

Magazine

The Sins of Summer

Kyle Campbell

As the weather warms up, we generally wear less clothes and/or lighter clothing. There is nothing wrong with adjusting our clothing to fit the weather, so long as our clothing adequately covers our bodies. The fashion of the world, of course, is to wear scanty, provocative clothing, especially when the weather is warm. Unfortunately, some in the church will be influenced more by the fashion of the world than by the word of the Lord.

Few things are more comforting on a hot summer day than a dip in a pool or a trip to the ocean. There is nothing wrong with enjoying the cool relief of the water. The problem arises when we strip down to almost nothing to do so. It is truly a shame that some claiming to live as a Christian see nothing wrong with such. The account of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 clearly tells us differently. After making “coverings” of fig leaves in verse 7, “coverings” which could not have covered any less than modern bathing suits, Adam says in verse 10 that they are still naked, even while they are wearing fig leaves! Verse 21 goes on to show that God clothed them with tunics of skin. Men, notice that no exception was given for Adam because he was a man, but God said he also was not properly dressed. How embarrassed and ashamed would we feel today if God appeared on the scene and placed more clothes on us because of the way we were dressed?

Our clothing is modest only if it is becoming (appropriate, suitable, proper) to women and men professing godliness.

For the life of me, I cannot understand why some brethren seemingly think God’s laws on modesty are suspended in the summer, or are only in force at the church building. Also, I have never been able to figure out the “spiritual logic” which some of my brethren use to justify their immodest apparel. How many so-called “Christians” will lose their souls on judgment day because they refuse to heed God’s admonitions about modest dress?

Please do not “cop out” by saying God never defined modesty; only society does that. You better spend more time studying God’s word and less time walking down the beach in short-shorts, for God has clearly defined modesty in the Old Testament as having your thighs covered (Exod. 20:26; 28:42), as being “*clothed with a coat*” (Gen. 3:7-21), and as being adorned in modest apparel which will allow you to face the world without shame in all godliness.

In the New Testament, Paul wrote, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works” (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Peter added, “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pet. 3:4).

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“How Amiable Are Thy Tabernacles, O Lord”

Mike Willis

Psalm 84 opens with this phrase, “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!” (Ps. 84:1). The NKJV says, “How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts!” Both translations emphasize the psalmist’s love for the Temple in Jerusalem.

The psalmist is separated from the Temple for some unrevealed reason and looks back longingly with desire to attend the worship which occurs at the Temple. He even envies the swallow, which he remembered having built a nest in the Lord’s altar.

My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the Lord;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
Even the sparrow has found a home,
And the swallow a nest for herself,
Where she may lay her young –
Even Your altars, O Lord of hosts,
My King and my God (Ps. 84:2-3).

These words reflect the love which this saint had for God’s worship in his Temple.

Some Do Not Love To Worship The Lord

Unfortunately, not all saints had this same love for the worship in the Lord’s temple. Malachi describes some who thought that the Lord’s worship was a weariness to them. He wrote, “‘You also say, “Oh, what a weariness!” And you sneer at it,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?’ says the Lord” (Mal. 1:13). Isaiah saw the same attitude in his day, “But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob; And you have been weary of Me, O Israel” (43:22). Do you see saints with this attitude as well?

There are some saints who have to be begged to attend worship. Their habit is to miss the assemblies of the saints rather than to attend them. The author of Hebrews described such men saying, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another,
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Troubled Over Family Discord

Connie W. Adams

Is there anything more unpleasant and unsettling than family discord? “When love is in the home, there’s happiness.” Yes, but love is not in all too many homes. There is anger, shouting, jealousy, competition, combativeness, and downright hatred. Sadly, this situation prevails in many homes of those who claim to be Christians. It may be hidden for a time behind the mask of regular attendance at worship gatherings and all the outward signs of piety. People who are kind, urbane, and understanding at work or at school, come home and behave the worst toward the people they claim to love the most.

Several passages offer help, if we will only listen. “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Prov. 15:1). “Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith” (Prov. 15:16-17). “Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones” (Prov. 16:24). “Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife” (Prov. 17:1). “A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping” (Prov. 19:13). Paul said a man is to love his wife as his own body and is not to be bitter against her (Eph. 5:28; Col. 3:19). The wife is to be “subject” to her husband as the church is to Christ and is to “reverence” her husband” (Eph. 5:24, 33). Children are taught to “honor” their father and mother, and parents are instructed to train them in the fear of the Lord and not to discourage them (Eph. 6:1-4).

Yet, some of the most famous families in the Bible suffered from discord at times. Job’s wife urged him to “curse God and die.” Job said she acted as one of thee “foolish ones.” Abraham’s family scene was not always peaceful. Remember Isaac and Ishmael and the conflict between Sarah and Hagar? The next generation did no better in that regard. Isaac favored Esau and Rebecca favored Jacob and conspired against her own husband and son to obtain the blessing for her favored son. The family feud between their heirs continues to this day in the Middle East. You would think that Jacob would have learned something from the experiences of his grandparents and parents, but he showed partiality toward Joseph and stirred the envy of his other sons. There were dysfunctional families aplenty throughout Old Testament history.

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In the New Testament we have the scene in the home of Mary and Martha which provides background for this series. The mother of James and John wanted places of honor in the kingdom for her sons. Paul wrote to the Corinthians about divided homes where one was a Christian and the other was not (1 Cor. 7). Peter instructed wives married to unbelievers as to how they might win them to the Lord (1 Pet. 3:1-7). Even the best known families were not free from discord at times. Therefore, it should not surprise us when we have to face similar problems. What we do about them is another thing.

Some Causes of Family Discord

If we understand what causes strife in our homes, we will have a good start at finding remedies. These may not be the only causes (you can make your own list) but they have been found to be prominent among those who deal with family strife.

1. Selfishness. The “self-esteem” craze has run amok. While we all have self-worth because we are made by God in his image, and he thought enough of us to address his revelation to us, the qualities of meekness and humility have taken a beating in modern culture. “I’m number one,” or “I’m worth it,” or “I need my space,” or “I am not being fulfilled,” or I have to find out who I really am”—these are the catch-phrases of selfishness. “Let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3) not only applies to our relationship with other Christians, it needs to start at home. The order Jesus gave was first to love God with all your heart, then your neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). That brings us in about third place, if I counted right. Jesus was not thinking of himself when he became poor for our sakes that we might be rich. Every husband and wife should determine to make the other as happy as possible. The strange thing about that is the harder each works at that, the happier each one truly comes to be. Try it. You’ll like it!

2. Poor Communication. “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man” (Col. 4: 6). What better place to apply this than in your own home? People live under the same roof, eat at the same table (sometimes, or rarely), have children, share bank accounts, mortgage and car payments; and just don’t talk to each other. Listen, the first stated purpose of marriage was companionship. God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). True feelings are often masked until something trivial occurs and then there is the grand explosion wounding everyone in hearing distance. Words of affection become rare, if said at all. One spouse will become miffed, then sullen and the other has no clue as to the problem. Listen up, people, talk to each other. Confide in one another. If you have children, you have plenty of mutual concerns to get started. Don’t give mixed signals. Be honest. Learn where your volume control is and turn it down. Make time for each other.

Communicate with your children before they shut you out and enter a world that will turn them into something you won’t recognize. If you ignore them when they are little because you don’t have time for them, the time will come when they will ignore you and you would give anything to know what they are thinking or doing when you are not around. That is a two-way street. Children need to grow up feeling comfortable talking with their parents about what troubles them. Some decide to rebel, refuse to listen (or talk) until they are deep in trouble and then they will come to the parents (whose judgment and advice they totally ignored) and ask them to bail them out of trouble. Many parents have to step in and try to untangle the wreckage of wasted lives. So much of this could be avoided by simple, consistent, and extended communication.

3. Money. How many family squabbles revolve around money? The lack of it or the abundance of it. There are two basic issues here. First how to get it, and second how to spend it. Whatever we obtain must be gained by honest means. Work has always been honorable. Adam had to dress and keep the garden, even before sin entered the picture. Solomon painted word pictures about the difference between the industrious and the sluggard. Paul said we ought to work with our hands to provide what is good and be able to help those in need (Eph. 4:28). He wrote that a man should “provide for his own” (1 Tim. 5:8) and that, if a man would not work, he should not eat (2 Thess. 3:10). But how much time should be spent in these honest pursuits? Are there other proper demands on time? Should family time always be the last consideration? When spouses are so preoccupied in pursuing careers that they have little or no time left for each other or for children, then what does it profit? Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 6:24-34. According to him, the first priority is to “seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (v. 33). Our modern world has turned that upside down.

But after we have worked honestly to obtain what we have, what shall we do with it? Sometimes a man has an expensive hobby. It may be hunting, fishing, or golf. Of a wife may be into collecting expensive objects or have expensive tastes in clothing or household furnishings. Children must be provided for, but do they need \$175, air cushioned, fancy designed shoes that light up like an approaching emergency vehicle? Many live beyond their means and carry huge credit card bills on which they pay high interest. Where does the church and its work figure into the budget? Paul can help us.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown

“Have You Not Read. . .?”

Larry R. Devore

In Matthew 19:3, the Pharisees came to Jesus to test him with their question, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?” Jesus answered their question in verses 4-9:

And He answered and said to them, Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate. They said to Him, Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away? He said to them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery (NKJV).

men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness (1 Tim. 6:6-11).

Those who are blessed abundantly have responsibilities to use their prosperity justly. “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (vv. 17-19).

These are some of the causes of family discord. The next article will deal with more of these causes. Stay tuned.

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Many today, including some brethren, say that Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage is complex, hard to understand, and of variable interpretation. Many folks do not like Jesus’ teaching on the subject, but it is readily understandable.

Jesus’ apostles understood his teachings and they really didn’t care for it, either. They said, “If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” The “such is the case” referred to Jesus’ teaching that there is only *one* cause where a man or woman may be remarried scripturally, and that is because of sexual immorality on the part of the guilty spouse!

The apostles were saying that if Moses’ permission to divorce, as interpreted by the Rabbis, was being taken away, it would be better not to marry at all! Jesus said in verse 12, in effect, that anyone could go to heaven who wants to. Some will make “themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heavens sake.” It seems to me that Jesus is not teaching self-mutilation here (though it could be if necessary; see Matt. 5:29-30). I believe that he is teaching a person to live a celibate life (for the kingdom’s sake), if they have no scriptural right to remarry. Man is more than just flesh and bones and animal instincts. He is a dual being, both physical and spiritual (2 Cor. 4:16). It is necessary for the spiritual man to subdue and conquer the physical and bring it into subjection (1 Cor. 9:27). Paul said in Galatians 5:24, “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Jesus’ hearers understood his teaching in the first century and we can understand it today. Are we willing to hear and accept his doctrine on every subject?

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Philippine Report

Justin Monts

A restoration is literally happening in the Philippines! Denominational preachers are being converted and taking down their signs to put up “church of Christ” signs. I personally witnessed an elderly preacher in the Pentecostal church get baptized with his household.

It is wonderful to be back with loved ones in America. I thought about brethren every day while in the Philippines. The Filipino Christians send their love and regards and they thank you for allowing me to come. I am happy to report that *280 were baptized* on this trip!

Wonderful Results This Trip!

This was Ron Halbrook’s seventeenth trip to the Philippines, but he indicated that a record had been set for the most baptisms in three weeks time. The first week of our month-long trip was spent in Tagaytay City training preachers so there were no baptisms that first week. Yet 280 baptisms followed over the next three weeks of preaching. There are never “mass baptisms.” Anywhere from none to perhaps eleven are baptized at any one place. Ron and I preached for three to four churches a day. In some cases Ron and I split up and he would visit three churches and I would visit three churches and then we’d meet and report the number of baptisms we had at each place.

Why Are So Many Baptized?

This is a third world country so it does not have the distractions of entertainment and recreation that we do. There is no such thing as a “career” that a Filipino can get lost in. When I think about 3,000 baptized on the day of Pentecost, I admit that number sounds surreal because of my own background where churches go years without a single baptism. But I

am convinced the Filipinos were like those on the day of Pentecost—very tenderhearted and searching for spiritual truth. When “cut to the heart,” these precious souls do not delay in repenting and being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38, 41). Filipinos are constantly surrounded by suffering and death. So when one speaks about *Heaven: Beautiful Home of the Soul*, as in a sermon that Ron preached, that has great meaning to them. If one speaks on righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come they are afraid, and believing the Bible to be the word of God, they respond. It was refreshing to see this level of interest in spiritual things. Further, Ron and I merely reap where others have diligently sown (1 Cor. 3:6). Filipino preachers are some of the hardest working preachers I have ever met. They labor hard to prepare the hearts of men and women so that by the time we come these precious souls hear the truth confirmed and decide to join the Lord’s body.

Wonderful Stories of Conversion

A restoration is literally happening in the Philippines! Denominational preachers are being converted and taking down their signs to put up “church of Christ” signs. I personally witnessed an elderly preacher in the Pentecostal church get baptized with his household. He had been listening to the radio program of Rody Gumpad (Rody was formerly a Pentecostal preacher but now a faithful preacher in the Philippines), and he asked Rody

to speak on why he left the Pentecostal church. Rody gave an effective appeal from God's word and the man came forward with tears in his eyes. He cried not only because he had now found the truth but also because for years he had walked in darkness and led souls astray. As far as I could tell everyone in his immediate family was baptized that day. They no longer form a Pentecostal church but a church of Christ!

On another occasion as Ron spoke on "The Gospel Makes Us Right With God," a Methodist preacher and a Pentecostal preacher were in the audience. Ron patiently showed the distinction between God's truth and the doctrines of men. At the close of the lesson the Methodist preacher had a question regarding Romans 3:23: "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." He asked why that did not include babies and Ron carefully showed from the context that the word "all" meant the Jews and Gentiles (v. 9), not babies. This man was honest and came forward to be baptized along with the Pentecostal preacher.

I found that including references to the Tsunami that struck Southeast Asia was effective as an invitation. Though the Philippines were largely untouched by the Tsunami, they were close enough for people to realize that such a tragedy could have occurred on their island. Nearly 200,000 lives were claimed by that wall of water traveling at 600 miles per hour. Fishermen went about their business, people traded in the market place, and children ran in the street, when their lives ended in an instant. We do not know what a day will bring forth (Prov. 27:1). The Filipinos understood that it is better to meet God prepared.

While in Ilocos Norte I met a lady named sister Ling-ling. She was formerly with the NPA (New People's Army), a communist rebel movement which capitalizes on the nation's poverty and the corruption in the Filipino government. I was told that she was with a companion hiding in

a ditch when two soldiers stumbled upon them. One soldier opened fire on her companion, killing him. He then turned to shoot her when the other soldier stopped him, saying, "Wait. I've seen her going to the church of Christ. There may be hope for her yet." As a result, her life was spared. Not long after that she quit the NPA and was baptized for the remission of her sins!

Countless stories of faith and devotion are to be told. Ron observed that the book of Acts plays out in the Philippines. From the great numbers of conversion of Acts chapters 2 and 3, to the conflicts among different tribes reminiscent of the dispute that arose among the Hellenists in Acts 6; from the execution of those who were martyred for the faith like Stephen in Acts 7, to the scattering of men and women everywhere to preach the word in Acts 8—the book of Acts unfolds before our eyes! This trip was an excellent experience for me. It was worth every last peso and centavo. And I thank you all for providing me the opportunity to go. "I thank my God in every prayer of mine for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now . . . for in the defense and confirmation of the gospel you are all partakers with me of grace" (Phil. 1:3-7).

Filipinos Are Hungry For Truth—Bibles Needed!

It was wonderful to see dozens flock to tables and grab religious literature. In America tract racks can often collect dust but in the Philippines a tract barely hits the table before being snatched away. There is often a lot of commotion as books and study aids are passed out and some reach their hands over other people in hope that a pamphlet will be placed in their palm. It is touching to observe this hunger for truth.

A lady here in America asked if the Filipinos had Bibles. Coming from my own cultural background where most people have several copies of the Bible, I initially told her, "I believe they have Bibles." But I was mistaken. Sometimes it is only the preacher out

of a congregation the size of fifty that has a Bible! It takes a week's worth of wages to get a Bible, so many cannot afford one. If you personally are interested in helping to purchase Bibles, you can give money to Ron Halbrook for that purpose (his address is enclosed). Remember the American dollar goes far so we can furnish many Bibles even with a small amount!

Thank you for allowing me to take part in this life-changing trip! It has done much good for eternity! A question that went through my mind every day in the Philippines was: "What is the price one can put on a soul?" 280 were baptized. 280 are now on their way to heaven. This was worth every expense. While on the plane I asked Ron why he came to the Philippines so much. He replied, "There are many places for a man to fish . . . but I want to go where the fish are biting." Having been to the Philippines, I now know what he means.

Let us thank God that a door of opportunity has opened (1 Cor. 16:9). Let us pray for our brothers and sisters in these foreign lands. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits (Phile. 25).

If you are interested in sending money for Bibles and religious literature you can contact Ron Halbrook.

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Theistic Evolution

John Henry, Sr.

We are involved in a spiritual battle—a battle over the accuracy of God’s word in regard to its teaching on origins (Eph. 6:10-12). Theistic evolution broken down looks something like this:

“*Theism*”—belief in a personal God as creator and ruler of the world.

“*Evolution*”—“A gradual process in which something changes into a different and usually more complex or better form.”

Evolutionists tell us this process has taken a period of billions or millions of years. Image, complex forms of life evolving from simpler forms of life until finally the most complex life form of all evolved: man. Theistic evolution is the belief that God called matter into being and then allowed everything to evolve on its own. This is supposedly an answer to the evolutionist as to how the Christian believes you get life from non-living matter. God simply governed its (matter or life-forms) development through the process of evolution.

Some Christians assume the evolutionary theory has been scientifically proven and have tried to interpret the Bible so as to make it fit this absurd theory. The theory of evolution is not a scientifically proven fact. On one hand we find, that evolution deals with the origin of things beyond science, beyond the scientific method, and things that cannot be established. Therefore, evolution is *not* a scientifically proven fact. On the other hand we learn, that science is knowledge. It deals with things that are observable, things that are repeatable, things that can be put to the test, proven and established. Evolution is none of those things. It is not observable, not repeatable, and it cannot be put to any test. Those who would try to harmonize the Bible with science are called “theistic evolutionists.”

Those who except the Bible as the inspired, inerrant, authoritative word of God, and who accept the biblical record of the beginning of all things as the miraculous, instantaneous power of God, must now fight the good fight on two shores. First there is the strict evolutionists—those

who don’t believe in God or his word. Second, there are those who profess a belief in God and his word, but who are intent on compromising the biblical account of origins so that they may incorporate aspects of evolution into the divine record. Let’s notice some of the consequences of theistic evolution.

Theistic Evolution Has Produced Three Views Of Evolution.

Before creation week—the Pre-Adamic world. Some believe that between the first and second verse of Genesis 1 there is a period of unknown time. They believe, and would have every one else to believe, that there was a Pre-Adamic world, or “gap” of millions or even billions of years, in which there were dinosaurs and perhaps other life forms. Everything died out in that world, and their fossils were left in the earth as evidence of this period. Those who hold to this theory believe the Pre-Adamic world was destroyed, and then, with verse 2, begins the account of creation, or the rebuilding of this earth begins in six successive twenty-four-hour days.

The problem with this theory: (1) The world existed before light or else light was created twice. (2) There were no fossils before Adam sinned, because there was no death before Adam sinned (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21). Nothing died until Adam sinned. (3) The world would have existed before the creation of light. Could plants have survived a “day” millions of years long without sunlight? (4) The main reason this theory cannot be true is found in Exodus 20:11. The “gap” theory excludes the heavens and the earth from the six days of creation. Therefore, you would have an unformed mass of matter in which all who lived in the Pre-Adamic world lived on. Moses said, the beginning of the heavens and the earth was included in the six days of creation. The heavens and the earth was not created separate and apart from six twenty-four-hour days.

During creation week—the Day-Age Theory. This theory suggests that the creation days in Genesis 1 were not literal, twenty-four-hour days, but rather were long ages or eons of time. The “Day-Age Theory” is used by

the theistic evolutionist to insert geologic time into the Genesis record so that evolution may be accepted as true and supposedly correspond to the earth's geologic column. Again the problems are many with this theory. (1) "Day" in Genesis 1 does not refer to a long period of time because God used and defined the word "Day" in the context. The "first day" is defined by Moses as a period consisting of both day and night, i.e., a normal twenty-four-hour day. (2) If the "Days" of Genesis 1 are "ages" or "eons," *then what are the years?* If a day is an age, then what is a night? In other words, the whole passage becomes ridiculous when one attempts to "reinterpret" the word "Day." (3) An honest person cannot read anything else out of these verses, that a day consisted of twenty-four hours and a week of seven days as we still have to this day in time. (4) Plant life was created on the third day. This means that those who believe in the "day-age" theory must accept the absurd hypothesis that plant life survived billions of years in periods of total darkness. (5) Either theistic evolution and its day-age theory are wrong, or Romans 5:12 is in error. Death did not enter the world until man sinned. According to theistic evolutionists, plant and animal life flourished and died at least 500 million years before man evolved. Their deaths have been recorded as the fossil remains embedded in the sedimentary rocks of the so-called *geologic column*. This cannot be true, since fossils would have only begun as a result of death. (6) Exodus 20:11 says, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." But, the day-age people have overlooked something even more obvious here: Genesis 1 and Exodus 20 were written by the same author—Moses—at about the same time (ca. 1500 B.C.). Therefore, the common authorship of both passages is evidence that he had the same time period in mind when he used the word "day." Furthermore, we might note that the fourth commandment was actually written by the finger of God himself on tablets of stone (Exod. 31:18; 32:16-19; 34:1, 28, 29; Deut. 10:4). If anyone should have known how long the days were, it should be the Creator himself!

After creation week—Genealogies and chronologies were incomplete. Theistic evolutionists would have us to believe that the genealogies of Genesis and of the Old Testament have gaps that represent millions or even billions of years. Yes, there could be some generation gaps in the lineage. But, what took place before the earth was inhabited, i.e., the idea of millions or billions of years before man appeared, must be explained on some basis other than the theory of gaps in human genealogies to prove gaps in the creation week exist. To prove gaps or millions of years in the creation account, a person need only look for proof in Genesis 1 and 2, not in the gaps of genealogies, nor in the spaces between the verses. These views were invented to harmonize the Bible with science. There is no harmonizing or fence-straddling here; one must make a choice between holding to theistic evolution or believing the plain statements in the Bible.

Theistic Evolution Says God's Word Is Not Inspired

Some believe that Genesis chapters 1-11 are nothing more than a myth or allegory. Theistic evolution says that some statements are not scientifically true. If a person is going to believe that "theistic evolution" is true then he must give up the position that the Bible is inspired of God. Here's why: (1) *Creation was supernatural*. There is no room for man-made theories about how God created everything. To do so, is to say God's word is not inspired. The Psalmist said, "For he commanded, and they were created" (148:5; see also Ps. 33:6-9). (2) *God alone can tell us how the world began*. We must stand in God's presence, ready to hear and to believe what he has chosen to tell us about creation. Odd, isn't it, that man wants to tell God how he created everything, instead of letting God, the creator and director of the universe, tell man how the world began and accept that by faith (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17). Even if, God would have allowed a human observer to watch as he brought all things into existence, do we really think that he could have fully understood what he saw apart from God's own interpretation (Job 38:3-4)? (3) *Jesus proved that the Bible account of creation was correct and that the beginning started with Adam and Eve* (Matt. 19:4-6). If Genesis 2 is a myth then that takes away the foundation on which Jesus built his argument against the Jews. Jesus confirmed that the Genesis account is true and that God created Adam and Eve, not only in his image and likeness (spiritually), but also as male and female (physically). According to Theistic evolutionists, Jesus was wrong about creation because Adam and Eve were not the first man and woman. They believe there were others before them.

Unbelievers and liberal theologians tell us that the Genesis account of creation was copied from the Babylonian Creation Story, *Enuma Elish*. This says that God's word is not inspired and the creation story is false. Truth is, the Babylonian account appears to be a corrupted story of creation after man began to serve many gods. What does the Bible say? (2 Tim. 3:16-17). "All" Scripture is God-breathed. It is hard to believe that some would trust in chance, rather than in a Supreme Being who created all things (1 Cor. 2:5).

Theistic Evolution Compromises the Bible and God

When we begin to compromise on evolution, what we are really doing is compromising the Bible and God. Instead of evolution being governed by chance, you have the providential guiding hand of God, which is supposedly leading through this process of evolution. The impossible chances of evolution are now removed by the theory of theistic evolution. How sad. By the theory of theistic evolution, man avoids having to make a choice between accepting the theory of evolution as being true or accepting the creation account of the Bible as being true. Theistic evolution says, "God did it, but He did it by this process." In other words, "God created all things, He just did it by evolution."

Who can believe this (Gen. 2:7)? “Living soul” should be translated “living creature” or “living being.” Genesis 2:7 tells us that Adam was *not* any kind of living creature until he became one by the creative breath of God. Until that moment, he was inanimate, lifeless matter. In light of this Scripture, how can anyone believe that there was life before Adam billions of years ago? To believe such a thing is to compromise the Bible and God! How could anyone in his right mind allow science and the Bible to both be right on this point of evolution?

Theistic Evolution Teaches Things Are Evolving

Worship: The Bible clearly tells us how to worship God (John 4:24). Theistic Evolution on the other hand says religion and worship are evolving. Wow! Just think of the new ideas that will be incorporated into worship in the future. If you think worship and the inventions of man are bad now, just stick around, it is bound to get only better with a little evolution.

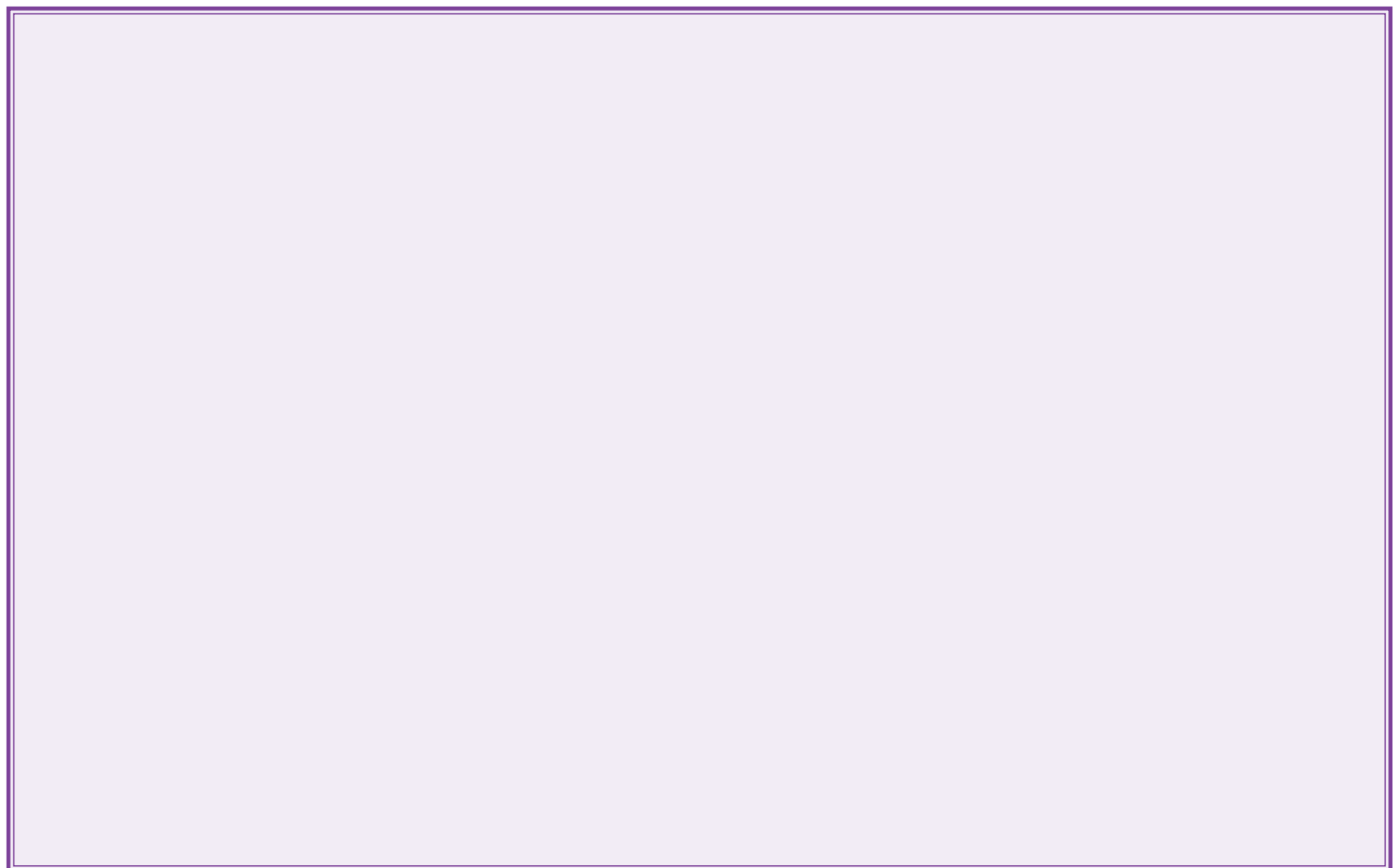
Morality: Why do you suppose we see an acceptable moral standard of behavior today that’s different from the accepted moral standards of fifty years ago? Or different from that of one hundred years ago? Evolution! Evolution brainwashes people into believing that we are still evolving into a higher life form in which man decides what’s right

and what’s wrong (moral). In the days of the judges “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 17:6). Evolution has mankind headed in the direction for a downfall. Evolution removes God and morality and puts man as the standard of authority on what is right and just in behavior. The standards of moral behavior have been set by God (Col. 3:5-10, 12-14).

The world is changing, but there is one unchanging thing in the world, and that is the word of God. “For I am the Lord, I change not” (Mal. 3:6). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35). “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17). Since God and his word are unchanging when it comes to the moral behavior of man, then we can honestly say, there is no evolution here!

Either the creation story is true or evolution is true. Where does you faith stand? In God or man (1 Cor. 2:5; 2 Cor. 5:7)?

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The Roaring Voice of the Sea

Irvin Himmel



The faithful prophet Jeremiah warned of the coming of the armies of Babylon against Judah. He used picturesque language. The invaders “shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like

the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion” (Jer. 6:23).

At an earlier period Isaiah had used similar language to describe the Assyrian invasion which resulted in the overthrow of the northern kingdom and threatened to topple Judah. “Their roaring shall be like a lion. . . . And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea” (Isa. 5:29-30).

How awesome and impressive is the roaring of the sea! There is something majestic and terrifying about the rumbling and rolling of the waves. The prophets foresaw the advancing armies of the heathen as roaring against the Israelites in wave after wave of dreadful destruction. The raging sea is an appropriate emblem of the powerful nations through which Jehovah executed judgment against his people for their unfaithfulness.

The roaring of the sea reminds us of the limitless power of him who created the heavens and the earth. I have stood on the rocky shores of the Atlantic in the state of Maine, listening to the loud rumble as the waves splashed against huge boulders, sending spray high into the air. I have watched the breakers rushing against the sandy beaches of Florida. But to look across the ocean as far as the eye can see and envision the enormity of the sea and the mighty force behind the churning waves, gives one a small glimpse of the power of the Creator.

The psalmist said, “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? . . . Thou rulest the raging of

the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them” (Ps. 89:7-9).

Always, even in the hour of ocean’s maddest fury, the Lord controls it. At the Red Sea the foaming billows saw their God and stood upright in awe . . . As a mother stills her babe to sleep, so the Lord calms the fury of the sea. . . (Spurgeon).

The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea (Ps. 93:4).

God asked Job, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, And said, Hither shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?” (Job 38:4-11).

It was God who fixed the limits of the raging sea! The “doors” may be rocky and rugged, loose pebbles, or silver sand. The proud and powerful waves approach “as if exulting in the assurance that they will sweep every thing away. In a moment they are arrested and broken, and they spread out humbly and harmlessly on the beach” (Barnes). The sea is under God’s control. It cannot reach beyond the bounds set by the Creator. Jeremiah urged the people to tremble at the Lord’s presence, for he “placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it” (Jer. 5:22).

No matter how magnificent the voice of the waters, or how fierce the roaring of the breakers, Jehovah on high is more majestic by far. He is to be feared and revered, honored and adored, believed and trusted, praised and exalted, magnified and glorified. Every person should stand in awe of the eternal God who made the sea and gave it that roaring voice.

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Sorrow Over the Pope's Death

Larry Ray Hafley

Yes, I was saddened to learn of the Pope's death. Here is why.

First, I am sorry to know that yet another soul has passed into the boundless reaches of a never ending eternity unprepared to meet God. The Pope was not a member of the body, or church of Christ, the one spoken of in the word of God (Matt. 16:18). He was a member of a human religious-politico organization wholly unknown to the Bible, except in its general references to false religion (Matt. 15:13; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Thess. 3; Revelation). Neither the Pope nor any other man can be saved separate and apart from the body of Christ (Acts 20:28; Eph. 2:16; 3:6; 5:23; Col. 1:13, 18; 1 Pet. 4:17, 18).

Second, I have grieved over the multiplied millions, both in and out of the Catholic Church, who, in their expressions of grief, show that they regard the Papacy, and all it represents, as being of God. Thus, they, too, are without God and without hope in this world (Eph. 2:12, 16). "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," saith the Spirit, "but rather reprove [expose] them" (Eph. 5:11; cf. 2 Cor. 10:5). Instead of doing that, masses have shown their endorsement, if not their support, of the Catholic faith. As such, they stand condemned, for "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 17:15).

Third, I mourned as I wondered, "Where were the "Protestants"? I will tell you where most of them were.

a. They were commiserating with the rest of the lost world and extolling the values and virtues of the late Pope. Where were their *protests* against the office of the Pope? Where were their appeals to others to wake up and see the great fraud being perpetrated by this man and his church? Did any hear the voices of the leaders of modern day Protestantism calling for a return to the Bible and away from the apostasy known as Catholicism? Where, oh, where were the descendants of Martin Luther in opposition to the ritual and tradition of Catholicism? They were as silent as the tongue of the dead Pope himself.

b. The truth is that Joel Osteen, Robert Shuler, Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, the Billy Graham organization, and other minor league protestant pretenders are so busy trying to build their own kingdoms of this world that they have neither the time nor the inclination to fight other human systems of religion. To such men and their systems, the Papal office represents the pomp, the power, the praise, and the popularity they seek.

c. Protestants can ill afford to trash an institution which has the trappings and traditions they themselves uphold. From sprinkling for baptism, from instrumental music to Christmas and Easter, from original sin to the acceptance of dancing, drinking, and divorce, "what's not to like" about the Catholic Church? Why protest them when you do the same? When you take the "protest" out of Protestantism, what do you have? Nothing but another "ism," another man-made religious institution.

Fourth, I will be sad to hear from some brethren who will resent the "judgmental tone" of these remarks. It will come from those who question the "traditions" of what they call "the restoration movement," but who seem rarely willing to challenge the real traditions of men. They decry our efforts to preach the plan but not the man; they scoff as they say we preach "the pattern," but not "the Person." They deride us for preaching "Churchianity" and not "Christianity." They wonder if the term "church of Christ" is scriptural, but they seem never to contend that "Baptist Church" and "Methodist Church" are unscriptural names.

Yes, the death of the Pope was a sad event. But, let us not be drawn and dragged down; rather, let us rise up and build, praying to the God of all grace that he may grant us the wisdom, judgment, and strength to overcome unto the end.

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Sainthood For the Late Pope?

Larry Ray Hafley

After being the official head of the Roman Catholic Church, after being the Vicar, the representative of Christ on earth, after being “the Holy Father” for more than a quarter of a century, the late Pope is being now being touted for sainthood.

What’s wrong with this picture? Is that not a “come down” for him? I mean, if a guy is the very essence and embodiment of Christ, and if he wears the title of the God of heaven, “the Holy Father,” is it not a step down for him to be made a “saint”? After the funeral of the president of General Motors or IBM, would it be an “honor” to say that the late head of the company was going to be declared an honorary line foreman?

And, how can a man who is “the Holy Father,” whose title is, “His Holiness,” not be a saint? Think about it. It’s like saying that Michael Jordan is going to be declared a basketball player, or that Tiger Woods is going to be called a pro golfer. If the Pope was not a saint, he was not sanctified. As such, he was unholy.

In the New Testament, *all* of those who were saved by the grace of God, *all* of those who were saved by the blood of Christ, *all* of those who were saved by faith, *all* of those who were baptized into Christ, and who were members of the body of Christ, were said to be saints (Rom. 1:7; 3:24; 5:1, 9; 6:3, 4, 17, 18; 12:4, 5; 16:2; cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; 4:15; 6:11; 12:13; Acts 18:8; cf. Eph. 1:1, 7; 2:8, 9, 16; Acts 19:5; cf. Col. 1:2, 13, 2:12).

It is quite an indictment and condemnation of the Pope to say that he died without being a saint, for that is the same as saying that he died without being saved, that he died without the cleansing blood of Christ, that he died without faith, and that he died without the grace of God.

Jarrood Jacobs-Roger Holland Debate on Baptism

Ron Halbrook

Who “wins” such debates? Everyone who studies both sides of the issue with an open Bible and an open mind. The seed of the kingdom was certainly sown in this debate and God’s word never returns to him void (Isa. 55:10-11).

February 25-26, 2005 Jarrod Jacobs (evangelist, Southside Church of Christ in Owensboro, Kentucky) met Roger Holland (itinerant evangelist from Tennessee working with Walnut Grove Baptist Church near Millwood, Kentucky) in a debate on whether baptism is essential for pardon from sin. The Caneyville, Kentucky Church of Christ hosted this Bible discussion at the nearby Millwood Community Center. Over 300 people including many denominational visitors attended the first night and over 200 the second night. The disputants conducted themselves honorably and the audience was orderly and attentive.

Jacobs’ Affirmative Proposition: Baptism in Order to Obtain the Remission of Sins

1. Jacobs’ First Affirmative Speech. On the first night, brother Jacobs affirmed and Mr. Holland denied the proposition, “The Scriptures teach that baptism, to the penitent believer, is for (in order to obtain) the remission of sins.” After clearly defining the terms, Jarrod clarified that their difference was not over the necessity of God, faith, Christ’s blood, grace, and confession of Christ in the plan of salvation, but over these issues: “Is baptism necessary for salvation, or not?” “Do we reach the blood of Christ ‘before and without’ baptism?” “Can we enjoy pardon and the blessings ‘in Christ’ ‘before and without’ baptism?” The next charts contrasted the Bible order with Mr. Holland’s order in Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16;

and 1 Peter 3:21. For instance, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” vs. “He that believeth and is *not* baptized shall be saved.” This was simple and effective.

Jarrood introduced a chart which turned out to be a blockbuster in this debate. It was presented over and over, but Roger made only passing reference to it and never offered any substantial response. The chart was labeled “Faith/Pisteuo” and quoted Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* definition:

used especially of the faith by which a man embraces Jesus, i.e., a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah—the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined with obedience to Christ.

Bible faith is trust conjoined with obedience—trust and obedience inseparably conjoined like Siamese twins.

The chart listed several of the passages cited by Thayer such as Mark 16:16; John 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; 11:25; 14:1; Acts 10:43; Romans 1:16; 10:10, 14; and 1 John 5:1, 10. This not only sustained Jarrod’s affirmative proposition but also anticipated some of the key passages introduced by Roger. One fallacy of Baptist doctrine is the concept of faith as a moment of mental assent rather than the comprehensive concept of faith including obedience. The Bible almost uniformly uses the word faith as a comprehensive concept.

Another simple and effective approach used by Jarrod focused on the little word “and” in Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; and 22:16. “‘And’ (*kai* in Greek) is a conjunction which joins two words, clauses, or sentences together which are to be taken jointly.” Jarrod approached Roger’s table and said, “He who believes and sticks out his arm shall receive twenty dollars,” offering a \$20 bill to anyone who would take it. No one moved. When it was offered to the people on the front row, a man who believed put out his arm and received it. The audience could not miss the point!

Other parallels using “and” were presented. “He that gets on a plane and is seated shall arrive at the destination.” “Stand up and leave the building to escape the fire.” Jarrod asked if some people stood only, would they escape? Again, the point was so clear that children could understand.

Jarrod challenged his opponent to name one Scripture which mentions baptism and places it *before* baptism. Also, he asked Roger to explain whether 1 Peter 3:21 teaches that baptism does *now* save or does *not* save.

2. Holland’s First Negative Speech. Mr. Holland’s first negative speech argued several times that unbelief is specifically condemned, but passages such as Mark 16:16 and John 3:36 do not say, “He that is not baptized shall be damned.” In attempting to prove salvation “before and without water baptism,” he cited 1 John 5:1 which mentions faith but not baptism. He claimed Jesus saves us by his blood without baptism. Old Testament worthies were cited as examples of people saved “before and without water baptism.” The charge was made that Jarrod does not believe in the Old Testament.

In an effort to find other people saved before baptism, Roger cited the cases of Cornelius in Acts 10:43 and

the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:30-31. Peter told Cornelius that the prophets taught all believers in Christ receive forgiveness of sins, and told the jailor simply to believe on Christ. Of course, Roger threw in the thief on the cross, for good measure.

A passing reference was made to Thayer’s definition of the Greek word translated “faith,” meaning trust conjoined to obedience: “Man said that.” Roger quickly moved on, being clearly uncomfortable with the chart setting forth Thayer’s definition.

Mark 16:16 is true, said Roger, in this sense, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” just as, “He that believeth, goes to church, and eats the Lord’s Supper shall be saved.” Faith is essential to salvation, but it is true that those who believe also follow the rules as a consequence of their salvation. Explaining that rules involve law, Roger cited Galatians 2:21 which teaches that righteousness does not come by the law. He understands that concept to mean baptism is excluded from the plan of salvation. Romans 11:6 was added to show we are saved by grace not works, and thus baptism is excluded as one of many meritorious works.

Roger found it ludicrous that men dead in their sins would confess Christ. He thinks only men who believe and receive spiritual life can then confess Christ (Eph. 2:1).

3. Jacobs’ Second Affirmative Speech. Jarrod began his second affirmative speech by emphasizing again Thayer’s definition of faith as trust conjoined to obedience. Then, since the Philippian jailor had been offered as an example of salvation before baptism, Jarrod reviewed the complete account of the jailor’s conversion. After Peter told him to believe on Jesus to receive salvation, Peter taught him the meaning of faith in Christ. The jailor demonstrated his repentance by washing the stripes of Peter and Silas, and was baptized im-

mediately. Only then does the Bible say that he “rejoiced, believing in God.” This only confirms Thayer’s definition of faith as trust conjoined to obedience!

Jarrod affirmed his faith in the Old Testament and in the salvation of Abraham and others. These men believed and obeyed the conditions given to them. Believing the Old Testament means believing Jeremiah 31:31-34, which promised the coming of a New Covenant. Hebrews 8 says that promise is fulfilled in the gospel of Christ, so today we must consult the New Covenant on the conditions of salvation, not the Old one.

Yes, Jarrod agreed, Peter told Cornelius the prophets promised salvation through faith in the name of Christ (Acts 10:43). For instance, Philip preached Christ to the eunuch in Acts 8, and in so doing preached the necessity of baptism for salvation. Also, Peter argued that Jew and Gentile are saved alike through the gospel of Christ (Acts 15:7-11). To say that men must be saved through faith in the name of Christ means through the authority of Christ. In Acts 2:36-38 *the Jews* were required to be baptized by the authority of Christ, and in Acts 10:48 *the Gentiles* were given the same command.

Roger had insisted the Bible does not say, “He who is not baptized shall be damned,” so Jarrod explained such a statement would be superfluous. “He who eats and digests his food shall live, but he who eats not shall die.” It would be redundant and ridiculous to say, “He who eats not and does not digest his food shall die.” If he eats not, there can be no digesting of food. If a man believes not, there can be no baptism for the remission of sins.

Baptism is not parallel to eating the Lord’s supper, Jarrod argued. Matthew 28:19-20 shows that baptism is essential to enter into salvation or a right relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Then, we

learn to follow all things commanded by Jesus, such as the Lord's supper. None of this involves keeping rules or laws as meritorious works, but simply reflects again the true meaning of faith as trust conjoined with obedience.

Yes, Jarrod responded, men who are dead in sin do believe, repent, confess Christ, and submit to water baptism for the remission of sins. Romans 6:3-4 shows that those who are dead in sin are buried in water, then raised up saved or spiritually alive. Baptist doctrine says the sinner comes to life at the point of faith before and without water baptism. According to this doctrine, a live man is buried in baptism. No, we bury the dead, not the living!

4. Holland's Second Negative. Mr. Holland argued that the gospel did not begin with the Great Commission in Mark 16 because God preached the gospel to Abraham and he believed it, and his faith was imputed for righteousness (Gal. 3:8). Roger said the Old Covenant passed away but there was no plan of salvation which passed away. Referring to various people scattered throughout the Bible who were saved without being baptized, Roger claimed he uses the whole Bible while Jarrod does not.

According to Roger, Acts 2:38 cannot mean baptism is necessary for pardon from sin because the thief on the cross and others were forgiven without baptism. Matthew 26:28 indeed shows that the blood of Jesus was shed for the remission of sins, said Roger, but baptism is only for the purpose of church membership.

Romans 6:1-4 refutes legalists who insist that law is needed for salvation. Though the passage speaks of baptism into Christ, Roger argued we cannot actually be baptized into Christ because he is in heaven, but baptism is "only a likeness." He said we baptize those who are dead to sin, not dead in sin.

Holland's Affirmative Proposition: Saved Before and Without Water Baptism

1. Holland's First Affirmative. Mr. Holland affirmed and brother Jacobs denied the proposition, "The Scriptures teach that one is saved before and without water baptism." His first affirmative speech listed various people who were saved under the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, "before and without water baptism." Roger included Cornelius, the thief on the cross, Timothy, Apollos, Paul, and others. Christ was preached in the Old Testament without baptism (Acts 10:43). There was no change at Pentecost in Acts 2.

Paul personally baptized only a few at Corinth simply because baptism was not that important, Roger claimed (1 Cor. 1:14, 17). In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul said he preached the gospel of salvation, but baptism is not mentioned.

2. Jacobs' First Negative. Since Mr. Holland on the first night had emphasized Abraham as an example of salvation without baptism, brother Jacobs began by referring to Galatians 3:8-9 with verses 26-27. Abraham did not live in the gospel age, but we do. We become the seed of Abraham by faith in Christ: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Since Roger camped on Cornelius both nights, Jarrod repeated his earlier arguments showing that Cornelius was saved by hearing and believing the gospel of Christ, which included the command of water baptism. Yes, Jews and Gentiles are saved through the name of Christ, and Acts 2:38 speaks of being baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Likewise, Peter commanded Cornelius "to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

Jarrod pointed out that though Roger's proposition speaks of salvation "before and without water baptism," Roger cited no passage which mentioned salvation "before and without water baptism." Then, the chart on Thayer's definition of faith as trust conjoined to obedience was introduced again, followed by a review of the people cited by Roger as examples of salvation without baptism. The faith of each of those people was comprehensive faith including action or obedience, not mere mental assent.

In many of the cases cited by Roger, there was no command to be baptized under Christ because the Great Commission had not yet been given, which is why their faith did not require baptism. After the death of Christ, when the gospel age began, the New Covenant came into force and it commands faith, repentance, and baptism.

Next, Jarrod gave attention to the people cited as saved in the Old Testament. The prophets preached to them that Christ was yet to come, and they did not believe Christ arose from the dead. Jarrod asked whether we are preaching today what those prophets preached? No, we are preaching that Christ died and arose, which is re-enacted in our baptism, "being then made free from sin" (Rom. 6:3-4, 16-18). This is the gospel which Paul preached and which saved (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Acts 8:35-38 shows that Philip preached that Old Testament prophecies such as Isaiah 53 are fulfilled in Christ and, in preaching Christ, Philip preached the necessity of baptism.

Jarrod wanted to know whether Roger thought Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:17 contradicted Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; and 22:16. When Paul said, "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel," he was making an elliptical statement, i.e., "Christ sent me *not only* to baptize *but also* to preach the gospel." In the context, Paul was rebuking the Corinthian Christians for adopting human names, such as Paul's name. He had personally baptized only a few

of them because he came first and foremost to preach the gospel, not to focus on personally baptizing large numbers of people. Jarrod pointed out that Paul's rebuke of wearing human names is a rebuke against wearing the name Baptist today.

3. Holland's Second Affirmative. Roger emphasized that people saved by Jesus during his personal ministry were saved "before and without baptism," such as Zacchaeus.

In an effort to define faith, Roger turned to Hebrews 11:1 and said it does not mention what anyone did. He added that in verse 4 Abel offered sacrifices not to be saved but to prove he was righteous.

Feeling the force of Jarrod's arguments on Philip and the eunuch, Roger said that Philip used Isaiah 53 which does not mention baptism. 1 John 5:1 was appealed to in an effort to show men are saved by faith without baptism.

Abraham was brought up again as an example of salvation without baptism.

Jarrod was charged with adding works to the blood of Christ. Works reflect our efforts to be holy as God is holy, but we go to heaven on God's mercy not our holiness (1 Pet. 1:16).

4. Jacobs' Second Negative. Jarrod's last speech began by reminding the audience that Roger gave no verse using baptism and biblically defining its purpose.

The case of Zacchaeus is no help to Roger because he lived under a different covenant.

As to Roger's effort to define faith by appealing to Hebrews 11, this chapter actually confirms Thayer's definition as trust conjoined to obedience! Abel offered sacrifices for atonement. Abraham's faith was comprehensive, obedient faith.

As to Roger's comments on 1 Peter 1 and holiness, Jarrod pointed out that we purify our souls "in obeying the truth" (v. 22).

Jarrod's chart on things conjoined in Titus 3:4-8 showed that Roger is trying to separate things God joined together: love and baptism, Christ's blood and baptism, grace and baptism, and faith and baptism. Another chart demonstrated that baptism is not a work of merit, according to Titus 3:5. This passage contrasts "works of righteousness which we have done" with God's mercy bestowed on us when we are baptized.

Jarrod reminded everyone that the debate was closing without Roger telling us whether 1 Peter 3:21 teaches baptism does *now* save us or does *not* save us.

Concluding Observations

The audience participated in a thirty-minute open forum period each night. The questions submitted were perceptive. Mr. Holland and brother Jacobs both addressed each question for two minutes.

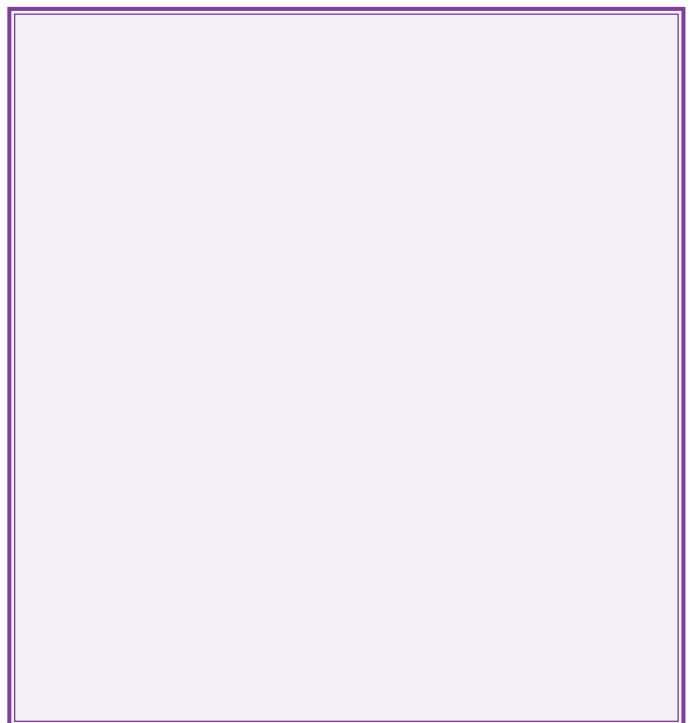
This brief review of the debate does not do justice to all of the excellent and effective arguments and charts presented by Jarrod Jacobs. Audio and video tapes are available from the Southside Church of Christ, 2920 New Hartford Rd., Owensboro, KY 42303 (e-mail for CDs preacher@southside-churchofchrist.com or go to www.southside-churchofchrist.com for church website and more about the debate).

After the last session concluded, Jarrod offered Roger propositions to debate the doctrine of eternal security. Roger has now agreed to participate in this discussion.

The Caneyville Church of Christ worked very hard in promoting and hosting this debate on baptism, and should be commended for their willingness to uphold the truth. Likewise, we commend Jarrod for his love of truth and dedicated efforts in proclaiming and defending it.

Who "wins" such debates? Everyone who studies both sides of the issue with an open Bible and an open mind. The seed of the kingdom was certainly sown in this debate and God's word never returns to him void (Isa. 55:10-11).

3505 Horse Run Ct., Shepherdsville, Kentucky 40165



“Let Me Die the Death of the Righteous”

Don Alexander

With an outpouring of love and respect our nation last year laid to rest the fortieth President of the United States, Ronald Wilson Reagan. Supporters and detractors alike paid their respects. Bands played, choruses sang, people spoke, people prayed, common people walked by the coffin to silently pay their respects. Apparently, soon after a President is sworn in he begins the planning of his eventual funeral.

Have you ever thought about how you would want your death to be acknowledged? Not a morbid thought, but a realistic one, since we all will die some day. In Numbers 23:5 God “put a word in Balaam’s mouth.” Part of that “word” is found in v. 10: “Let me die the death of the righteous.” Even when Balaam would like to curse God and the people of God, he was not able to, because God made him utter a blessing! How sweet the sound!

But before one can “die the death of the righteous,” he must live the life of the righteous. Righteous living is “right living” within the will of God expressed in his word. It is living for the blood of Jesus to “forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” as sins are repented of and confessed to him in prayer (1 John 1:9). It is living right with God in obeying his precepts, teaching them to others, living as “lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15-16) who “hold forth the word of life” as a beacon for lost sinners. It is worshiping the Lord in his prescribed way, according to his pattern, and having a thankful heart always (Eph. 5:18-20). It is honoring the brethren with love and deferential treatment, not with jealousy or envy, competition or discord (Rom. 12:9-10). It is living right with one’s husband or wife, parent or child, and neighbor (Col. 3-4:6). It is living right with a view to eternity in “the new heavens and new earth wherein dwells righteousness,” “looking for” and desiring the coming of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:8-13).

When I die, I want God’s people in simple assembly, singing, praying, and encouraging each other. The voices of children, unshackled by the need to sing in perfect four-

part harmony, sitting right down front, simply singing out because they want to imitate the actions of older folks they admire and to please God. Prayers of praise and gratitude to our God for his “tender mercies” that are “new every morning” (Lam. 3:22-23); let them be heard throughout the assembly of God’s nobles. Let the people “dress up” not because of me but because it is a grand occasion when the nobles of God’s people come before him who is “Lord of Heaven and Earth.” Let there be no brass bands, however trained and respectful they may be. Let the single sound be that of voices singing “in spirit and truth.” “All the way my Savior leads me, what have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His tender mercy, who through life has been my guide?” “My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine . . .” “What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. . .” “There’s a beautiful place called Heaven. It is hidden above the bright blue. Where the good, who from earth ties are riven, live and love an eternity through. . .” “Does Jesus care . . . Oh, yes He cares, I know He cares. His heart is touched with my grief. . .” “Be with me, Lord, I cannot live without Thee . . .” “Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy heart. Draw me my Savior, so precious Thou art . . .” “Only in Thee, O Savior mine, dwelleth my soul in peace divine. Peace that the world, though all combine, never can take from me . . .” “Saints lift your voices though dark your days . . . upward the calling, brighter the light, soaring like eagles on wings of flight . . .” “Praise the Lord, I am forgiven and my Father up in Heaven, knows and hears and will be with me, praise the Lord, I am His child!” “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you peace . . .”

Then at the conclusion, let the speaker, whomever he may be, read the words of Jesus from the cross when he said, “Father into thy hands I commit my spirit.” And read from Luke 15 about how the angels carried away the spirit of the poor beggar without human fanfare, but with divine aid and oversight. And let my family, friends, and brethren hear the words of the Apostle Paul: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

Debate Challenge Accepted

Weldon Warnock

Recently, brother Jeff Belknap of Beckley, West Virginia issued a challenge to six different men for an oral or written debate. Sounds like he is ready for business. I was the second one on the list. Jeff submitted two propositions, an affirmative and a negative, on the marriage, divorce and remarriage issue. I accepted his challenge, agreeing to debate the propositions he formulated, although they do not cover the entire spectrum of the issue, but do serve as a basis for discussion.

I offered one prerequisite to Jeff's proposal and that was that we have the debate in Beckley, West Virginia. But lo and behold, he backed right down. He offered the following lame excuse: "The church in Beckley is the same congregation where Weldon was the preacher for ten years, and he still maintains a close relationship with some of our members. Hence, it would be inexpedient to the unity of the Lord's church in Beckley to hold the debate here, due to the personalities involved and their relationships with the local membership." He goes on to say that the men of the congregation have urged him not to debate me "in or near Beckley" because of the same concerns. But I learned that this is just some of the men, while other men and several ladies would like to have the debate in Beckley, if we are going to have one. It seems to me that since both Jeff and I

Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give unto me in that day and not to me only but to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

And, after a closing "Amen" from the noble people of God in assembly, let them go out to continue their work of extolling the blessings of a tender and merciful God whose name is above every name and whose cause is above every cause.

"Let me die the death of the righteous."

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have preached in Beckley that Beckley would be the logical place to debate our differences.

Let us draw some implications from what brother Belknap said as quoted above:

1. If you are afraid of disrupting the unity of the church in Beckley if the debate is held there, why don't you have the same fear of disrupting the unity of the church or churches in some other city where the debate would be conducted? Is it that you do not care to be divisive somewhere else, just not in Beckley? I have a good relationship with many, many brethren all over the country. If I should not debate you in Beckley because of my relationship with the brethren there, then that rules me out about everywhere else because of my relationship with those brethren.

2. Jeff stated he doesn't want the debate in or near Beckley. How far away would we have to get to be outside of "near Beckley"? You reckon if we just barely got outside Raleigh County (where Beckley is located) that we would qualify as far as distance?

3. In regard to dividing the church in Beckley, Jeff has already taken care of that by himself. I preached there ten years and we had no disturbance. This so-called "mental divorce" (a misnomer) never came up. It was not until brother Belknap arrived on the scene and cranked up his computer that confusion and dissension on MDR started. He began putting on his website every little tidbit of those with whom he disagreed and presenting it in the context of heresy. He set out to poison the minds of some of the members in Beckley that I was a false teacher. He claims he interrogated all preachers who were, and are, scheduled to hold meetings at Beckley as to their position on MDR. If they did not pass the litmus test, the meeting was cancelled. He didn't ask them about other issues; just MDR. Now, he is concerned about being divisive if we have a debate in Beckley.

Pshaw!

4. Jeff said he wanted the debate in a central place. Well, central would be about half way between Scottsville,

Once For All

Mark Mayberry

Introduction

Jude 3 says, “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was *once for all* handed down to the saints.”

Thomas defines the Greek word *hapax* as “once” (530). BDAG say this adverb is used “(1) as a numerical term pertaining to a single occurrence, once; (2) pertaining to a single occurrence and decisively unique, once and for all.” This word occurs fourteen times in the NT (2 Cor. 11:25; Phil. 4:16; 1 Thess. 2:18; Heb. 6:4; 9:7, 26, 27, 28; 10:2; 12:26, 27; 1 Pet. 3:18; Jude 3; 5). In the NASB95, *hapax* is translated “once” (9x), “once for all” (3x) and “once more” (2x).

Thomas defines the Greek word *ephapax* as a compound of *epi* (an intensifier) and *hapax* (once), meaning, “once

for all” (2178). BDAG says it is an adverb, “(1) pertaining to being simultaneous, at once, at one time; (2) taking place once and to the exclusion of any further occurrence, once for all, once and never again.” This term occurs five times in the NT (Rom. 6:10; 1 Cor. 15:6; Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10). In the NASB95, it is translated “once for all” (4x), and “one time” (1x).

Louw and Nida say these two words, *hapax* and *ephapax*, describe “a single occurrence to the exclusion of any other similar occurrence” and signify “once and for all, once and never again” (60.68).

These terms are used in various incidental passages. Describing the persecutions he suffered for the cause of Christ, Paul said, “once I was stoned” (2 Cor. 11:25; cf. Acts 14:19-20). Referring to the support that he received from the church at Philippi, the apostle said, “You sent a

Kentucky, my home, and Beckley, West Virginia where Jeff lives. As the crow flies that would be in the mountain region of southeastern Kentucky in the vicinity of a little community called Dwarf. But friends, he is not interested in a central location, but just getting the debate out of Beckley. He even proposed that we have the debate here in Scottsville, Kentucky. What does that tell you? Then I understand he had an offer from one of his sympathizers to have it in Louisville; just anywhere but in or near Beckley. He evidently does not want to be exposed in Beckley. What is he afraid of in Beckley?

5. Since Jeff thinks a debate in Beckley would cause friction in the church there which he has already done), how is he going to prevent brethren there from attending a debate if we have it somewhere else? We are led to believe that it won't divide the church in Beckley if they come and listen to the debate outside of Beckley, but if they listen to it in or near Beckley, it will be divisive. What convoluted reasoning. Too, you suppose the brethren in Beckley would want a video tape or audio cassettes of the debate and hear it that way? Why would it divide the church if they hear

the debate in Beckley, or near there, but it will not divide the church there if they get the tapes and listen/watch the debate in their homes?

Our brother Belknap is most eager to shelter the brethren in Beckley that they not hear both sides on the MDR issue. Wonder why? Of what is he afraid? He is most willing and content to sit behind his computer and “let it rip.” He doesn't mind the brethren in Beckley logging on to his website and read controlled, voluminous material on MDR, but they must be protected from hearing an open discussion on the same subject, lest they become divided. What a convenient, self-serving way of getting out of a debate in Beckley, West Virginia. Brother Belknap, I am ready for a debate in Beckley!

What doth hinder you? You can no longer pretend to be courageous and bold by challenging for a debate and then “weasel” out. As the old-timers would say, “It is time to come up to the lick log.”

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gift more than once for my needs” (Phil. 4:16). Expressing his eager desire to see the Thessalonian disciples, Paul said, “For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us” (1 Thess. 2:18).

More significantly, these words impact important biblical doctrines. They depict the sacrificial duties of the High Priest, who once a year entered the Most Holy Place to make atonement for himself and the sins of the people (Heb. 9:6-7). They describe the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to more than five hundred brethren at one time (1 Cor. 15:6). Additionally, they define the sacrifice, judgment, and revelation of Christ. These three points are the focus of our present lesson.

The Sacrifice of Christ

Jesus, our great High Priest, made atonement for sin once for all when he offered up himself (Heb. 7:26-27). Not through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, he entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:11-12; cf. also 9:23-28, esp. v. 28). Through Jesus’ effectual atonement, we have been sanctified through the offering of his body once for all (Heb. 10:1-10, esp. v. 10). Christ also died for our sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God (1 Pet. 3:18).

The Judgment of Christ

On many different occasions, God has judged sinful humanity. However, a Great Day awaits: “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.” This signifies removal of those things which can be shaken, i.e., the physical universe, the earth and its works. Therefore, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; let us be diligent to be found by him in peace, spotless and blameless (Hag. 2:6-9; Heb. 12:25-29; 2 Pet. 3:10-14).

The Revelation of Christ

In like manner, Jude exhorted his readers to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3). Depending on the context, faith (Greek: *pistis*) can refer to either one’s subjective confidence or, alternatively, the objective basis for that confidence (BDAG). Here it carries the latter meaning, identifying “the faith,” that which is believed, that body of teaching that constitutes NT Christianity (Rom. 1:16-17; cf. also Acts 6:7; 16:5; 2 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 1:27; 1 Tim. 4:1, 6; 6:10; etc.). Jude’s statement disqualifies any so-called latter-day revelation. The New Testament system of faith was delivered one time for all time. From its completion, the Christian canon has been complete, whole, lacking nothing.

Conclusion

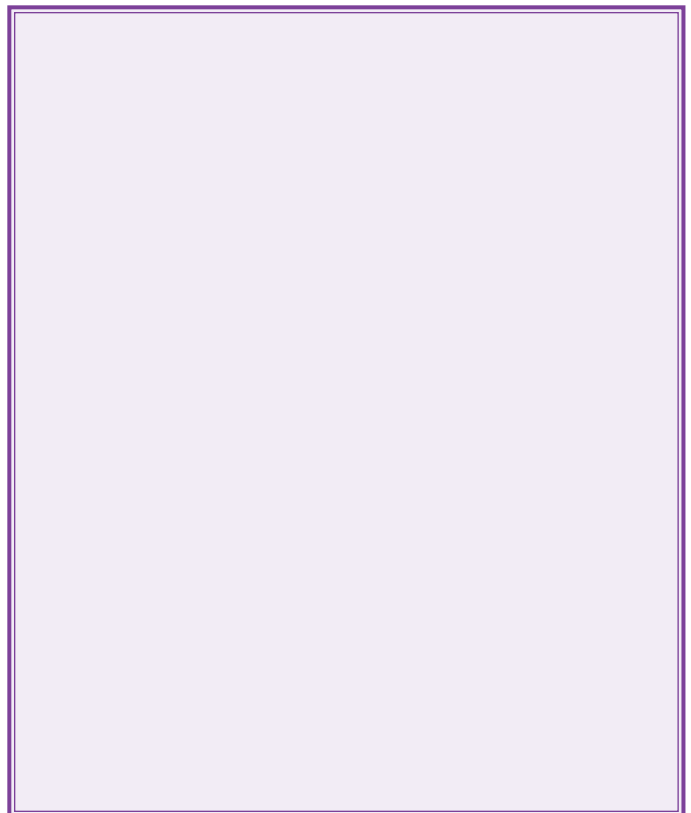
In conclusion, the Greek word *hapax* reminds us of the

necessity of obedience. It describes the certainty of death and judgment, and also the finality of God’s atonement for sin (Heb. 9:27-28). It is used in the context of Romans 6:1-11, which demands that sinners recognize the nature and necessity of baptism: “For the death that He died, He died to sin *once* for *all*; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” It also occurs in Hebrews 6:4-8, which impresses erring Christians with the urgent need of restoration: “For in the case of those who have *once* been enlightened.”

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Despising the Longsuffering of God

Bobby Witherington

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you repentance (Rom. 2:4)?

The epistle of Paul to the “saints” at Rome (Rom. 1:1, 7) has been called “the most profound book ever written.” In view of the nature of the other sixty-five books of the Bible, and the source from whence they came, I hesitate to single out one particular epistle as the “most profound.” However, I must confess that the spiritual treasures contained in the book of Romans are vast, deep, and rich.

In Romans 1:16 Paul announces the theme of this great book; namely this: “. . . the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation.” He then begins to show why the “gospel” is so necessary—it being because “there is none righteous” (Rom. 3:10), because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). But Paul does not merely mention the general condition of sin; rather he divulges the ugly, gruesome details! Hence, in Romans 1:18-32 this apostle to the Gentiles elaborated upon the departures of those in the Gentile world as they got further and further from God. Though “the things that are made” necessarily inferred the existence of the Maker (the Creator!), they “did not glorify” God as God, became “futile in their thoughts,” became “fools,” began to worship idols, and engaged in every form of revelry and debauchery—even to the point that “God gave themselves over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting” (Rom. 1:20-23, 28). It is little wonder that he concluded by saying “that those who practice such things are worthy of death” (Rom. 1:32).

No doubt the Jews inwardly said “amen” to everything Paul had to say about those awful, sin-loving Gentiles. But in chapter 2 this apostle “lowered the boom” on the self-righteous Jews (vv. 17, 24) who condemned the Gentiles for their horrible conduct, while practicing “the same things” (v. 1)! These Jews made their “boast in God” (v. 17), had been “instructed out of the law” (v. 18), taught others (v. 21), and somehow believed they “could escape the judgment of God” (v. 3), even though they engaged in the same

conduct which they freely condemned among the Gentiles. In view of these things, it is not surprising that, to these religious hypocrites, Paul had so much to say about “the judgment of God” (v. 3)—judgment which “is according to truth” (v. 2), “righteous” (v. 5), “according to . . . deeds” (v. 6), without “partiality” (v. 11), and which will be “by Jesus Christ” (v. 16).

It was within the context of Paul’s remarks to the hypocritical Jews that he penned the words of our opening text, Romans 2:4, wherein he asked, “Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering?”

Can you imagine this happening—people despising the infinite, holy, glorious attributes of God? On the surface, this seems shocking. However, upon further reflection, it becomes evident that such conduct is more common than we might realize. For example, love (a necessary attribute of all Christians) is a quality which “thinks no evil” (1 Cor. 13:5). In other words, it “keeps no account of evil” (Mar. Ref.), and it thus is a quality which discourages one from being naturally suspicious of others. By the same token, true Christians tend to “turn the other” cheek (Matt. 5:39) instead of retaliating in kind. Love is thus an attribute which many mistake for weakness, and which may even cause a person to be victimized by those who are guided by the philosophy of “what is yours is mine if I can get it.” It is a sad, but true, fact; multitudes in today’s world show contempt for those qualities which constitute “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22, 23). But if people of the world despise the moral and spiritual qualities of true Christians, then it is axiomatic that they would despise the same qualities in God, who possesses these qualities in the infinite degree.

Returning to our text (Rom. 2:4), please note those qualities which some “despise.” To begin with, we observe that Paul asked “do you despise the riches of His goodness?” “Goodness” (from *chestotes*, Greek) denotes goodness in the sense of what is upright, righteous. It signifies “not merely goodness as a quality, rather it is goodness in action, goodness expressing itself in deeds” (Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*). From the same text we discover

that “the goodness of God” is a great contributing factor that “leads to repentance.” Nonetheless, multitudes “despise” (think lightly of) the goodness of God—even though “the goodness of God” stands behind “every good gift and every perfect gift” (Jas. 1:17) that we receive from God.

The second item mentioned in Romans 2:4, and which some “despise” is the “forbearance” of God. “Forbearance” (from *anochē*, Greek) denotes “a holding back . . . a delay of punishment.” “In Rom. 2:4 it denotes a suspense of wrath which must eventually be exercised unless the sinner accepts God’s conditions (*Ibid.*). Those who refuse to “obey the gospel” will “be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1:8, 9). However, that “punishment” is currently being delayed during this period of God’s “forbearance.” Tragically, multitudes “despise” (think lightly of) God’s “forbearance” and refuse to seek the forgiveness they so desperately need.

The third item mentioned in Romans 2:4 which some “despise” is the “longsuffering” of God. Literally, “long-suffering” means “long tempered.” It is “that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish” (Vine). In a very real sense, all three of these qualities are bound together. God’s “forbearance” is the result of his infinite “goodness,” and God’s “longsuffering” is his “forbearance” extended.

The Greatness of His Longsuffering

The greatness of God’s “longsuffering” is more fully realized when we consider:

1. The infinite holiness of God (cf. Isa. 6:3). Every sin anyone commits is “against” God (Ps. 51:4), and is an insult to his infinite holiness. Before God, there is nothing funny or pretty about sin!

2. That God sees all! “. . . all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:13). Think of that vast multitude of people who are on friendly terms with others simply because their friends do not see all they do, hear all they say, and are not privy to all that passes through their minds! But nothing said, done, or thought escapes the all-seeing eye of God. Nevertheless he “is longsuffering toward us” (2 Pet. 3:9).

3. God’s ability to punish. As one writer expressed it, “all resources are His—heaven and earth, wind and hail, storm and tempest, death and plague, and pestilence, are all His servants, and are ever at hand.” God can instantly think of a million ways to punish any sinner at any second; yet God chooses to be “longsuffering.”

The Design of His Longsuffering

1. The longsuffering of God provides time and op-

portunity for repentance (2 Pet. 3:9), apart from which no person could be saved (Luke 13:3, 5).

2. The “longsuffering of our Lord is salvation” (2 Pet. 3:14). It reflects the riches of his grace, it gives the sinner further opportunity to take advantage of God’s amazing grace.

3. It leaves the impenitent without excuse. To Israel, God said, “All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people” (Rom. 10:21, cf. Isa. 65:2), yet Israel, for the most part, ignored the countless overtures of God’s mercy in their behalf. Hence, when they were eventually carried away as captives to Assyria and Babylon they had no one to blame but themselves!

But God’s Longsuffering Is Often Despised!

Infidels speak contemptuously of the return of Christ, saying, “Where is the promise of His coming” (2 Pet. 3:4), concluding that he will never return because he has not yet returned!

Hardened sinners wax worse and worse, allowing themselves to be described by Ecclesiastes 8:11: “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” And the masses of people ignore the tender appeals of the gospel, continuing to live in sin. Instead of being moved to repentance by the “longsuffering” of God, they continue to live in sin, even though every morsel of food they eat was made possible by God’s “goodness.” By “holding out,” instead of obeying, they “despise” (make light of) the longsuffering of God!

Conclusion

God’s “longsuffering” must not be interpreted as Divine indifference! “. . . each one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). To refuse to heed God’s will (believing God will give further opportunities) is base, ungrateful, reckless, foolish, and often eternally fatal. In essence, it serves as a demonstration of what it means to “despise” the longsuffering of God. Beloved, I am persuaded of better things of you!

506 Triple Crown Ct., Seffner, Florida 33584



“Summer” continued from front page

In both covenants, God has spoken and had a standard for modesty. Does that make any difference to you?

Our clothing is modest only if it is becoming (appropriate, suitable, proper) to women and men professing godliness. Brethren, how successful do you think you will be trying to get out of all these definitions of modest apparel?

It is a fact that times have changed, and styles have changed, and society has changed. However, the word of God has not changed, and human nature has not changed. Several years ago, a well-known preacher wrote the following: “What is wrong with mixed swimming? I cannot speak for the ladies, but I can speak for the men. There is not an ordinary man who can look at a woman clad in nothing but a bathing suit for a long time without entertaining evil thoughts. ‘But,’ some will say, ‘it does not bother me.’ One who says that, may be so young that passions have not arisen, or he may be so old they have subsided, or he may be so ignorant that he does not know what is going on, or he may not be normal, or he may be lying.”

The following survey appeared in the December 1982 issue of *Psychology Today*. The survey was done in June of the same year. The survey may seem outdated, but if anything the situation has probably gotten worse!

Reasons Men Go to the Beach	Reasons Women Go to the Beach
To swim 14%	To Swim 11%
To Sun 7%	To Sun 43%
To Watch 69%	To Watch 7%
To Be Watched . . . 10%	To Be Watched . . . 40%

It is indeed true that not all men go to the beach to watch women and not all women go to be seen by men, but enough admit their reasons to show that the child of God needs to be careful. We must be careful of our intentions when we dress ourselves. Instead of being called “bathing suits,” modern day swimsuits could be better described as “baiting suits.” Whether done intentionally or not, the way we dress can cause others to lust after our bodies and sin. Matthew 5:27-28 says, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” In order not to leave anyone out, Jesus addresses the one who is enticing another to lust (Luke 17:1-2).

There are many “explanations” for immodest dress, but the real reason most members of the church persist in wearing clothing that is immodest and indecent is simply

this: God’s will is not important enough for them to yield their own will to him.

I really do hope that everyone has a great summer. God has blessed us with warm and wonderful weather during the summer. But we just need to remind ourselves of what the word of God says. Keep the Lord first and foremost in your heart and dress appropriately. Your soul depends upon it!

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“Amiable” continued from page 2

and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25). Can those who have to be exhorted and urged to be present for worship honestly say, as did the psalmist, that they long for the courts of the Lord?

One sees an absence of love for the Lord’s worship in the things which have more importance than worship for such a Christian. One who misses worship to attend ball games, watch TV, visit relatives, hunt, fish, and other such optional things obviously loves those things more than he loves the Lord and his worship.

Some Do Not Love the Lord’s Temple

Obviously there were some in Old Testament times who did not love the Lord’s Temple. Jeroboam did not love it, as seen by the fact that he created his own self-devised worship to keep the northern tribes of Israel from going to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple (1 Kings 12:25-33). He taught Israel to sin by encouraging them to forsake the Lord’s Temple. Nebuchadnezzar did not like the Temple worship, because he destroyed the Temple in his assault on Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:9). The enemies of Judah and Benjamin hated the Temple as shown by their efforts to keep Zerubbabel and Jeshua from rebuilding the Temple after the Babylonian captivity (Ezra 4). Others showed their disdain for the Temple by turning aside to worship Baal, Chemosh, and other pagan deities.

In the New Testament, the writers frequently employ the language of the Old Testament Temple worship to describe the Lord’s church. The church is the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). The church is described as the Lord’s Temple in such places as the following:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).

We should be just as enamored with the Lord's Temple today as those in the Old Testament were of the physical Temple. However, just as there were those who were not attracted to divinely revealed worship in the Old Testament era, there are those who are not attracted to divinely revealed worship in our own day.

Those who have become enamored with unrevealed worship in our own day despise the Lord's Temple. They are more attracted to the denominations of men. They look at the mega-church movement and think more highly of it than they do the Lord's revelation. They are more attracted to denominational scholars than gospel preachers, more desirous of being received into the former circle than the latter. Such men like the music in the denominations more than congregational singing; they want clapping with their singing, special singing groups, and eventually instruments of music. They want the sermons they hear in the denominational churches—those which have more anecdotes and feel-good stories than Scripture, sermons without “hell fire and brimstone,” sermons that “accentuate the positive,” sermons that don't condemn members who dance, social drink, or dress immodestly, sermons that don't mention the names of the denominations or brethren who have departed from the truth! This is the same spirit as was present in the psalmist's day when men looked with longing eyes, not at the Lord's temple, but at the idolatrous worship in Baal's temple.

Preaching that emphasizes the Lord's church is viewed as denominational in the eyes of some brethren. When one contrasts the name, organization, conditions of membership, etc. between the Lord's church and the denominations of men, some say that he is preaching the church instead of the Christ. I would like someone to tell me what is wrong with telling men in unrevealed religion that they must leave their unrevealed denominations to become a part of the blood-bought body of Christ. Must one be part of the one body in order to be saved from his sins (Eph. 2:16)? If so, what is wrong with telling people that?

We are not preaching, “This is our preference for the church.” We are preaching what the God of heaven revealed! We are not preaching that the church is the dispenser of salvation; we are preaching that it is the recipient of salvation and that one cannot be saved from his sins without meeting the conditions God revealed.

Conclusion

Like the sons of Kohath, let us also express our love for the Lord's Temple and give our allegiance to it. Let us not become enamored with the denominations of men like the Israelites who fell in love with the idolatrous practices of their pagan neighbors. Rather, let us adhere to God's revealed will.

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Quips & Quotes

Six Priests Face Suspension

“In yet another sign of Anglican fracture, six conservative Episcopal priests in Connecticut face possible suspension from their pulpits after defying a bishop's order to submit to his authority. The pastors, and their congregations, oppose Andrew Smith, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut. Smith backed the 2003 consecration of V. Eugene Robinson, an openly practicing homosexual.

“Smith told CT that while he has offered to arrange alternate supervision, he cannot allow the congregations to effectively secede from the diocese. ‘The relationship to the whole diocese is fundamental for the Episcopal Church, no matter what the time or situation or issue.’

“However, the six said in a statement, ‘We do not understand how we have in any way “abandoned the communion of this church.”’ They have asked for ‘oversight as called for by the primates of the worldwide Anglican Communion in their statements of October 2003 and February 2005.’

“While this case has drawn national and international attention, it is symptomatic of widespread battles over orthodoxy in the denomination of 2.3 million members. In the last year, about a dozen churches nationwide have broken with the Episcopal Church USA, and more are discussing the matter. Other churches have split or joined theologically conservative Anglican movements” (*Christianity Today* [June 2005], 22-23).

Oklahoma Pastor Tapped to Lead Disciples of Christ

“Bartlesville, Okla. — The Rev. Sharon E. Watkins, senior minister of the Disciples Christian Church of Bartlesville, has been nominated to become the next leader of the Indianapolis-based Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

“If elected in July at an assembly in Portland, Ore., Watkins would be the first female leader for the 770,000-member denomination.

Watkins, 50, was unanimously endorsed by the denomination's General Board to be its next general minister and president" (*The Indianapolis Star* [April 30, 2005], B3.

Poll Finds Many Teenagers Lack Basic Bible Knowledge

"Washington — There's considerable ignorance about the Bible among U.S. teens, judging from a Gallup Poll released recently.

"Fewer than half the 1,002 youths polled knew that Jesus turned water into wine at the Cana wedding, and nearly two-thirds couldn't identify a quote from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount or the relation of the road to Damascus to the Apostle Paul's conversion. About one in 10 thought Moses was one of Jesus' 12 apostles" (*The Indianapolis Star* [April 30, 2005], B3.

Lawmakers OK Bill to Ban Suggestive Cheerleading

"Austin, Texas — The state House on Tuesday approved a bill to restrict 'overtly sexually suggestive' cheerleading to more ladylike performances.

"The bill would give the state education commissioner authority to request that school districts review high school performances.

"Democratic Rep. Al Edwards, who filed the legislation, argued bawdy performances are a distraction for students resulting in pregnancies, dropping out and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases" (*The Indianapolis Star* [May 4, 2005], A4.

Be Not Afraid

When the storm clouds gather,
And the billows roll high,
Do we fear and forget,
That our dear Lord is nigh?

He was soundly sleeping
At peace amid the storm.
While the disciples toiled,
The darkness hid His form.

They rowed to save their lives,
Forgetting He was there,
Saw, then cried: "Don't you care?
Please save us, hear our prayer!"

He stilled the raging sea
And told the winds to cease,
To show He rules all things,
To help their faith increase.

Lord, when waves engulf us
And we can't understand,
Please come and still the storm
With love and caring hand.

Lord, help us trust your word,
You bought us with your blood,
You will never leave us,
And you control the flood.

Kathleen Rogol



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