in 1950 ended up divorced, about 50% of couples who married in 1970 did. And approximately half of the children born to married parents in the 1970s saw their parents part, compared to

only about 11% of those born in the 1950s (Wilcox, online).

And, as the Nation goes, so goes the church!

## **THE CHURCH'S DANGEROUS SHIFT**

Brother Glenn Colley has an outstanding sermon series addressing the “shifting middle” of today’s culture. As the culture shifts noticeably and progressively to the left, the church inevitably follows suit. Little by little, bit by bit. When left unchecked, there is not much difference between the world and the church. This problem is not a new one. After all, the New Testament epistles were written to combat worldliness and establish holiness among the community of believers. Elders must be astute to the ever-changing whims of culture and must courageously stand behind (and in front of) their preachers as these moral issues are addressed boldly from the pulpit. Dear elder: be the shepherd that you have been ordained to be! Dear preacher: be the heralding watchman that you have been called to be! Too often, elders are more concerned with numbers and preachers are more concerned with job security to address the moral issues plaguing the brethren.

The Lord’s church often adopts a worldly, denominational model, albeit, on average, about twenty years after the denominations introduce it. In many places, the local “church” has redefined grace, worship, and women’s role. Some denominations have few moral expectations when it comes to marriage. After all, how can they bring in new people and uphold the Bible’s stance on morality? The Biblical standard often seems rigid and ungracious. These philosophies begin to “leaven up” the Lord’s church (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:7). The disciples

understood Jesus' teaching on marriage and decided that it was too harsh (cf. Matthew 19:10). As Jesus rightly said, "No man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). Does the church serve the culture or the Christ? The message of the cross, and the moral requirements therein, are foolishness to the world and often to members of the Lord's church (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18). Paul understood that a Christian cannot have a dualistic nature, seeking to serve God on one hand and men on the other (Galatians 1:10). The reason that many churches have compromised on what the Bible teaches concerning any number of moral issues is that many of her preachers have been "educated" in secular seminaries, the membership affectionately looks to society and not Scripture for validation, and business-minded elders care more about bucks and buildings than they care about bustling discipleship.

## **THE BIBLE'S DEFINITE STANDARD**

### **A. WHAT JESUS TAUGHT**

Everything that Jesus taught about marriage and divorce can be studied in these passages: **Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18**. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to carefully examine the above texts. It is not within the scope of this manuscript to meticulously exegete each text. However, an attempt will be made to investigate the various texts and address several concerns. Corresponding statements and harmonious passages will be combined for ease of instruction's sake.

**The religious leaders tested Jesus (Matthew 19:3; Mark 10:2).** This question was not asked genuinely, but rather to "test" Jesus. Jesus was often "tested" for the

purpose of forcing Him to choose between sides (cf. Matthew 16:1; John 8:6). Stewart (p. 458) affirms:

Here the Pharisees were “testing” Jesus concerning the question of divorce, which was a controversial issue among the rabbis of that time. The Greek verb for “test” (πειράζω, peirazó) can mean either “test” or “tempt,” depending on the context. When used of God, it refers to His testing of His people. When referring to Satan, it denotes his tempting of people to do evil (Mark 1:13). This latter meaning of “tempt” fits the context here. The Pharisees were doing the work of Satan by “tempting” Jesus (KJV).

Therefore, the Pharisees, were “tempting” Jesus to determine if He would side with the popular whims of the culture or affirm the less popular, traditional biblical interpretation. Sound elders and gospel preachers face this same “test” today! Modern contemporaries attempt to claim that Jesus was a “liberal.” But here, He sided with the Bible and God’s purpose, not a cultural, religious, or political movement. Christianity has always been counterculture.

**The question under consideration: “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?” (NKJV - Matthew 19:3; cf. Mark 10:2).** Must there be a legitimate, warranted cause for divorce or may a man divorce his wife for any reason of his choosing? That was the concern of the day. There were two schools of thought during Jesus’ day: the liberal school, where any reason was as good as another; and the conservative school, where only for sexual



infidelity was divorce allowable. The discontinuity derived from how one might interpret the word “uncleanness” in Deuteronomy 24:1. The Hillel (liberal) school interpreted it to mean that “he may divorce her even if she spoiled a dish” (Wilkins, p. 117). While the Shammai (conservative) school “held to the letter of the Mosaic law and said, ‘A man may not divorce his wife unless he has found unchastity in her’” (Wilkins, p. 117). They were essentially asking Jesus to pick a side and settle a doctrinal dispute among the religious authorities.

**God’s plan from the beginning (Matthew 19:4-6, 8; Mark 10:6-9).** Jesus superseded the trap that the Pharisees were trying to put Him in by swerving away from the intended head-on collision and returning to God’s plan for marriage from the beginning. He need not contemplate the cultural tendencies of His wicked society, nor bow the knee to the whimsical liberal rabbis who were ever seeking to supplant God’s truth for their own desires. Jesus went back to the beginning, to the Almighty Source who created male and female and established the marital union. He went back to the first marriage and family bond that was created, sanctified, and ordained by God. He went back to the *historical account* of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:18-25. The principle of specificity comes to mind here: when God specifies a thing, He need not forbid all other things. God’s eternal pattern from the beginning is obvious: one man, one woman, for life. That is reasonably simple to understand, yet profound! Crain (p. 156) communicates the simplicity therein:

God made male and female to compliment and complete one another (Gen. 2:18, 24). The original design was to be the model for

all sexual unions. By its very nature it excluded polygamy, polyandry, and divorce and remarriage ... God's intention excluded same-sex unions (Rom. 1:26, 27). If He had planned for males to be with males and females to be with females, He would have made another man for Adam and another woman for Eve. When men tamper with God's purposes, the results are disastrous.

Amen and Amen again!

**The exception (Matthew 5:32; 19:9).** However, there is one exception: **fornication**. The Greek word translated "fornication" in the KJV is πορνεία (*porneia*) and according to Crain, "includes every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse" (p. 159). Modern translations admittedly make a mess of this, often softening it by translating the word "sexual immorality" (NKJV, NASB, ESV), which leaves a world of possibilities to one's imagination. Boles (p. 389) explains it in this way:

Unlawful intercourse with any other person permits the innocent party to break the marriage tie; the guilty party has deserted forever the marriage partner; and has become unfit for further association; the guilty party can never again enter a pure and lawful marriage covenant.

The marriage covenant that one entered into was sorely severed by infidelity and an innocent heart was crushed. According to Jesus, this is the only exception for dissolving the marriage relationship. The word "except" may be translated literally as "not, lest" (Strong's, online) or

“unless.” One would be fair in qualifying the statement by “if and *only* if” or “*only* having met these conditions.” According to HELPS Word-studies (online), the word “negates ‘*subjectively,*’ ruling out *any implications* (‘*suggestions*’) that *could* be involved with what *should* (*could, would*) *apply.*” The word by its use, is a qualified negation, thereby, ruling out any other reason for divorce other than for fornication. According to the linguistic composition (and common sense), this text may only have one possible interpretation: that divorce is only allowable for fornication (sexual infidelity on the part of either spouse); thereby, one commits adultery and shatters the sanctity of the marriage covenant.

## **B. WHAT AN APOSTLE THROUGH INSPIRATION TAUGHT**

### **1 CORINTHIANS 7:15 “NOT UNDER BONDAGE”**

The Roman Catholic Church has long turned to 1 Corinthians 7 as a “second” allowance for divorce and subsequent remarriage. This has been dubbed the “Pauline Privilege.” If one runs with this assumption, that Paul gives a “second” reason for divorce, one may be surprised by what he does not find in the text. The diligent and honest Bible student will not read of Paul allowing or condoning a second marriage after desertion or abandonment, as those who hold to this view give allowance. The text is simply void of any liberty to remarry!

Several precepts must be in order for this text to be relevant: 1) There must be a marital union between a Christian and an unbeliever. This is the context of the statement after all (1 Corinthians 7:13-16). This text is not giving a Christian the “right” to wed an unbeliever.

However, the more plausible circumstance is that one spouse had been converted to the gospel of Christ, while the other had not. 2) The Christian spouse must fervently have in mind, that the preservation of the marital relationship is of utmost importance, secondary only in importance to one's relationship with Christ (1 Corinthians 7:14). Notice that the believing spouse is not trying to find a "loophole" or a "way out." One must also remember that Paul was answering specific questions that the saints in Corinth had sent to him. The question of whether a Christian should stay married to an unbeliever was concerning to them. Paul was not attempting to answer every hypothetical situation. 3) It is the "unbeliever" that initiates the separation, not the other way around. This is the true context of the phrase "not under bondage."

One should be aware that there are three commonly accepted interpretations of the phrase "not under bondage." 1) The Christian is not so enslaved as to be in submission to the actions of the authoritative/abusive spouse. This simply does not fit the context. 2) The prevalent view in the contemporary religious world is that the word "bondage" refers to the marriage bond. This view is widely accepted in Christendom and allows the abandoned spouse the liberty to remarry. However, the Greek word *douloo* is the word used for "bondage" in the text and never refers to the marriage union. This interpretation is an example of *eisegesis*, "reading into" the text what is not there and asserting one's own assumptions and biases. Concerning this notion, Jackson (online) writes:

Biblically speaking, marriage is **never viewed as slavery!** The "bondage," i.e., enslavement, does not refer to the marriage union. If the

unbeliever departs, that is not the Christian's responsibility. The brother or sister is not enslaved to maintain a **togetherness** (note the allusion of 1 Corinthians 7:5) at the expense of fidelity to the Lord.

The third view is the most exegetically sound in interpretation and is in keeping with the original context. The third view is expressed articulately by Lusk (p. 121):

The view, however, most suited to the exegetical data here is that the apostle is saying that the brother or sister is not in a state of enslavement in the marital union so as to be under obligation to maintain it at any cost (i.e., that they are enslaved to the union so as to be in it no matter what he/she or the unbelieving mate may do). If the unbelieving mate chooses to divorce his/her believing mate, then the union is broken and the believer is no longer in it. The marriage bond is not such that those in it become slaves to it from which there is no escape and in which they have lost their freedom and rights as a person. This seems to be the thrust of the apostle's words here as viewed in the light of the context (flow of thought), syntax (the grammatical relationships), and lexicography (the meaning of the terms involved).

However, playing out the situation to its fullest, if the unbelieving spouse does abandon and dismiss the believing spouse, in keeping with additional Scriptures, the believing spouse does not have a right to remarry (cf.

Matthew 19:11-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11), but should sanctify oneself wholly in service to the Lord and not seek to pursue sensual lusts. Reconciliation with one's spouse or celibacy are the only possible options here. It may be that if reconciliation is attainable, or the unbelieving spouse has future regrets about how he has treated his spouse, there may be an open door for sharing the gospel through one's reverent conduct and godliness (cf. 1 Peter 3:1-2).

Reconciliation should always be the end result; not looking for a right to remarry. As Tuten (p. 169) notes, "It is sad indeed that so many in our society, as in years past, have not been satisfied with God's Word, and have gone about to establish their own doctrines by manipulating the precious Word of God" (For further study on "not under bondage," please read the sources by Jackson, Lusk, and Tuten - C.S.).

## **CONCLUSION**

Stewart (p. 501) rightly observes:

Young couples must see the great importance of church attendance and spiritual growth. A couple should pray and study the Bible together. If two marriage partners are growing closer to Christ, they will also grow closer to one another.

May God grant elders the wisdom to faithfully shepherd the church of Christ, "which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). May God grant gospel preachers the courage to be bold in the pulpit and lovingly speak out against the moral dilemmas that afflict the Lord's church. May God grant brethren, who are engaged in sexual sin, clarity to see the error of their ways and give them time to

repent. May God's Word compel husbands to love their wives as Christ loves His church. May God give wives a humble spirit to quietly demonstrate godliness and sound judgment. May parents return to raising their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). May the church forever be a shining beacon for the cause of Christ.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boles, H. Leo. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1952.
- Crain, Sellars S., Jr. *Truth for Today Commentary: An Exegesis and Application of the Holy Scriptures - Matthew 14-28*. Edited by Eddie Cloer. Searcy, AR: Resource Publications, 2011.
- Ham, Ken. "Study: Only 37% of American Pastors Have a Biblical Worldview." May 30, 2022. [answersingenesis.org](http://answersingenesis.org) (Accessed 17 January 2023).
- HELPS Word-studies. 3361. [biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com). (Accessed 23 January 2023).
- Holy Bible. King James Version.
- Jackson, Wayne. "What is the Meaning of 'Not Under Bondage' (1 Cor. 7:15)?" [christiancourier.com](http://christiancourier.com) (Accessed 17 January 2023).
- Lusk, Maurice W. III. *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Teachings of Jesus and Paul*. Atlanta, GA: Maurice W. Lusk, III, 1982.
- Stewart, David. *A Commentary on Mark*. Searcy, AR: Stewart Publications, 2016.
- Strong's Concordance. 3361. [biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com). (Accessed 24 January 2023).
- Tuten, Ryan. "Marriage and Divorce: Not Under Bondage." *Epistles to Corinth: 2007 MSOP Lectureship*.



Edited by Bobby Liddell. Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 2007.

Wilcox, W. Bradford. "The Evolution of Divorce." Fall, 2009. [nationalaffairs.com](http://nationalaffairs.com) (Accessed 17 January 2023).

Wilkins, Michael J. Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Volume I. Edited by Clinton E. Arnold. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.

## CHAPTER 12

# YOU BELIEVE CHRISTIANS ARE THE ONLY ONES GOING TO HEAVEN?

Written by **Barry Grider**

### INTRODUCTION

Who is or who is not going to Heaven is perhaps the most sensitive issue among religious people. When one religious group suggests another religious group will not be in Heaven or when one individual says of another individual that person will not be in heaven, the reaction is often intense and can stir deep feelings of bitterness and hatred. Let this writer begin by saying every religious person should be very careful concerning what he says about the eternal destiny of another, realizing that ultimately God is the only One who determines such. There may be someone in Heaven that I did not expect to be in Heaven. There may be someone in Hell that I did not expect to be in Hell. God hath granted "all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22).

Having preached many funeral services during my 35 year ministry, I have maintained a close relationship with numerous funeral directors. One of them, a Bible believer, indicated to me that having heard thousands of funeral sermons during his many years in the funeral business, and from representatives of a multiplicity of religious groups, it seemed that every individual that died evidently when to Heaven, at least based on what the preacher said. Many of

the most wicked individuals on earth not only believe in Heaven but, likewise, that they will be there when this life is over.

While it is true that man does not determine the eternal destiny of another, is it possible than we can know or at least have an idea of who will be in Heaven or not? If so, one must readily conclude that God, with whom all judgment resides, must reveal this information to us. If he has done so, which is the purpose of our study, let us accept what He says on this crucial subject.

## **THE REALITY OF HEAVEN AND HELL**

Many religious people, who are not well established in the Holy Scriptures, perhaps would be amazed at how much the Bible speaks of life after death. It seems that God has placed something within the heart of man that yearns for life eternal (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Surely Abraham, the Father of the faithful, believed in life after death. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Concerning his death, we read, "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people" (Genesis 25:8). Abraham's sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried their father, next to his wife, Sarah, in a cave in a place called Machpelah (Genesis 25:9,10). However, the ancestors of Abraham were not buried in that place, hence, what is the meaning of he "was gathered to his people"?

It was our Lord Jesus who pulled back the curtain that covered eternity and gave us a quick glimpse of the other side. In His story recorded in Luke 16, it is clear that a man named Lazarus was saved and that a rich man was

lost. Lazarus found himself in a Paradise called Abraham's bosom, while the rich man was in a place of torment. Lazarus was enjoying peace and comfort, while the rich man was in agony. It is clear, these two places were the exact opposite of the other. Furthermore, there is no biblical passage that speaks of any other abode for the dead than the two spoken by Jesus. He said, on the day of judgment, our Lord will render a verdict concerning every soul that has ever lived. He speaks of only two destinations. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46). Therefore, it is Jesus who has established the fact that there is a heaven and a hell.

### **WHY MUST THERE BE A HELL?**

If God is all powerful and all loving and one's eternal destiny is in His hands (Ecclesiastes 12:1), why must there be a hell? After all, God "will have all men to be saved" (2 Timothy 2:4), and He is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). However, men often overlook some other characteristics of the God of Heaven. He is infinitely holy (Leviticus 21:8) and infinitely just (Psalm 89:14). When man sins, he offends the holiness of God and God's justice comes into play. There is a penalty for sin. That penalty is death (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 3:23). At some point there was a portion of the angelic host that sinned against God and were then cast into Hell (2 Peter 2:4). Hell was not made for you and me. Hell was "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). Yet as one studies the Bible he learns it is possible even for the souls of men to be cast into Hell. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in

the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). While there is a real place called Heaven, there is also a real place called Hell. Every person has a soul and that soul will be alive forever in one of those two places.

## **WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?**

The question under consideration in this study is who will be in Heaven? Specifically are only Christians going to Heaven? But what constitutes a Christian? There are approximately seven billion people on earth today. Of that number over 2 billion people claim some type of allegiance to Christianity. However, just because someone identifies himself as something does not make it so. A Russian citizen could claim he is an American citizen, but that does not make it so. A male could identify as a woman but that does not make him a woman, despite the bizarre claims of transgenderism.

If one is truly a New Testament Christian (and that is the only way to determine who is a Christian), then that means such an individual has followed the teaching of the New Testament as to how one becomes a Christian. A Christian obviously denotes a follower of Christ. It is the judgment of this writer that the new name to be given to God's people is the name Christian (Isaiah ). "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). King Agrippa said to the Apostle Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28). Peter, addressing believers who were enduring intense persecution, said, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Peter 4:16).

Who is a Christian? Succinctly stated, a Christian is one who is in Christ, who is faithfully following His Lord, and rejoices in the service he renders (Philippians 4:4). What authorization is given to an individual make this notable claim. If Christ is the one and only Savior, then it follows that one must respond obediently to Christ to obtain the salvation He offers. It should be concluded that Christ is the Savior of the world (John 8) and its only Savior (John 14:3). Furthermore, He is the author of salvation to all them that obey him (Hebrews 12:2) and He is strong and able to save (Hebrews 7:22).

Listen to what Jesus says concerning sin and salvation. "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). Furthermore, if one dies in his sins, Jesus said, "whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:21). Regarding the same subject, sin and salvation, He said, "Nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32,33). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Now the honest and sincere Bible student, who reads those passages, must come to a particular conclusion. In the words of Jesus, the penitent believer who confesses Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and is baptized or immersed in water, is the one who receives the forgiveness of sins. These steps of salvation come from the lips of the Savior. To deny this teaching is to deny Him.

Remember a Christian is one who is in Christ. Salvation is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10). All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3) It should be noted that baptism puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:27). It was this message that was preached on the day of Pentecost to the multitude that gathered. "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). "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41). "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). These same individuals, and those who followed their example after Pentecost, are the same disciples that ultimately would be called Christians (Acts 11:26).

This writer remembers following his baptism into Christ, that some asked, "when did you obey the gospel?" Others asked, "when did you become a member of the church?" Still others would enquire, "when did you become a Christian?" It was clearly understood that what was being asked was simply "when were you baptized?"

So it can be established in the scriptures who is a Christian and who is not a Christian. 1) Through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ for the remission of sins, one becomes a Christian. 2) The same baptism that put one into Christ placed Him in the church of Christ (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 12:13), hence, all true Christians are found in His church, not outside of it. 3) Christians are faithfully following their Lord (1 John 1:7; Revelation 2:10).

## **ONLY CHRISTIANS IN HEAVEN?**

Having defined through the Holy Scriptures who is a Christian, are such individuals the only ones who are going to be in Heaven? Again, only God's word can give us the answer. It needs to be understood that to make the claim only Christians are going to Heaven does not mean that everyone who died before the establishment of Christianity are lost. The Bible is clear that those who died faithful to God during the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages will be in Heaven. These are the ones who looked to a future promised Messiah who would, likewise, redeem them from their sins. They were faithful to God under the law which they lived.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**



## CHAPTER 13

# YOU BELIEVE THAT BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION?

Written by **Kevin Rutherford**

### INTRODUCTION

Eternal life! What is it worth to you? What would you do to receive eternal life? What if the way to receive eternal life was to walk barefoot around the equator, or crawl ten miles through broken glass? Would you do it? How badly have you been hurt by death, and how many times have you come face to face with the possibility of your own death? Have you come yet to realize the brevity and fragility of life? This life will end, but what if you could have eternal life in a place of perpetual perfection? How valuable would that be to you? What would you do to receive this eternal life? If living in a cave the rest of your life with only the bare necessities for survival were required for eternal life, would you do it? If fifty percent of your earned income were required for eternal life, would you give it? Would you give everything you own if that was required in order to receive eternal life? What if a part of the requirement for the reception of the gift of living forever in Heaven was humble submission to immersion in water? Would you do it? The Bible does in fact teach that baptism is required for salvation, and yet so many balk at baptism (Mark 16:16). What a shame it would be to miss out on eternal life because of a refusal to allow someone to immerse you in water!

## **BIBLE BAPTISM DESCRIBED**

Baptism is described in the Bible as a burial (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). Therefore, sprinkling and pouring are not Biblical baptism. The baptism about which we speak is a burial in water (Acts 8:36-40). This burial in water is for accountable souls who are capable of believing (Mark 16:16). An infant cannot understand and believe the Gospel. Therefore, an infant is not subject to baptism. Baptism is for those who have repented (Acts 2:38). An infant has nothing for which to repent (Ezekiel 18:20). Baptism is a burial in water of an accountable soul. Must all accountable souls be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins in order to be saved? The Biblical text provides the God given, authoritative answer to this question. We will be judged by the Biblical text (2 Timothy 3:15-17; John 12:48; Acts 17:30-31).

## **BAPTISM AND GRACE**

Salvation is freely given by the grace of God (Romans 3:23-25). It can never be earned or deserved (Ephesians 2:8-9). What we have earned by our sin is death (Romans 6:23). "But the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Does salvation by grace imply baptism cannot be a condition that is essential to salvation? No! To be saved by the grace of God, one must humbly submit to the will of God (1 Peter 5:5-6; James 4:6-10). Those who refuse to submit to the will of God will be rejected by Him. When we humbly submit to the will of God, we are saved by His grace. God has chosen to save by grace all of those who submit to His will. He will reject all those who refuse to accept His will. There

is grace for the humble and obedient. There is no grace for the rebellious and proud!

When one obeys God by submitting himself to Biblical baptism, he is saved by the grace of God (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). How is one saved? By the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). Must one do anything to receive the grace of God for salvation? Yes. Among other things, one must be baptized. Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Some say baptism is not required because it is only found in the first part of this verse and not in the second. However, one will not be baptized if he does not believe. Therefore, adding baptism in the second sentence would be superfluous. Additionally, leaving it out of the second sentence in no way diminishes the impact of it in the first. Jesus could not have spoken more plainly.

Peter compares baptism to Noah's salvation by water (1 Peter 3:21). Just as Noah was saved by the water lifting up the ark, so one today is saved by submitting to immersion in water. Peter said: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21). Because we cannot earn or deserve our salvation, it must be by the grace of God. Because we are told baptism saves us, then we must understand that we are saved by the grace of God when we are baptized into Christ.

## **BAPTISM AND FAITH**

We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). "Belief" is equivalent to "faith." Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). We

are not saved by faith alone (James 2:14-26). We are saved by an obedient faith that humbly submits to the will of God (Matthew 7:21-22; Hebrews 5:8-9). A humble, submissive faith is required for salvation (James 2:14-26). A humble, submissive faith obeys the will of God regarding baptism (Mark 16:16). The Samaritans believed and were baptized (Acts 8:12). The Corinthians "hearing, believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). In doing so, the Samaritans and the Corinthians obeyed Jesus Christ and were therefore saved (Mark 16:16).

We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). But God's saving grace is only given to those who choose of their own free will to submit to His will (Joshua 24:15; 2 Peter 5:5,6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). We are saved by faith, but the faith that enables us to receive the grace of God is a faith willing to submit humbly to His will (Acts 16:30-34; James 4:14-26). The Holy Spirit illustrated this for us in the book of Hebrews by the examples of Noah and Abraham. The Holy Spirit said concerning Noah, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7). The author of Hebrews wrote: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8). When one understands grace is given to the obedient, and faith includes obedience, he can more easily understand the words of Jesus Christ: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16)."

The Bible says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). Does this mean we become God's children by faith apart from baptism? No. As explained above, Biblical faith requires obedience to God. Further, the statement in Galatians 3:26 is understood best in its context. The very next verse says, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Who are the children of God? Those with faith in Christ Jesus. How did they put on Christ Jesus? Through baptism. Faith and baptism must be found together in the individual who desires salvation.

In the book of Acts the positive response of people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ is sometimes recorded simply with expressions that indicate they believed (Acts 4:4; 17:4, 34). Some argue this proves one only needs to believe in order to be saved. Therefore, baptism is not required for salvation, some say. However, it has been demonstrated above that Biblical faith includes obedience to God and obedience to God includes baptism. One also needs to consider the fact that there are not multiple ways to be saved allowed under the New Covenant. God does not give one group of people a specific set of requirements and another group an entirely different set. When Acts shows us that sinners believed, the implication of the context (context - book of Acts) is that they obeyed all of God's requirements for salvation. The confession identified in Romans, chapter ten, is not to be excluded. The repentance spoken of in Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19 is not to be excluded. Neither should the baptism spoken of throughout the book of Acts be excluded. If one truly believes, then one naturally obeys. Therefore, consider the

numerous texts that specifically mention the act of baptism in conversion (Acts 2:38-41; 8:12, 36-40; 9:18; 10:48; 16:14-15, 30-33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16).

## **BAPTISM AND BLOOD**

Salvation is available because God the Son became flesh and dwelt among men, died for men, and rose from the grave (Romans 5:1-11). The Bible states: "We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). John the apostle wrote that Jesus Christ is the One "that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). Some would argue that because our sins are washed away by the blood of Christ, baptism must have nothing to do with sins being washed away. Yet, Ananias said to Saul: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). This verse teaches the washing away of the sins takes place when the sinner is baptized. The sins are not taken away by the water, but rather by the blood of Christ. However, the Bible teaches this happens when men are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-4). If one is not baptized, then he has not received the blood of Christ. If one has not received the blood of Christ, then he is not saved!

The relationship of baptism to the blood of Christ is also seen in the representation of His death burial and resurrection in the act of baptism. Paul wrote:

Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so

we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6:4-5).

Jesus shed His blood in His death and men are buried with Him by baptism into His death.

## **BAPTISM AND THE BODY**

Paul says concerning Jesus Christ that God, "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 fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). The same author later stated: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). In the first statement one learns that Jesus Christ is the Head of the body, which is the church. In the second, one sees that Jesus is the Head of the church and the Savior of the body, which is the church. The church is therefore the body of the saved. This is further emphasized by Paul's statement to the Ephesian elders concerning the church of God (Acts 20:28). Paul wrote: "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 body of Christ, which is the church of Christ, has been purchased by the blood of Christ, and therefore will be saved by Christ. How then does one enter into the body of the saved? One is added by Christ to the body of the saved when he is baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38-47). Paul said: "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body

(1 Corinthians 12:13).“ The church is the body of the saved. One is baptized into the body. Therefore one cannot be a part of the body of the saved unless he has been baptized.

## **BAPTISM AND REMISSION OF SINS**

“Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). The expression “for the remission of sins” is also used in Jesus’ instructions concerning the last Supper (Matthew 26:26-30). Jesus says, “For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). It is very clear to see that Jesus is saying His blood would be given in order that people might receive remission of sins, not because they had already received remission of sins. The same expression is used in exactly the same way in Acts 2:38. One must be baptized in order to receive remission of sins, not because he has already received such. Therefore, just as one must repent in order to receive remission of sins, so also one must be baptized in order to receive remission of sins.

## **BAPTISM AND CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD**

An inspired writer stated: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). Many will admit calling upon the name of the Lord involves faith and confession. This is found in the context (Romans 10:9-10). Yet, some will say that while calling upon the name of the Lord includes faith and confession of faith, it excludes baptism. Perhaps they forget that baptism is also in this context (Romans 6:4-7)? Romans, chapter six teaches



that one must be baptized into the death of Christ in order to walk in newness of life. If there is no baptism, there is no new life! Also consider the verses that follow Romans 10:13. The text teaches one calls upon the name of the Lord when he believes, and he believes when he has heard the gospel of peace (Romans 10:14-17). "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The word of God that produces true Biblical faith teaches the importance and necessity of baptism (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; John 3:1-5; Acts 2:38-41; 8:12, 35-40; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:14-15, 29-33; 18:8; 19:1-10; Romans 6:4-7; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:19-22). Because the faith in this context comes from the Word of God, and one can clearly demonstrate the necessity of baptism in a contextual examination of the Word, then "the faith" here must involve baptism. This statement can be clearly proven in the context of other passages that speak concerning "calling on the name of the Lord." But, before moving on to those passages, take note that this context shows us obedience to the Gospel is required (Romans 10:16). Therefore, the faith taught in connection with calling on the name of the Lord in this context is the faith that obeys God, and baptism is required for obedience to God (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:38).

The expression, "calling on the name of the Lord," is found again in Acts 22:16. In this context Ananias is speaking to Saul as he says, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Notice the effect of being baptized is the washing away of one's sins. If there is no baptism, there is no washing away of one's sins. Also notice the statement here that speaks to the nature of this

action. Being baptized to have one's sins washed away is involved in "calling on the name of the Lord." Just as the context of Romans, chapter ten shows us that faith, confession of that faith and obedience are involved in calling on the name of the Lord, so this passage shows us that baptism is involved in calling on the name of the Lord.

The first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ is such a significant day that it was spoken of in prophecy centuries before it occurred (Isaiah 2:1-4; Joel 2:28-32). As Peter was preaching on that most significant Pentecost day he quotes Joel's prophecy which includes the statement, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). As Peter was preaching concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ, those who were pricked in their hearts asked Peter and the apostles, "What shall we do" (Acts 2:37)? Asking "What shall we do?" indicates an understanding that some action must be taken. The actions which must be taken by believers are repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). Peter said those who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. When these men called upon the name of the Lord, Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. There is no salvation apart from remission of sins! Therefore, repentance and baptism are necessary for the remission of sins. But to the point concerning calling on the name of the Lord, see again the context showing what is involved in calling on the name of the Lord. In Romans chapter ten, faith, confession of faith, and obedience are connected to calling on the name of the Lord. In Acts chapter twenty-two, baptism is connected with calling on the name of the Lord. In Acts chapter two, repentance and baptism are connected with

calling on the name of the Lord. If one calls upon the name of the Lord to be saved then he must fulfill the requirements of so doing. These requirements are faith, confession of faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins.

## **CONCLUSION**

God has created us as free-will beings who are individually responsible to Him (Genesis 2:15-17; Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15; Ezekiel 18; Revelation 22:17; Acts 10:34-35). If we are to receive eternal life from God we must humbly submit ourselves to His will (2 Peter 5:5-6). Eternal life is given to those “who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality” (Romans 2:7). Patient continuance in well-doing is contrasted with refusing to obey God (Romans 2:7-8). Eternal life is a gift from God given to those who fight the good fight in order to lay hold on eternal life (Romans 6:23; 1 Timothy. 6:12). The good fight is the war Christians wage against Satan (Ephesians 6:10-12). One cannot receive eternal life without first fighting for his spiritual life. This involves actively obeying God (Matthew 7:20-22). Those who refuse to obey God will not receive eternal life (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). God has commanded baptism and therefore baptism is required (Acts 2:38). Those who seek salvation apart from immersion in water for the remission of sins seek it in vain.

Acts 2:38-41 shows repentance and baptism are required for remission of sins. Additionally, this text shows us baptism is directly connected with receiving the Word of God in faith. Luke records, “Then they that gladly received

his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41). This context also demonstrates the relationship of baptism to being added to the church, which is the body of the saved (Acts 2:41, 47). If one gladly receives the Word of God and desires remission of sins along with addition to the body of the saved, then one will be baptized. Those who refuse baptism, or the Biblical doctrine of the necessity of baptism have not gladly received the Word of God, will not receive remission of sins, and have not been added to the body of the saved.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## CHAPTER 14

# YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE IS SOMETHING BETTER THAN THIS LIFE?

Written by **Joshua Cantrell**

### INTRODUCTION

A story is told about a father who conversed with his young son. He questioned him about his plans and goals for life. The father asked his son over 10 questions. After each answer the Father asked his son, "And then what?" Eventually leading them to the last question, "what will you do after this life?" The son simply replied, "I guess I'll just pass away dad." The father asked him again, "And then what?" The Father was trying to get the son to think of eternity. We can have many things going for us in this life. We can make millions of dollars, people can know our names across every corner of the world. But just like those before us, we will die if the world is still standing. Then the question is again asked, "And then what?" Solomon records, "To everything, there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2).

Death is the common denominator for all mankind, but Christians do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14). We believe that this life is not our home, we are just passing through. We look forward to the day when we can be with our God for all eternity. Our faith in God allows us to trust God. The Bible speaks a great deal

about having faith in God. We trust Him because we know His character. The Hebrews writer declares, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Our God is faithful and just (1 John. 1:9). Faith is the key that unlocks the door to the Kingdom of God. Our faith allows us to see what our physical eyes can not see (2 Corinthians 5:7). Our faith is not some blind leap in the dark. Our faith is based on the evidence we read in God's word and what we see in our own lives. The saints in the first century believed that there was something better after this life. They believed in the promises God had given to them.

As the Hebrews writer continues his thoughts on faith, he gives examples of those who were faithful to God despite the circumstances in their lives (Hebrews 11). We often look to God to change our circumstances, but God wants our circumstances to change us. As the Hebrews writer pens this chapter he reminds us of many faithful servants who had gone on before us. He declares:

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly country: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be

called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city (Hebrews 11:13-16).

They looked for a city where the foundations were not manmade. Through the ingenuity of mankind, we have been able to create many great things. Only our Father in Heaven could create something as beautiful as Heaven. This city is an everlasting city, one that never goes away. It is a city that is awaiting those faithful when our Lord returns for His bride, the church. To think there is something better than this life is to misunderstand that God has a plan for us. Many have built their hopes and dreams only by planning for this life. Paul writes,

For which cause we faint not; but though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen temporal; but the things which are not seen eternal. (2 Corinthians. 4:16-17).

When asked the question, "Do you believe that there is something better than this life?" Christians can say with full assurance, YES! Not only do we believe there is something better than this life, we know. Paul struggled with wanting to stay here or going to be with Jesus. He writes, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a

desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Philippians 1:21-23). Paul understood that this world was only temporary. We can look death in the face and have the same confidence as Paul.

## **BUILDING OUR HOPE**

As we look at hope we can understand that the Biblical definition of hope and that of the world is not the same. Typically we use the word “hope” as in wishful thinking. We “hope” we are going to Heaven. Christian hope is trusting God and knowing that He will deliver what He promised. Paul records,

who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which as spoken, so shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara’s womb. He staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able to perform (Romans 4:18-21).

Our hope is not connected with the promises of the world. This world will pass away. Jesus would say, “my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35). As Christians we build our hope on that which is eternal. Paul records, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Our faith and hope are tied to the



word of God. As we grow in our relationship with God, so do our faith and hope. Peter would say,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4).

We all have had reservations and plans canceled on us. This is a reservation that will not be canceled. God keeps His promises and does not cancel plans. His word is His bond. The Hebrews writer records, "But without faith, it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). By building our faith in God, will build our hope and expectation for Heaven. In Hebrews 11, the Hebrews writer not only gives us a great chapter about faith but hope as well. This chapter takes us back to the Old Testament and reminds us that faith and hope are connected. Paul would say, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). We can look back at the Old Testament and encourage ourselves for today.

We draw hope from those who looked to God as their only hope. Hope should not be the last option for Christians, but a first response. When tragedy strikes our lives we look to God. The people of God suffered greatly

through the period of wilderness wanderings, the conquest of Canaan, the judges, the king, and on to the Prophets. They all found their purpose and the proper response to those problems. Looking to God as their only solution. Paul records, "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" (2 Timothy 4:12).

## **BUILDING OUR CONFIDENCE**

The Prophets in the Old Testament looked forward to the day of the coming Messiah and His kingdom. Isaiah records:

The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 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. And many people shall say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and shall beat their swords in plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall

they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come ye and let us walk in the Light of the LORD (Isaiah 2:1-3).

The confidence and assurance they had in the coming kingdom showed their dedication and belief that God had something great for His people. While many of them prophesied about the kingdom, the New Testament teaches us that something better is after this life for those who are in the kingdom. Confidence is defined as "To trust; to rely on, with a persuasion of faithfulness or veracity in the person trusted or of the reality of a fact; to give credit to; to believe in, with assurance; followed by in" (Webster's definition of English language). The word is used over 50 times in the New Testament. Depending on the context of the word, we can note how it is being used.

As Paul writes to the church in Philippi, he reminds them that they are always in his prayers (Philippians 1:3-4). As you make your way down chapter 1, Paul is going to show them the struggle he has in wanting to stay or go be with the Lord. He records, "For to me to live in Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Paul knew and had the assurance that there was something better than this life. While this life certainly has many things that capitulate our attention, Paul's aim and focus were always on Heaven. He goes on to say, "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet, what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:22-23). Paul makes it abundantly clear that he was looking forward to going to be with Jesus. While many have said, "I can never have faith like Paul," I don't believe God is asking us to. I don't believe

Paul had this confidence and assurance when we first met in scripture. I don't believe Paul had this dedication when he is converted to Christ. By the time those in Philippi read this letter from Paul, he had suffered immensely for the cause of Christ. He is at a point in his life where he no longer looks backward, only forward.

The sufferings of this life hurt, and they do cause pain. But they are not intended to defeat us. They are there to build on faith, trust, and confidence in our God. Paul writes, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith. That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again" (Philippians 1:24-25). Paul made it clear to them that he was ready and looking forward to going to be with Jesus. But while he was here, he was going to strive and serve the kingdom of God. When we read scripture, it should be a springboard to build our confidence in our God. We don't just read the Bible to get faith, we read it to continue what we have already come to believe.

David makes a clear case for where our confidence should be. The Bible records, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psalm 118:6-9). Where do we put our confidence today? We believe that there is something better than life because of the confidence we have in God. God keeps His promises,

He cannot lie (1 Kings 8:56; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). The fact that God is a promiser keeper, and He has assured us that there is something better than this life should give us a boost in confidence to keep serving Him and keep sharing His message of the Gospel. Despite the battles and challenges in life, David puts all his confidence in God:

Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my LORD: my goodness extendeth not to thee: But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drunk offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and my cup: thou maintains my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a godly heritage. I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. There my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hades: neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand, there are pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16:1-11)

The confidence David had in God was not based on convenience, but on conviction. As we walk with God, and commune with Him, our confidence must be rooted and grounded in Him. We follow God not just for the plan for the world, but for the plan for our individual lives. As we obey the Lord, we have an assurance of our salvation (1 John 2:3). Also, having a good conscience aids our confidence, for we will have nothing to hide. "The righteous are as bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). Paul was confident that God would help those in Galatia, "I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be." (Galatians 5:10).

## **BUILDING OUR ASSURANCE**

As we look at our assurance in Christ, this will bring everything we have talked about together. Assurance is defined as, "The act of assuring, or of making a declaration in terms that furnish ground of confidence; as, I trusted to his assurances; or the act of furnishing any ground of full confidence" (Baker's Bible Dictionary). As Christians, we "sorrow not as those who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Not only do we have confidence there is something better than this life, we have assurance. We often sing the song, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine." As our Lord talked with His Disciples, He was preparing them for a time when He would no longer be with them. He was going to send the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth (John 16:13). Beforehand He assures them He is going to prepare something for them. John records,

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

This is not just a prophecy, but also a promise.

Jesus gave them the assurance and confidence they needed to keep going forward. We often forget the words of Paul, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). Peter records,

Beloved, this it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. (1 Peter. 4:12-16).

The book of 1 John goes to great lengths to remind of us the assurance we have in Christ. We can “know” we are going to Heaven. We can “know” there is something better than this life.

## **CONCLUSION**

I’m sure many of us have heard the “And then what” illustration used by many faithful gospel preachers. A Father asked his son what he was going to do after he graduated high school. The son answered and this went on and on. After each answer the father asked the son, “And then what?” Ultimately leading to saying eventually he would just die. The Father then asked him, “and then what?” For those of us who have obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the answer to our “and then what?” Make no mistake about it, we need to get to Jesus before death gets to us. Do we believe that there is something better than this life? We can all emphatically say, YES.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**



## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The Holy Bible. King James Version. Print

The Holy Bible. New American Standard Version. Print

## CHAPTER 15

# YOU BELIEVE A WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE CHURCH IS WHAT?

Written by **Melissa Cain**

### INTRODUCTION

In Seneca Falls, New York in 1848, the first gathering of women devoted to women's rights was held. During its beginning, female reformers focused on social and institutional barriers that restricted women's rights, including family responsibilities, a lack of educational and economic opportunities, and the lack of a voice in political debates. "American women finally achieved the same rights as men at the polling box when, in 1920, women won the right to vote" (Seneca Falls, online). Believe it or not, it took 72 years for women to obtain the same voting rights as men and an additional 40 years for *all* women, both black and white, to be able to stand at the polls together. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, "Feminism became an official concept and the first feminist wave began in 1850. The spearheads of the women's movement were equality in education, labor, and electoral rights" (Feminism, online). Flashforward to the women's rights gatherings of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and there is a very different picture than what was seen in Seneca Falls. To oversimplify it, feminists in the 1800's desired equal rights for women but some feminists in the 2000's are offended even to be called women. The events and trends of the world have always had a direct effect on the Lord's people.

In Old Testament times, when God's people allowed themselves to become overly exposed to the gentiles and pagans around them, they would begin to act as the heathen did. The same was true in New Testament times. God's people were surrounded by worldly people and their negative influence, and it could permeate the church. Today, the world that surrounds God's people is constantly trying to infiltrate His bride and innovate her. The Lord's church is in a fight: in one corner is the right to uphold God's truths about Biblical rights and privileges, and in the other corner is the world's attempt at tearing down the church with women's rights: demands.

Faithful Christian women must be more concerned with what God permits them to do as His church for His glory and for their own good. God has spoken on the matter of authority and submission (Ephesians 5:22, 24 KJV; 1 Corinthians. 11:3). While many women in American society stay concerned with having a voice for their opinions and beliefs to be heard, women of the church must be more concerned about when and *if* their voices *should* be heard at all. This is the topic at hand: when can a woman, in the presence of men, let her voice be heard in the church? What is her God-given role? The world shouts that no matter the situation, women are equal to men in *all* things. God's Word esteems women as equal to men in value and importance, but does having equivalent value mean having equivalent function? Believe it or not, like it or not, God gave instructions for exactly what He wants and expects of all women of any age, race, or ability in their role as part of His church.

Paul told brethren in Rome not to be conformed to the world around them (Romans 12:2). Christ expects His followers not to return to the world's ways in any area of life (Galatians 1:4). The Christian woman hears His voice rather than her own on any given topic (Hebrews 3:14-15), and to her His whispers are louder than the shouts of a world constantly telling her she is not doing it correctly or that it can be done better. Believe it or not, even when God *has* given her permission to speak, a faithful sister hears His voice over her own, always staying quiet enough to listen intently so that she knows to carry out her role in the right way and at the right time.

During the first century, in the city of Corinth, a young church was growing in the faith and learning how to be pleasing to God. This was during the time of miraculous gifts, and they were not using theirs properly, so Paul wrote to correct their abuse of miraculous powers (1 Corinthians 12-14). In these passages speaking in tongues was regulated, prophecy was regulated, and the women in the congregation were even regulated (1 Corinthians 14:34-36).

When Paul wrote, "Let your women keep silence in the churches" (1 Corinthians 14:34), what was meant? The most common approach to this text has led to questions, not only among souls outside the church, but also within Christ's body. "You believe a woman can't ever speak in the church?" "You believe a woman can't ever lead prayers?" "You believe a woman can't ever teach?" "You mean you believe a woman has to be submissive?" Such questions must be answered by speaking the truth in love, allowing scripture in its entirety to provide the answers. That is how

Paul answered, and it is how Christians ought to answer today (Acts 20:27). **“You believe women can’t speak in the church”** (assembly)? Paul told the Corinthians,

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34-35).

The women being addressed in these verses were not just *any* women. Specifically, they were referred to as *“your women.”* Was Paul stating that all women belong to all men in the church? Of course not, for Paul repeatedly emphasized that wives are to be in submission to their *“own husbands”* (Ephesians 5:22, 24; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:4). The brother that sits behind sister Jane in worship would never refer to her as *“his woman,”* nor is Jane in subjection to all men in the assembly. However, the man next to sister Jane, her husband, can rightfully call her *“his woman,”* and she is to be in subjection to him. Paul was addressing men in the church who had women, or wives, that were not behaving as they should. Paul specifically addressed prophets in the congregation when he said, *“Let your women keep silence...”* (1 Corinthians 14:34). It appears that the prophets’ wives lacked restraint when their husbands were prophesying in front of the church, interrupting and speaking over them and essentially disrupting the service since he told them that their women *“are commanded to be under obedience”* (Ibid). While this verse is often used to teach the general limitations of

women in worship, it specifically applies to wives whose disrespect for their husbands and desire for attention was creating disorder in the church.

Believe it or not, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is not a general statement meant to describe the general rules and roles of Christian women; it was a specific correction of a specific problem. If Christians desire to rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15), these truths will be kept in mind. The context of this specific passage is specific, not a general statement of rules and roles for *all* women in *all* churches, and forgetting the context can create doctrinal conundrums.

The women who were told to “keep silent” were also to “ask their husbands at home” (1 Corinthians 14:35). These women in question were to ask their specific questions from a specific person in a specific setting: their own husbands at home. Does this mean that the sister whose husband is not a Christian is supposed to take her doctrinal questions to her lost husband? What about the unmarried sister: does this mean she can never get her Bible questions answered until she gets married? What about the Christian widow? A preacher was once questioned by a devoted widow of the congregation about scripture from his sermon, and he curtly informed her she was not to ask a question “in the church.” Was this Paul’s point?

If this text is the general guide in directing the woman’s role and behavior in worship, if it is always “a shame for women to speak in the church” (1 Corinthians 14:35), then how can a woman read a scripture during

Bible class or ask a sincere question in class or after worship? How can she be silent and still sing as a Christian ought (Colossians 3:16)? The fact of the matter is that Paul addressed a specific problem coming from specific people in a specific environment: the disruption of the wives of the prophets when the church was assembled to worship. This disruption was apparently rampant in Corinth, because just as wives were to “keep silence,” Paul likewise commanded tongue-speakers to “keep silence” in the absence of an interpreter (1 Corinthians 14:28), and a prophet was to “hold his peace” instead of trying to speak over another prophet (1 Corinthians 14:30). The phrases “keep silence” and “hold his peace” come from the Greek *sigao*, to “keep silent, hold peace” (Strong’s, “*Sigao*;” Thayer, “*Sigao*”). The prophets’ wives were not the only disruptive interrupters corrupting the church in Corinth.

Paul’s first letter to Timothy was written with specific purpose: “that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God” (1 Timothy 3:15). Paul had just finished describing the qualifications of bishops and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13), and prior to that he had told Timothy who is to pray, how they are to pray, and how the women are to learn (1 Timothy 2:8-9), telling Timothy, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection” (1 Timothy 2:11).

The word translated “silence” in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is not the same word translated “silence” that Paul used when telling the prophets’ wives in Corinth to “keep *silence* in the churches” (1 Corinthians 14:34, emp. MC). With Corinth Paul used *sigao* to emphasize actual silence, but when he told Timothy, “Let the woman learn in silence with all

subject" (1 Timothy 2:11), he used the *hesuchia*, "stillness, quietness" (Strong's, "Hesuchia;" Thayer, "Hesuchia").

Paul said the wives in Corinth needed a sturdy piece of duct tape to keep them silent, but in 1 Timothy he said for the woman to listen quietly, exhibit a quiet disposition, and be willing to obey. There is a difference in not making a sound versus listening quietly. This allows the worshipping woman to fulfill the command to sing and teach in song as the entire church is commanded to be "teaching and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). Improperly using 1 Corinthians would prohibit the ability to obey the command to sing and teach. By using 1 Timothy in its context rather than 1 Corinthians out of context, the Christian woman is able to ask questions and have her knowledge of God's word expounded to her as she has the need, whether she is married or not. She is able to be submissive in her quiet disposition and obey the command not to "usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:12).

**"You believe a woman can't lead prayers?"** As Paul gave Timothy instruction inspired by the Holy Spirit, he told him for whom Christians are to pray, through whom they are to pray, and who is to lead public prayers (1 Timothy 2:1-9). Concerning who is to lead the church before God's throne, Paul declared, "I will therefore that *men* pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Timothy 2:8, emp. MC). Men, the male gender (Strong's, "Aner;" Thayer, "Aner"). In Greek there are two words for men, one meaning the male and the other meaning human or mankind (Strong's, "Anthropos").



Believe it or not, Paul was not accidentally inspired to use the word for male when teaching Timothy who is to be leading prayers, nor did Paul stop there. He proceeded to tell him how they are to pray, "lifting up holy hands" (Ibid). The Greek for holy means, "undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious" (Thayer, "Hosios"). This is not a command of posture as some petitioners practice, but a command of purity by the one leading the prayer. This is to be performed "every where." It is the Christian with holy hands, pure and righteous, that is to lead souls before God's throne in every location where the church assembles. Should a sister in Christ be the only Christian among a group of people made up of men and women, this is not the assembled church, and her holiness would make her far more qualified to lead a public prayer than *any* unholy, non-Christian male. Although a rare circumstance for a Christian woman, her prayer before God with men present would be acceptable. However, if any brother in Christ is present, it is his appointed role to lead supplications.

**You believe a woman can't teach?** The Christian woman is not only allowed to teach, she is also expected to teach (Titus 2:4). She can teach in a variety of settings: her home, the Bible classroom, women's events, and evangelism are all areas where women should feel encouraged and at times obliged to teach. Taking the gospel into the world is called the great commission, not the limiting commission. *All* Christians are to go into the world "teaching as they go" the doctrine of Christ which was held to and taught by the apostles (Matthew 28:18; Thayer, "Poreuomai"). Paul's fellow-helper Aquila had a helpmeet who led by example as she worked alongside

her husband, not only in secular work but also in labors for the Lord: her name was Pricilla (Romans 16:3; Acts 18:26; 1 Corinthians 16:19).

**You believe a woman's role in the church is not important?** Scripture teaches that women not only were integral to the work of the church, they were appreciated and respected for their labors. Many women were recognized in high regard by the apostle Paul: he called Phebe a sister servant, Priscilla was a helper in Christ, he identified Mary, Tryphena, and Tryphosa as hard workers, as was Persis, and Julia received inspired honorable mention (Romans 16:1-15). The names of these women were held in such high regard they are recorded in the most important book in the world. Paul praised the women of Philippi, "those women which labored with me in the gospel," and stated that their names are in the book of life (Philippians 4:3). The Christian woman, whether inside or outside of worship, is to maintain a "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:4).

This does not degrade her, but shows God's love for her and His appraisal of her. If the woman "more precious than rubies" is of such excellence that "her husband doth safely trust in her" (Proverbs 31:10-11), how much more priceless is it when her Lord can count on her?

## **CONCLUSION:**

The answers to these questions are not about how she behaves and acts because she is *in the church*. This is about how she behaves because she *is the church*. If a woman is practicing the increasingly unique qualities

Scripture defines, it will become so much a part of who she is that she would never think about disrupting a worship service to hear her own voice over the voice of the Father (2 Timothy 3:16-17). All of those loud voices in the world yelling for women to fight for equality in every way in every place will become a faint whisper that cannot be heard over loyalty and submission to what God desires.

The role of women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is demonstrated by the responsibilities of not one but many women in the 1<sup>st</sup> century church. Believe it or not, at the right time and the right place, the Christian woman can and should speak, teach, and pray. When she is quiet enough to hear the voice of God instructing her through His Word, her name will be found in the most important book in eternity.

Society tells the Christian woman, "You have the right to do whatever you want." The Christian woman simply replies, "I simply want to do whatever is right."

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Feminism in the 20th Century." *Atria*, institute-genderequality.org/news-publications/feminism/feminism-20th-century/.

The Holy Bible, King James Version. Print.

*Seneca Falls Convention - History*. 10 Nov. 2017, [www.history.com/topics/womens-history/seneca-falls-convention](http://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/seneca-falls-convention).

Strong, James A. "Anēr." Entry #435. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. e-Sword 8.0.1. 2022.

-- "Anthropos." Entry #444. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. e-Sword 8.0.1. 2022.

-- "Hēsuchia." Entry #2271. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. e-Sword 8.0.1. 2022.

-- "Hosios." Entry #3741. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. e-Sword 8.0.1. 2022.

-- "Sigaō." Entry #4601. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. e-Sword 8.0.1. 2022.

Thayer, Joseph H. "Sigaō." Entry #2842. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. e-Sword 8.0.1. 2022.

-- "Hēsuchia." Entry #2271. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. e-Sword 8.0.1. 2022.

-- "Poreuomai." Entry #4198. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. e-Sword 8.0.1. 2022.

## CHAPTER 16

# YOU BELIEVE A WOMAN MUST SUBMIT TO HER HUSBAND?

Written by **Cindy Rodgers**

### INTRODUCTION

There are so many ways that Biblical submission is viewed, taught, portrayed, and even abused. Simply implying that you submit to your husband can get you some strange looks or at the least the question, "You believe a woman must submit to her husband?"

The world gets Biblical submission to one's husband wrong over and over. We are told that it is perfectly fine to submit in the corporate world, but when a husband tries to lead his household, feminists tell us to leave him. The world today would consider him tyrannical and part of the problem of patriarchy. So often young girls are brought up hearing they should strive to only be "boss babes," or that if they submit to their husband they are "a doormat" or "weak." As older Christian women, we are not doing our part to teach the younger, no wonder this very Biblical command for wives has been so misconstrued and confused.

While God asks us to die to self (Luke 9:23), feminism is all about role reversal in a marriage. In Genesis 3, Eve initiated and Adam responded passively. That shows up in today's marriages sometimes in the "as long as she is

happy" attitude. Submission is essential to keep a marriage together. "Can two walk together, unless they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). A husband and wife can not be unified if they are going in different directions, and not submitting as God commands fractures the relationship.

The Bible mentions submission as a wife in Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, 1 Peter 3, and Titus 2. We also have examples of this type of submission throughout the Old and New Testaments. Ephesians chapter five begins by telling the Ephesians to be "imitators of God." They are told to, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Ephesians 5:1-3).

The Ephesians are told what NOT to do and what to avoid when trying to imitate or follow God, living the Christian life.

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be

not ye therefore partakers with them  
(Ephesians 5:3-7).

Immediately after these “what not to do” verses, we find the “what to do” verses: walk in the light, provide what is acceptable, reprove works of darkness, walk in wisdom, redeem the time, understand the will of the Lord, be filled with the Spirit, sing, give thanks, and “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:8-20).

In verse twenty-two, Paul writes: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” Why? Verse twenty-three answers that with our example. “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.” This goes back to verse one which tells us to be imitators of Christ.

Verse twenty-four begins with “therefore,” which shows us an example. “Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.” Paul by inspiration makes a clear concise example. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in **everything**. Paul then gives advice to the husbands, “love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25), letting us see the example of the Christ/church relationship in respect of the husband/wife relationship. In verse thirty-three, Paul reminds us to “let ... the wife see that she reverence her husband.” Often, when these verses are read, eyes are rolled or some make a dismissive gesture.

## RESPECT

Submission can also be defined as respect. So, the question here is, what does this respect look like? Respect is also described as fear or honor. Not fearful as in scared, but to hold in high esteem, love and care for her husband willingly and freely. This means to take what he says seriously and to hold his opinion as important and not being dismissive when he speaks. It means treating his leadership importantly and with value. Showing respect means that a wife must be careful that she is not constantly combative or quarrelsome. "...And the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping" (Prov. 19:13b).

We read in 1 Peter 3 an example of a wife being "respectful and pure in conduct." A wife can most certainly give her thoughts and even disagree with her husband, but a wife must always treat him with respect. Paul wrote to Titus instructions for older women "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). Submission is not just given as a thing to do out of respect, but also out of love for her husband.

The relationship and position of Christian women is obligatory and vital concerning her subjection to her husband. There are many wives who face the challenge of unbelieving, unresponsive husbands, but their role must be to teach by example through their subjection. The word subjection in the Greek means to subordinate, but it carries the idea of reflexive obedience (Strong's #g5293).



When I go to the doctor and the doctor uses that tool to check my reflex, she uses that tool that taps my knee in just the right spot and my knee kicks out. It is natural and almost an uncontrollable response.

Our response to be submissive to our husband should be the same. It should not be a continual challenge or a forced response to be respectful, kind and loving, but it should be a natural, uncontrolled response to be in submission or subjection. Our response never should be a “shooting off at the mouth” or making jokes at his expense about him or to him. Our response and speech concerning him is to be naturally loving and godly. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord” (Colossians 3:18). “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” (Ephesians 5:22-24). (Melissa Cain, 2018)

According to Guy N. Woods concerning 1 Peter 3:1:

The word “own,” in the text is emphatic and significant. Christian women, with heathen husbands, might be tempted to despise their husbands and exhibit contempt for them, feeling obligated only to those Christian men

with whom they were associated in the church. The effect of such an attitude would be disastrous, not only to the church, but to the family and to society in general (Woods, 87).

## **LOVE**

Paul tied together not only respect, but also that love was to be taught by the older generation to the younger:

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:1-5).

Older women are to teach the younger women to love their husbands. God is giving us the attitudes that we are to have as well as to teach a younger generation. Obviously, He knew these would be things that we would need to be taught and reminded of through example as well as reminders from other Christian women.

When you see this kind of love together with that respect in a couple, it really is unmistakable and is so

heartwarming. The same is unmistakable when the opposite is seen in a couple. When a woman is rolling her eyes or dismissing her husband, not showing him the love of a wife, that is so heartbreaking!

What is love? We have it defined in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

Charity [love, NKJV] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

This is love. This is how wives are to treat their husbands; with loving submission. A faithful wife will show her husband love and respect. This love is to grow over time as the relationship between a husband and wife grows. When we show this love and respect we will look more like the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31, whose husband praised her in the gates.

We are to have a love for our husband that is so true that we want our husband to succeed in all he does, especially in his walk with God. A wife loving her spouse in the way God intends can ultimately help him get to Heaven.

**OBEY**

Throughout scripture, we are taught about obedience. We obey because we love (John 14:15, 21, 23). Jesus always expects obedience. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Jesus said: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10). He tells us to obey the Father, as He did. Jesus speaks of His respect, love, and even obedience to His Father.

Our submission to our husband is an opportunity to show our love for God. God has providentially put things in place for us, not to burden, but to help us abide. We are given the examples, the commands, and the ways to be pleasing unto Him.

The idea of submission is no different. In Colossians 3:18, Paul writes: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." God put this in place so that our marriage can look like He designed it to look. "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement [terror, NKJV]" (1 Peter 3:5-6). Here we have the example of Sarah obeying Abraham.

Ross Mitchell wrote:

Is the marriage relationship supposed to be patterned after a dictatorship or a democracy? Honestly, the answer is neither. Many women today think that their only options are to choose between being a doormat to a despicable dictator or to declare herself fully emancipated in a two-headed domestic democracy. God offers an alternative. In Genesis 2, we see that God designed marriage to be a love relationship between two mutually interdependent equals, one of whom He designated as the head, and the other He designated as the heart. What is more important to you, your head or your heart? The fact is, you need both to survive. So what is marriage? It is a relationship involving two people giving up their own will and agenda for the life and benefit of the other person. The husband serves his wife by sacrificially loving her, and the wife serves her husband by willingly submitting to him. Biblical submission does not mean that a wife is to sacrifice her dignity on the altar of her husband's ego. When Hagar wronged Sarah, she went to Abraham and confronted her husband with the evil in her home and she appealed to him to take care of the problem. Submission does not mean that a wife is inferior or that she must give in to all of her husband's demands no matter what they may be. Rather, God wants a wife to submit to her husband in the same way that she submits to Christ (R. Mitchell, 176-177).

Obedience to our husband is to be given freely and from the heart. This is not to be forced from the husband. When a wife refuses to submit, she is not only putting a strain on her marriage, but also disobeying God. We obey because of our love for God. Again, we obey because we love. This is the same in our marriage relationship with our husband.

The first submission is to God. We are to submit all to God. Often, we get this mixed up and reverse rolls and put our husband before God. We are to obey God and put God first (Matthew 6:33). Emily Hatfield's tag line for her Wifey Wednesday podcast is "Love God, Love Your Husband." No husband has the right to take the place of God, and we should never put our husband before God. We did not nor do we presently have to rely on our husband for our salvation (Galatians 3:26-27). It is our own. We must remember that God is our God, our Father. He is first above all else. Once we are married, that does not change. God is always first, then our husband.

As a side note, we are not to obey anything or anyone that is contrary to God's Word (Acts 5:29). As well as knowing that a husband must also remember that his wife has Christian liberty. As a wife she has her own faith (Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

## **CONCLUSION**

The submissive wife shows this love, respect, and obedience in the way she cares. She cares about pleasing God, she cares about her husband's well-being, happiness, and hopefulness in Heaven. She wants to please her

husband in the way she speaks, dresses, acts and in keeping the home. "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD" Proverbs 18:22). "House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD" (Proverbs 19:14).

Our job in marriage, as a Christian woman, is to submit to our own husband. This is obedience to God.

**[CLICK TO GO TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cain, Melissa. Lesson given at Choosing That Good Part Retreat. 2018.

Mitchell, Ross. *“Important Passages on the Family - New Testament Epistles.”* Fortify Our Families, Fifth Annual Lectureship Cold Harbor Road Church of Christ. Edited by Greg R. Elliot, M.D. Sain Publications, 2001.

Woods, Guy N. *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John and Jude.* Gospel Advocate Co. 1991.