

Magazine

The ACLU Exposed

Bill O'Reilly

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Wednesday, October 12, 2005

The ACLU Exposed: that is the subject of this evening's "Talking Points Memo."

Last night, we reported that the Supreme Court of Oregon had ruled 5 to 1 that live sex shows are permitted in that state under the freedom of expression banner. The ACLU and The Oregonian newspaper both filed briefs in favor of that ruling. But why would the ACLU do that? What's in it for them?

The Supreme Court has consistently ruled that states and local communities have the right to limit expression. This is the U.S. Supreme court, in a time, place, and manner, application of standards. That is, you can't have sex on your front lawn, even if it's a personal expression on private property. The Supreme Court realizes the Constitution requires boundaries for what Americans do. If you don't have boundaries, you have chaos. Thus, community standards and public safety trump personal expression.

But the ACLU doesn't believe that. The organization has moved so far left, that now anything goes.

• **Item:** The ACLU is defending the North American Man Boy Love Association, saying that although the organization champions the criminal rape of children, it has a right to do that under free expression.

• **Item:** The ACLU endorses virtual child pornography and has defended the right of people to obtain real child porn.

**If you don't have boundaries,
you have chaos. Thus,
community standards and
public safety trump
personal expression.**

• **Item:** The ACLU opposed the Minutemen protests at the border, obviously, a legitimate form of expression.

So it seems the ACLU cherry picks its cases. The Minutemen certainly have a right to protest the porous border situation, but the ACLU opposes that expression.—Off the chart hypocritical.

So let's apply the no spin concept to this. The ACLU simply wants a different country, a nation where conduct it approves of, public sexual displays, child molestation literature is allowed. But the ACLU wants to inhibit conduct it disagrees with, like protesting the border and celebrating the birth of Jesus. That's what's going on.

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Manuscripts should be sent to Mike Willis, 6567 Kings Ct., Avon, IN 46123, (317) 272-6520. E-mail: mikewillis1@indy.rr.com.

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Things That Provoke A Child To Anger

Mike Willis

The apostle Paul gave instructions to Christians about proper conduct in the rearing of their children. In Ephesians 6:4, he writes, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The word translated “provoke to anger” is *parorgizo*. It is defined in Liddell and Scott to mean “provoke to anger”; in the passive it means “to be or be made angry” (1343). Thayer says about the same word: “to rouse to wrath, to provoke, exasperate, anger” (490). Fritz Rienecker writes in *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (II:194), “to anger, make angry, to bring one along to a deep-seated anger.”



Please notice his description of the anger under discussion, not as that temporary anger which flames up and quickly subsides, but to a deep-seated anger that one can instill in a child’s character.

The parallel verse in Colossians 3:21 says, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” The word “provoke” is the translation of *erethizo*, which Thayer defines as “to stir up, excite, stimulate. . . in a bad sense, to provoke” (249). Arndt and Gingrich write, “arouse, provoke mostly in a bad sense, irritate, embitter” (308). Rienecker observes, “A child frequently irritated by overseverity or injustice, to which, nevertheless, it must submit, acquires a spirit of sullen resignation, leading to despair” (II:236).

Many of us have seen children reach their teenaged years so full of anger that it is bound to express itself in some negative manner at a later date. The parent may have the “as long as you put your feet under my table” attitude that forces the child to do what he resents doing throughout his teenage years. Then when he turns eighteen and leaves the nest, he is as “wild as a March hare.”

I asked a class at the Lafayette Heights church where I worship, “What are some parental mistakes in disciplining children that can create this sullen, deep-seated anger in children?” Here are some things we came up with:

1. Inconsistent punishment. When a child is not consistently punished, he does not understand what the boundary lines are. When he is punished

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Troubled Over Immorality

Connie W. Adams

Nothing can create more havoc in a home or a congregation than immoral behaviour on the part of Christians or their children. Webster defines immoral as “Inconsistent with purity or good morals.” Immorality is defined by Webster as “the quality or state of being immoral: wickedness, esp. unchastity.” It is immoral to steal, lie, cheat and a host of other things opposed to righteousness. But the term is often used of sexual misconduct. The word fornication (*porneia*) is used of illicit sexual intercourse, including incest (1 Cor. 5:1), adultery (Matt. 5:32; 19:9), homosexuality (Jude 7), and cohabitation of the unmarried (1 Cor. 7:2).

Immorality was a common problem in the first century, especially among Gentiles. “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pet. 4:3). This had been a pattern of life among some of the Corinthians before their conversion. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Our bodies belong to God who made us. “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Paul said that sin is not to rule over us. “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:12-13).

Troubled Over Immoral Mates

Jesus said that fornication is the only reason one can put away a spouse and marry another (Matt. 19:9). It is the ultimate betrayal of trust and vows made before God and man. The husband’s body belongs to his wife and to nobody else. The wife’s body belongs to her husband and only to him (1

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Cor. 7:3-4). How many hearts have been broken and how many tears have been shed over this sin? This immoral act causes great trouble for the innocent party in the marriage. Even if the guilty is penitent, it is a fact that trust has been betrayed and the question arises as to whether you can ever fully trust again. The problem is compounded when there are children involved and agony arises over what is best for them.

But there is also trouble for the guilty one. Should the innocent exercise his/her right to put that one away, then the guilty has now forfeited the right to marriage. Some think that is too heavy a price to pay. But the Lord said, "Whoso marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). The worst problem of all is that God is offended. A soul is at stake. God made his marriage laws strict on purpose. Marriage is ordained of God for the good of the human family. It is the basic unit of all orderly society. While present culture tends to treat adultery as a normal (even expected) thing, God does not view it so. And neither should we.

But *must* the innocent exercise the right to put away the guilty when repentance is evident? Some think that unless the innocent remains in this marriage, now betrayed by fornication, that forgiveness has not been granted. Of course, unless we forgive those who sin against us, we cannot expect God to forgive us either (Matt. 6:14-15). But actions have consequences. It is God's law that the innocent may put away the guilty. Some are able to reestablish the relationship and make the best of it. Others have difficulty. Those on the outside do not know how many times the innocent has been wronged. Was it a one-time fling? Or a part of a pattern of infidelity? It does not take long to betray your vows, but it might take a long time to restore trust and rebuild credibility. What trouble would be avoided if people would just do right.

Troubled Over Pornography

This is an age old problem. It is rampant in our culture in recent years. The viewing of pictures and images of people engaged in every form of sexual activity has spawned a huge industry in this country and around the world. "Adult" bookstores and video houses are springing up, not only in seedy neighborhoods, but up and down the interstate highways. The computer age has brought it into homes all across the world. Businessmen and women, housewives, husbands who stay up late and surf the web, children in their own bedrooms, or at the family computer when they are unsupervised, and sometimes preachers have been caught up in this immoral trade. Home have been broken up because of it.

The works of the flesh include "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness" (Gal. 5:19-20). Peter described those who have "eyes full of adultery" (2 Pet. 2:14). Can there be a

more accurate description of this sin? Jude describes them as "filthy dreamers" (Jude 8). Jude also said, "But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 17-19). Paul warned Titus of those to whom nothing is pure "but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Tit. 1:15-16).

If we could keep our minds thinking on the kind of things Paul mentioned in Philippians 4:8, there would be no room or taste for pornography. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true . . . honest . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report . . . of virtue . . ." and worthy of "praise"; then he added, "Think on these things."

In addition to violating what is taught in the foregoing passages, the trouble with pornography is that it arouses passion, distorts reality, creates false and unreasonable expectations in marriage, causes women to be seen as objects rather than persons of worth, and reduces people to the level of the brute. When you purchase such material, you help subsidize an evil which is contributing to the downfall of souls and our nation as well.

When a husband (or wife) is found to have such an attraction for pornography, it is time to sit down and have some soul searching talks. It is not a time to scream and yell and sharpen sarcastic tongues. Talk frankly about your sexual life. It may be that one has unrealistic expectations. Or that one has not been satisfying the other. The pressures of daily work and life may contribute to it. One may tend to be cold, prudish, or unresponsive. And sometimes there are much deeper problems. Some are just given to sensuality. They have allowed their minds and hearts to be corrupted.

When children are found to be caught up in this sin, it is time to have some no-nonsense education about sexuality, keeping it within the bounds of dignity and casting it in a context of what the Bible teaches on the subject. Children caught in this snare may have a hard time ever being realistic about their own expectations in marriage. Parents need to supervise what movies are seen, what television shows are watched and the use of computers must be monitored. Again, yelling will not solve the problem.

Like Job, we need to "make a covenant with mine (our) eyes" (Job. 31:1). "The lust of the eye" (1 John 2:15-17) is a powerful force leading us in the wrong direction. The images we see have a direct influence on what we think. And "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Pornography corrupts the heart and so corrupts the person, preventing him from being fashioned in the image of Christ.

P.O. Box 91346, Louisville, Kentucky 40291

Christ Centered Religion

Larry Ray Hafley

All people, young and old, need to be rooted and grounded (indoctrinated) in the word of Christ (Col. 2:4-8; 3:16, 17). A Christ-centered, Bible-based religion unashamedly has a verse for its existence (Isa. 8:20; 1 Cor. 4:6). Thanks be unto God that we do not have to rely upon human schemes, which have the flimsy foundation of worldly wisdom, in order to worship God acceptably. The very reason that many have succumbed to Satan is because of their lack of reverence at the word of God. The clever reasonings of men are nothing more than their vain imaginations which Paul and the prophets say the faithful must pull and cast down (Jer. 1:10; 2 Cor. 10:3-5).

It is true that innovations of brethren have brought division and dissension, but it is unfair to blame the steadfast for the consequent loss of souls. The faithful belong to no party or sect which has confused and dimmed the vision of honest hearts and sincere souls. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:3, 4).

All human plans, rituals, ceremonies and doctrines, whether they originate in denominationalism or in the hearts of deceived brethren, make the word sent from heaven void and vain (Matt. 15:8, 9). Therefore, they must be exposed and condemned (Eph. 5:11; Rev. 2:2, 3). Only the work and worship, the order and organization of God, as expressed in the New Testament, will stand in that last, great day.

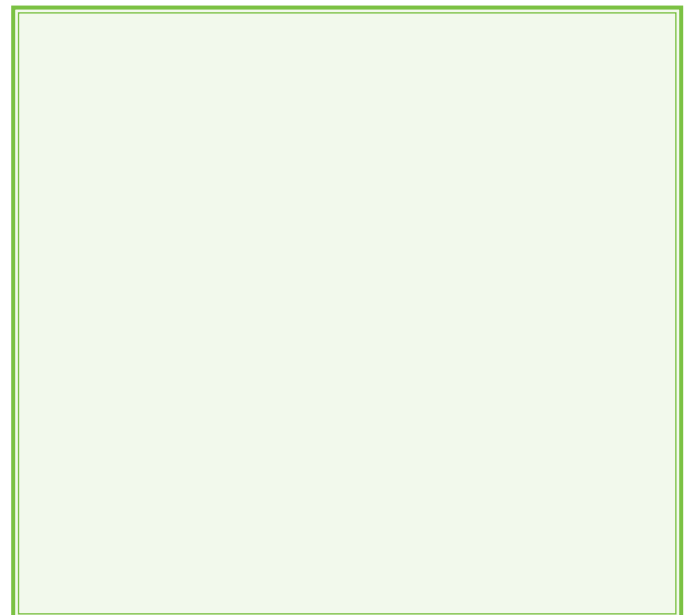
Christ is the sum and substance, the center and the circumference of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). That being true, why adulterate and contaminate that which comes from him by adding the things invented by men? Does it make good sense to take the worship and service of Christ, as outlined and defined in the word of God, and add to it the items of man's invention?

All agree (because the Bible teaches it) that Christ is high, holy, and heavenly (Rom. 9:5; Heb. 9:25-28). Would

any man seek to add or adorn Christ with any trait or character not given him in the Bible? We have the perfect, complete Son of man, the divine Son of God. Shall we call a convention of men and seek to add anything to his divine and eternal majesty? Every sincere saint is repulsed by the very hint of such an endeavor. In the words of Paul, "God forbid!" Likewise, therefore, since we have the complete work and the pure worship of Christ set forth by Spirit led men in the New Testament, dare we add to it what they did not advocate or advance? See the parallel? If the very person of Christ cannot be improved, upon what basis would we presume to add human traditions to his divine appointments of worship as set forth in the New Testament?

Those who contend for traditions and worship activities unknown to the Bible need to answer the argument above. If they will not allow any to add to the pure person of Christ, how can they be allowed to add to the perfect system of worship given by the him through the Spirit?

4626 Osage, Baytown, Texas 77521



Bibles For Hungering Souls

Bobby L. Graham

In the early days following Hurricane Katrina, I began hearing a few references to the requests for Bibles being made by the people of the Gulf coast. I immediately thought that their hearts must have been humbled by the disaster through which they had passed and its aftermath. They were then manifesting their need for God. After all, the psalmist also had a similar experience in Psalms 119:67, 71, and 75.

Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word (Ps. 119:67, NKJV).

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes (Ps. 119:71, NKJV).

I know, O Lord, that Your judgments *are* right, And *that* in faithfulness You have afflicted me (Ps. 119:75, NKJV).

When people who have either avoided the Bible or read it later acknowledge their need to have God's word in their lives, we who are able ought to help to provide for their spiritual needs. Such is part of the commission of our Lord to teach the gospel to all. How could you sow the seed in any purer form?

Knowing the urgency of acting in a timely way, before hearts grew cold again, I began gathering a group of men willing to take the Bibles and tracts to the coast. Numerous individuals and two congregations provided funds to purchase the materials and to meet the expenses for the trips.

Trip #1 Report

After buying about one hundred Bibles and receiving about thirty-five used ones good enough to hand out, we took them Monday, September 19, to the coast of Alabama and Mississippi. Along with three other brothers (David Cox, Jeremy Paschall, and Frank Richey), I went to distribute the Bibles and many tracts (probably a total of 250 of three titles: *How to Study the Bible*, *The One True Church*, and *Making Your Life Right with God*) with them.

We worked parts of two days, spent the night, had good success and arrived home last night. We distributed them in Bayou le Batre, Alabama Port, and Heron Bay, Alabama and in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The stop in Mississippi was the one where we thought we were able to accomplish the most good because of a local church being there, so that we could write the church name and phone number on all of the tracts handed out there. Local brethren were aware of our work and thankful for it. Many of them were occupied in making their houses livable again. To conserve our time, we concentrated on locations where the public was coming to pick up supplies. Most of the people were eager and thankful to receive them and began examining them and the tracts before leaving. Their hearts were obviously humble and hungering for God. They wanted the Bibles as a dog lapping up water.

A number of people and congregations had a part in this effort. I am not even aware of all of the people, because some of them handed money to another person, who then handed it to me. We are thankful for the part that all had in this effort.

Trip #2 Report

Beginning Thursday, September 29, we went to Pascagoula and Gulfport, Mississippi to hand out close to 350 Bibles and 400 tracts (same titles as first trip). The only different person on this trip was Mike Johnson from Huntsville, who took the place of Frank Richey, who could not go this time. Our concentration was again on distribution centers, where we could meet the people coming to obtain food, water, and other supplies. Different churches and people in several congregations helped us with Bibles and money to buy the materials and make the trip. A little boy named Jake wanted his own New Testament to go to somebody needing it.

The timing of this last trip was propitious and possibly providential, because it was the last day for the busy distribution center to operate. Distribution of the Bibles and tracts would have been possible after its closing, but the

process would have been much slower without a center to which the public came for their basic supplies.

We tried to avoid centers operated by religious groups, because of the obvious resistance that might have resulted when the person in charge saw our tracts, which quite clearly set forth New Testament teaching. We told the people receiving the Bibles about the tracts placed inside them, so they might not expect to see them later. On the second trip we took with us labels with the names and telephone numbers of two churches, prepared by two of the men, to identify the congregations in Gulfport and Pascagoula as contacts for the people.

Some Observations

One of the most encouraging aspects of this effort was the encouragement that we received from brethren. All who learned of it spoke encouragingly to us about it. Many, even some non-Christians, offered money to help. Some of them had already given to meet physical needs. We even had to turn some down so that we not have so much money remaining that we needed to return it. A number of

brethren were quite generous in their giving. Just as the apostle Paul was encouraged by the brethren, so can we be encouraged (Rom. 15:14).

Let us also remember that the spiritual is superior to the physical. While helping the people who had lost so much in the storm with their material needs, let us remember the spiritual dimension. Their spiritual needs do not cease at such times. What we do for them in this realm will have more permanence than the water, food, money, and clothing which we send them (Matt. 6:33; John 6:27). Times of suffering often produce humbler hearts; take advantage of such times in the lives of people to point them heavenward.

When we challenge brethren to act according to the will of God, we do them and ourselves a favor. Most will respond favorable, and many will grow spiritually thereby (1 Tim. 4:7-8).

24978 Bubba Trail, Athens, Alabama 35613

bobbylgraham@juno.com

Are the Psalms a Part of the Law?

Johnie Edwards

In order to introduce some unscriptural practice, there are those who argue that the Psalms are not a part of the Law of Moses! For an example, those who try to prove it scriptural to use mechanical instrumental music in today's worship, appeal to a number of Psalms which commanded mechanical music.

1. The Old Testament Authorized Mechanical Instrumental Music. A number of Old Testament passages teach that instrumental music was commanded by the Lord. "And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: *for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets*" (2 Chron. 29:25). Psalm 150 taught the people to "Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs" (Ps. 150:3-4). Why did the Psalms teach the use of mechanical instrumental music in worship? Psalm 81:1-4 tells us, "For this was a *statue for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.*"

2. The Psalms Belong to the Law of Moses. John records, "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your *law*, I said, Ye are gods?" (John 10:34). Now, just where is this written? It is in Psalm 82:6, and Jesus said that Psalm 82:6 is in the Jewish law! Jesus himself put the Psalms in the Law of Moses when he talked with early disciples. "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be *fulfilled*, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the *Psalms*, concerning me" (Luke 24:44).

3. The Psalms, A Part of the Law, Have Been Fulfilled. If the Bible teaches anything at all, it teaches that the law of Moses served its purpose and has been taken out of the way (Col. 2:14-16). Jesus said, the law has been "fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17). Paul argued that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us into Christ," and, "we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24-25). Thus, we are not under the law of Moses! Perhaps the best argument of all is Paul's "allegory" in Galatians 4:21-31, when he told the Galatians that the two women in his story were the "two covenants." Hagar was the bondwoman and Sarah was the freewoman, and Paul concluded, "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." We are not children of the law of Moses, but of the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

4121 Woodyard Rd., Bloomington, Indiana 47404

Jewish Feasts and Festivals (1)

Kyle Campbell

In order to fully understand the Jewish religion and people, and to gain a greater perspective of a number of events in the New Testament, one needs to study the Jewish feasts and festivals. The Jewish feasts and festivals were scheduled at specific times in the annual calendar and they were both civil and religious in nature. Some marked the beginning or the end of the agricultural year, while others commemorated historic events in the Jewish nation. All of the feasts were marked by thanksgiving and joyous feasting.

The feasts and festivals of Israel were community observances. The poor, the widow, the orphan, the Levite and the sojourner or foreigner were invited to most of the feasts. The accounts of these feasts suggest a potluck type of meal, with some parts of the meal reserved for the priests and the rest given to those who gathered at the temple or the altar for worship. One of the feasts, Passover, originated in the home and later was transferred to the temple. The rest were apparently observed at specific times during the year and in designated places.

The Jews also had three great “pilgrimage” festivals: Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. They were very important in the Jewish faith, and every male was expected to observe them (Deut. 16:16). The religious pilgrimage from the various towns and cities to the temple became annual events. In all the feasts and festivals, the nation of Israel remembered its past and renewed its faith in the Lord who created and sustained his people. We will be examining these feasts and festivals in this article and the next. But before considering the feasts, it will be helpful to take a brief look at the Jewish calendar and how the Jews reckoned these events in their year. Following the discussion of the calendar, we will investigate a complete list of all the feasts and festivals observed by the Jewish people.

The Jewish Calendar

The Jewish calendar was based upon the lunar month; that is, the beginning of the month was marked by the new

moon. The moon was carefully observed by the people of Bible times. When it appeared as a thin crescent at sunset, it marked the beginning of a new month. The lunar month was about twenty-nine days. Therefore, the first crescent of the new moon would appear twenty-nine or thirty days after the previous new moon. The marking of time in ancient days revolved around the months, seasonal religious festivals and the year.

The first month of the Hebrew calendar was in the spring, around March/April or the beginning of the spring equinox. In their early history the Israelites adopted Canaanite names for the months which were connected with agriculture and climate. Only four of these names are mentioned in the Old Testament. The month Abib, or “ripening of grain” (Lev. 2:14), was the first month (March/April), which was at the time of barley harvest (Exod. 13:4; 23:15). The month Ziv, or “splendor,” referring to the beauty of flowers blooming at that time (1 Kings 6:1, 37), was the second month (April/May). Ethanim (1 Kings 8:2) was the seventh month (September/October), which occurred during the rainy season. Bul (2 Kings 6:38) was the eighth month (October/November). Its name may have reference to “rain,” since this month was between the early and latter rains. These four names were associated with the most important agricultural times of the year.

In its later history the nation of Israel adopted all twelve months of the Babylonian calendar as their civil calendar, but not all of them are listed in the Bible. The seven that occur are Nisan, the first month (Neh. 2:1); Sivan, the third month (Esth. 8:9), Elul, the sixth month (Neh. 6:15); Chislev, the ninth month (Zech. 7:1); Tebeth, the tenth month (Esth. 2:16); Shebat, the eleventh month (Zech. 1:7); and Adar, the twelfth month (Ezra 6:15). The beginning of this calendar also coincided with the spring equinox.

Since the months were based on the lunar system and since each month averaged 29 1/2 days, the year would be 354 days, or eleven days short of the solar year. In just three years the calendar would be off more than a month.

To reconcile the calendar, seven months would be added to the calendar over a nineteen-year cycle, resulting in an error of only two hours and four minutes by the end of the cycle. Israel adjusted her calendar in a similar fashion by adding a thirteenth month, known as Adar Sheni, whenever necessary. The year in which such an adjustment was made was determined by the Sanhedrin, and ultimately fixed in a permanent manner by astronomical calculation. In a cycle of nineteen years the third, sixth, eighth, eleventh, fourteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth are made leap-years with an average length of 384 days. It is plain, therefore, that the Jewish year has long been, and still is, a luni-solar year. Because this system was developed in harmony with ritual requirements, it is called the sacred Jewish year.

Sabbath/Shabbat

The Hebrew word for Sabbath means “to cease or abstain” and the Sabbath is discussed in Exodus 16:22-30; 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-16; 34:21; 35:21-3; Leviticus 23:3; 26:2; Numbers 15:32-36; 28:9-10; and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. Exodus 20:8-11 reminded the nation of Israel to remember that God rested on the seventh day of creation (Gen. 2:2). Israel was reminded of its bondage years when there was no rest (Deut. 5:12-15). This passage fixed the origin of the Sabbath in the bondage of the Hebrews in Egypt.

The Israelites were instructed to include the family, the hired servants, the stranger, and even their domestic animals in observance of this holy day. All were commanded to cease from normal labor, even gathering firewood (Num. 15:32-36) or kindling a fire (Exod. 35:2-3). Later in Jewish history, the Jews were forbidden to travel more than 2,000 cubits or seven-eighths of a mile on the Sabbath. Those who violated the Sabbath would be cut off from among the people or could be put to death by stoning (Exod. 31:12-26).

Although the Sabbath was not intended as a day of worship, it did become a day of convocation to the Lord. A specific burnt sacrifice on the Sabbath was required in Numbers 28:9-10. In later periods of Jewish history, prayer and other rituals became the procedure for observing the Sabbath and just prior to the New Testament times, the Sabbath became a day of assembly when the principle synagogue service was conducted.

The Sabbath observance, which occurred every week, had two purposes. First, it symbolized that the nation of Israel had been set apart by the Lord as his special people. Second, it was also a celebration of the fact that the land belonged to God. This is seen in God’s provision of a Sabbatical year, which was one year out of every seven when the land would rest from cultivation (Lev. 25:1-7). The law included the fields of grain and the vineyards. Even that which grew from the planting and pruning of the sixth year

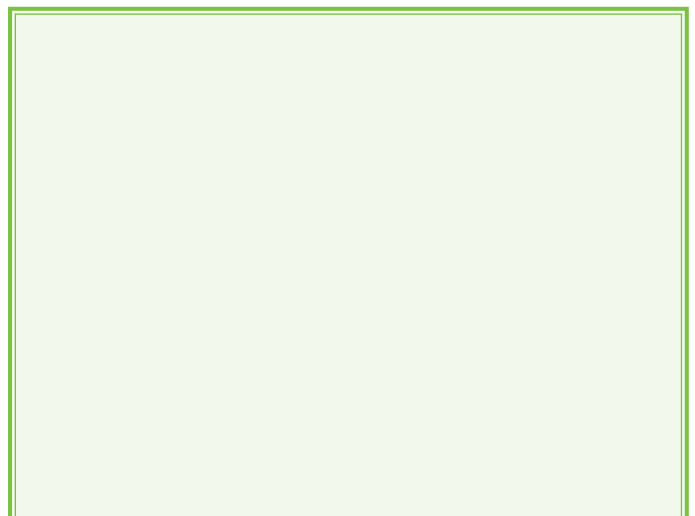
was not to be consumed by the owner. Eventually, the cancellation of debts was added to the land rest as a part of the Sabbatical year. Debts to fellow Jews were to be forgiven during this year, although debts of non-Jews might be collected. But the spirit of generosity was encouraged even toward non-Jews. Indentured servants were to be granted their freedom. Furthermore, they were also to be provided with generous portions of meat and drink.

After every seven Sabbatical years, or forty-nine years, the fiftieth year was set aside as the year of Jubilee. Once the Israelites possessed the land of Canaan, it became their obligation to observe this year (Lev. 23:15-16; 25:8-55; 27:14-24; Jer. 34:8, 14-17; Isa. 61:1-2). The Jubilee year began with the blowing of the ram’s horn. The year of Jubilee was a special year in family renewal. A man who was bound to another as a slave or indentured servant was set free and returned to his own family. If any members of his family were also bound, the entire family was set free. Houses and lands could also be redeemed in the year of Jubilee. The land owned by Levites was exempted from this law; they could redeem their land at any time.

The Sabbath observances were rounded out by the observance of special Sabbaths where no servile work could be done. The Jews had fifty-two regular Sabbaths and seven special Sabbaths. These included the first and last days of Passover (Lev. 23:7-8), Pentecost (Lev. 23:21), New Year’s Day (Lev. 23:24-25), the day of Atonement (Lev. 23:28) and the first and last days of the feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:35-36).

Having laid a significant foundation concerning the Jewish calendar and the regular Sabbath celebrations, the next article will examine the New Moon and the yearly Jewish feasts and festivals and their significance in Jewish life.

251 Hunters Glen Dr., Lufkin, Texas 75904
kylec@consolidated.net



Why Christians Have Extra-Marital Affairs

Donnie V. Rader

How does the marriage deteriorate? It may be because of work schedules and busy lifestyles that the couple have very little time for each other (cf. Eph. 5:25-28). They may let up on their efforts to keep communication what it ought to be (1 Pet. 3:1-7).

We ask why because Christians should know better. Christians should have the best and strongest marriages. All too often we hear of some brother or sister who has become entangled in an affair. At times, it is with another Christian.

When I talk with some who have fallen to the temptation, I hear statements like, “I never thought I would do this.” Or, “If you had asked me a year or two ago, I would have said that I would never think of having an affair.”

How, then, does it happen? How can people who believe it to be sinful get involved?

It Is a Sin

First, let’s consider that both pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships are sinful. Paul said that fornicators and adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Later, in the same chapter, he gave the command to “flee fornication” (v. 18). The Thessalonians were instructed, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality” (1 Thess. 4:3).

Note the contrast made in Hebrews 13:4, “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

The bed (sexual relationships) is honorable within marriage. However, the fornicator (one who has pre-marital relationships) and the adulterer (one who has an extra-marital relationship) God will condemn.

Continual reminders that it is a sin will help prevent the problem. It certainly helped Joseph when he was tempted (Gen. 39). He recalled that this was wickedness and sin against God (Gen. 39:12).

Two Primary Reasons From Proverbs 2:17

Who forsakes the companion of her youth, And forgets the covenant of her God (Prov. 2:17).

This verse is speaking of an immoral woman (a seductress). Two things are said about her as she engages in her sin. (1) *She forsakes the companion of her youth*. That is, her marriage has deteriorated to the point that she is not bothered by her action. (2) *She forgets the covenant of her God*. That is, her faith has weakened to the point that it will not keep her from her sin.

1. Faith get weaker. This should be obvious since those with a strong faith don’t have extra-marital affairs. A strong faith (like Joseph had) will serve as a wall of resistance to the temptation.

How does one's faith get weaker? It may be that things have so developed in their lives that little time is left for spiritual matters (Matt. 6:33; Luke 8:14). Study and reflection on the word is not a daily matter as it once was (Acts 17:11). Prayer isn't uttered as often as in time past (Dan. 6:10; Ps. 55:17). This does not happen overnight. Gradually one's faith grows weaker (Heb. 2:1). Therein is part of the problem. It happens so slowly it is hardly noticeable until it is too late.

As faith gets weaker, material and worldly things have a greater attraction. The fear of God is lost (Exod. 20:20; Ps. 34). One is not as bothered by sin as he would be with a stronger faith. Now, it is easier to do things he knows to be wrong.

2. The marriage deteriorates. This, too, should be obvious since those with strong marriages don't have extra marital affairs. Remembering and holding to the commitments of marriage will also serve as a wall of resistance to the sin of adultery.

How does the marriage deteriorate? It may be because of work schedules and busy lifestyles that the couple have very little time for each other (cf. Eph. 5:25-28). They may let up on their efforts to keep communication what it ought to be (1 Pet. 3:1-7). One or both partners in the marriage may have emotional needs that are not being met. This is not to suggest that one's mate is at fault here. It may be due to one's own work schedule or busy life that his or her emotional needs are not being met. This is a dangerous situation in that this opens the door or another to meet those needs.

This too happens gradually (Heb. 2:1). They don't have a great marriage one day and then it comes apart a week later. Little by little they pull apart. One or both neglect to give the marriage the attention it deserves. In time, they may not have the love for each other they once had.

When the marriage deteriorates, the commitment to one's mate means less. Focus is more on self than on one's mate. Now one is at a great risk when one of the opposite sex shows him or her some attention. Those whose marriage had declined are not as apt to be bothered by someone flirting with them.

Couple these two problems together and you have the recipe for disaster. When one's faith gets weaker and his marriage deteriorates, there is little to keep him from the sin of adultery.

Become Careless

Those who are being careful and watchful about how their words could be taken, their actions could be perceived, or how a situation may look is not likely to fall into the snares of adultery. Those who do are often overcome because of their carelessness.

David was careless in how he let his eyes continue to gaze upon Bathsheba (who also was careless in displaying herself in sight of others) until lust developed in his heart (2 Sam. 11:1-5). His carelessness allowed him to inquire and send for her. Their sin of fornication would never have happened had they not been careless.

The Proverb writer warned about carelessness. Speaking of dealing with a harlot he wrote, "Remove your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her house" (Prov. 5:8). In other words, don't play with fire! Run! Don't put yourself in what might be a tempting situation. Rather than thinking you are strong enough to withstand any advances that might be made toward you, wisdom says to go "far from her."

Joseph well understood this principle. When Potiphar's wife approached him, he "fled and ran outside" (Gen. 39:12). All too often men and women (who are not married to each other) become too familiar. They are careless in what they talk about and how long they talk to each other. They are

careless in how they touch. They are careless in being alone.

Put this carelessness with a weakened faith and a marriage that is on the decline, disaster may not be far behind.

Fail to Recognize the Danger Signals

The Bible not only tells us that premarital sex and extra-marital sex are wrong, but tells us of things to watch for that could lead to such a sin.

1. Flirting with the eyes. The Proverb writer warned, "Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids" (Prov. 6:25). She may say more with the look of her eyes than with her mouth.

2. Flatter and lies. Again the writer of Proverbs says, "To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress" (Prov. 6:24). She may flatter him and tell him what a man he is. She strokes his ego and makes him feel like he is king of the world. "With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, With her flattering lips she seduced him" (Prov. 7:21). She will use lies to persuade him, telling him he is the only one for her (Prov. 7:15). She is lying for she would take any fellow that came along.

3. Looking and lusting. Jesus warned about looking upon a woman and lusting after her. To do so is to commit adultery in his heart (Matt. 5:28). In the context of warning about the harlot, the Proverb writer said, "Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids" (Prov. 6:25).

The apostle Paul focuses on how to stop the sin of fornication long before it comes to the overt act.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to

possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness (1 Thess. 4:3-7).

Notice what Paul said. We should abstain from fornication (v. 3). In order to do that, we should know how to possess our own vessels. That is, we must control our bodies (v. 4). In order to control our bodies, we must control our thoughts (v. 5).

4. Thinking it could never happen to me. We are in real danger when we have the attitude that we could never be tempted to commit this sin. We must not forget the warning, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). Doctor William F. Harley, Jr. said, “It became clear to me early in my counseling experience that affairs were much more common than I had ever imagined. But now, after years of marriage counseling, I have come to realize that almost everyone, given the right conditions, would have an affair” (*Surviving An Affair* 16).

What Can be Done to Prevent an Extra-Marital Affair?

1. Work daily building your faith. Study your Bible daily (Acts 17:11). It will build a strong faith and maintain it (Rom. 10:17). Pray fervently every day (1 Thess. 5:17).

2. Do not neglect your marriage. Cleave to your mate (Matt. 19:4-6). Take time for each other (Eph. 5:16). Share your lives with each other. Communicate (1 Pet. 3:7). Listen to William F. Harley again, “When you stop to think about it, privacy isn’t something that improves marriages. It’s honesty and openness that improve marriages. The more information you have about each other’s thoughts and activities, the easier it is to meet each other’s needs and resolve conflicts. Privacy actually blocks access to that important information, and that ultimately leads to marital failure” (*Ibid.* 41).

3. Reset goals to emphasize the spiritual. Make it your purpose to serve God (Eccl. 12:13). Make spiritual matters first and foremost in your life (Matt. 6:33). Destroy any wrong goals you may have (Matt. 19:16-22).

4. Watch for the pitfalls that lead to adultery. Read Proverbs 5-7 carefully. Don’t lust (Prov. 6:25). Know the tools that are used to allure (Prov. 7:10). Watch for flirting (Prov. 6:24-25; 7:21). Understand that a seducer will lie (Prov. 7:15). Don’t play with fire. Stay clear of a tempting situation (Prov. 5:8). Know that opportunities and occasions to have an affair will come (Prov. 7:19-20).

May God help his people to conduct themselves as they should and not commit the heinous crime of adultery.

1533 Highway 41-A North, Shelbyville, Tennessee 37160

Demas

David C. Morrison, Jr.

“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world and departed to Thessalonica” (2 Tim.4:10). Demas is only mentioned briefly in Scripture. The first time we see him he is with Paul and Luke sending greetings (Col. 4:14). The second time we see Demas he is referred to as a “fellow-worker” (Phile. 24). The third and final occasion leaves us with the sadness of one who once was faithful, but chooses the “way of the world.”

Paul was in prison for preaching the gospel (2 Tim. 1:11-12) and was treated as a “criminal, an evil doer” (2 Tim. 2:9). Paul is convinced he is going to die (2 Tim. 4:6). Demas forsakes him.

“Forsaken Me”

Can you imagine the bitterness of a friend and fellow worker forsaking you under these circumstances? The sense of the word “forsaken” is to abandon; willful desertion.

We tend to think of Paul as being popular and successful. In the eyes of those of the world he was not popular or successful. Perhaps Demas sees his imprisonment as an opportunity to get away from this old man. It was just too hot for Demas. Paul needed a friend, but he had to stand alone. This reminds us of our Lord when all the disciples forsook him (Matt. 26:31), the plight of Job (Job 19:13-19), and David (Ps. 55:12-14). The sting is made all the more painful, because Demas was a friend, a brother in Christ, a fellow worker in the kingdom.

Christians must give more than lip service to comradery. We are soldiers in God’s army. We must protect one another. We must stand shoulder to shoulder in the heat of battle. We must never allow a brother to run to the forefront of the fight, only to turn and see his fellow-soldiers forsaking him!

“Love for the World”

Paul tells us why Demas forsook him. Demas “loved this present world.” Demas loved “living and life” and the

things of this world that accompany our living here. He wanted to stay here. Paul was facing death. This made such a very real possibility for Demas as well. Can we relate? This seems pretty reasonable.

Remember Jesus’ words in Matthew 16:25, “Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it.” Demas is saving his physical life only to lose it all. Paul, lost his life and found eternal life.

James 4:4 says, “Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (cf. 1 John 2:14-17)

Where do we stand? There is no middle ground, either we love God or we love the world. “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:18-19). When those who are of the world (carnally minded) see Jesus living in us, they will in turn hate us. When we are holy and distinct and pure and shun the very appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22), you can be sure the world will take note of it. Far too many have a strong desire to be “accepted” by those of the world. Demas was guilty of forsaking Paul under harsh circumstances. How often have we forsaken Christ to simply appease those of the world?

“Departed Unto Thessalonica”

This was Demas’ haven, his security blanket, far from the heat of persecution. Once he made the decision to forsake Paul, the Devil was there to provide the road map to Thessalonica.

Today if one decides to forsake the Lord, he can be sure the Devil will provide a road map (1 Pet. 5:8)

204 Backusburg Rd., Kirksey, Kentucky 42054, dcmor@wk.net



The next three articles are the concluding articles in the series “A Study of the ‘I Am’ Statements of the Apostle John.”

I Am The Resurrection and The Life

Kyle Campbell

The account of the raising of Lazarus is the climactic sign in the gospel of John. Edersheim states, “We have here the fullest evidence alike of His Divinity and Humanity; as regards those who witnessed it, the highest manifestation of faith and of unbelief.”

A number of scholars isolate seven of the miracles of Jesus, all performed in the public eye, in John’s gospel: (1) The turning of water into wine (2:1-11); (2) the healing of the nobleman’s son (4:43-54); (3) the healing of the impotent man (5:1-15); (4) the feeding of the multitude (6:1-14); (5) the walking on the water (6:16-21); (6) the cure of the blind man (9:1-41); and (7) the raising of Lazarus (11:1-45).

Each of the seven “signs” of Jesus before his death in the gospel of John illustrate some particular aspect of his divine authority, but the one in John 11 exemplifies his power over the last and most irresistible enemy—death. They are called “signs” (John 20:30) because they point to something beyond themselves; i.e., the power and ability of Christ. In most cases, these signs were followed by a confession of belief on the part of many of the witnesses (2:11; 4:53; 6:66, 69; 9:38; 11:45).

The resurrection is not placed in the above list because it did not actually take place in public sight and was performed on Jesus himself. The draught of fishes (21:2-11), the only miracle recorded after his resurrection, is not considered in the above list because it occurs in John’s epilogue, which is not a part of the main body of his gospel.

The belief in the resurrection and eternal life was not introduced by Jesus. It was expressed by men in the Old Testament (Job 14:12-15; 19:25-27; Pss. 16:9-10; 17:15;

21:4; 49:15; 121:8; 133:3; Isa. 25:8; 26:19; Dan. 12:2-3, 13; Hosea 13:14). The resurrection was a commonly held belief among the Jews, as is shown in several instances of the inter-testamental writings (2 Macc. 7:9, 14, 23, 36; 12:43; 14:46; Wisdom of Sol. 5:15; 6:17-19). Moreover, we have clear evidence from the Scriptures that the issue was debated by the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 22:23-32; Acts 23:6, 8; 24:14-15; 26:6-8).

William James said, “The best use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts life.” With this noble saying in mind, we will examine this final miracle recorded in John 11:1-45.



The Church at Bethany

Historical Background

Bethany was a small village about two miles from Jerusalem. When Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha became sick, Jesus said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby” (v. 4). The time between Lazarus’ death and Jesus’ arrival at Bethany was four days. Two full days had intervened between the arrival of the messengers and Jesus’ departure for Bethany (v. 6). The trip to Bethany would have taken at least a day, since Bethany was more than twenty miles distant from Jesus’ “place” in Perea (10:40-42).

So the death of Lazarus must have occurred not long after Jesus was first contacted concerning his illness. McGarvey states, “He delayed that he might discipline and perfect the faith of the sisters and the disciples. He withheld his blessing that he might enlarge it.”

As Jesus approached Bethany, Martha came to him and said, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask

of God, God will give it thee” (vv. 21-22). Although some attribute this statement to bold faith, her response to Jesus in verse 39 shows that this is more a nebulous hope than a settled conviction.

The statement that Jesus made in response to her, “I am the resurrection and the life,” is not redundant. Both of these claims are followed by subsequent statements, i.e., “I am the resurrection . . . he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” and “I am the life . . . whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” These parallel statements are quite remarkable because the second clause reinforces the first. In what is surely one of his most majestic and comforting utterances, Jesus said that he embodied the vital power to bring the dead to life. These are not mere doctrines about future events, but present realities in Jesus himself.

“I Am The Resurrection”

Jesus was proven to be the Son of God by his resurrection (Rom. 1:4). But when he stated, “I am the resurrection,” He meant that he had the power to raise the dead. But his statement went further, for he truly is the author or the cause of the resurrection. He had said earlier, “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:40).

Without Christ, there would have been no resurrection at the end of time. Therefore, his resurrection is critical to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:3). Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:20, calls Jesus “the firstfruits of them that sleep.” He was not the first to rise from the dead. The Lord had even raised others from the dead (Luke 7:11-15; 8:40-56). But he was the only one to rise and never die again! Because of this mind-boggling power, we have assurance of his promise to raise us from the dead (John 5:28-29).

The Hebrew writer said, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (2:14-15). We are “*subject to bondage*” because of sin and death. But Jesus is to sit by the Father’s right hand until all enemies are subjected to him, and the last enemy is death (1 Cor. 15:25-26).

Because we are “dead in our trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1-2), we are in desperate need of his power over death. The Lord said, “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” Physical death now no longer has any substantial effect on us. Because the death of Christ deprived death of its power, the death of a Christian is not technically death.

“I Am The Life”

Where there is resurrection, there is life. In the prologue of John’s gospel, he wrote, “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (1:4). When Jesus stated “I am the life,” he meant that he has the power to bestow eternal life. In John 6:33, Jesus referred to himself as “the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” Jesus said in John 10:28, “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” In a vision before John, the Lord said, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:18).

The one who believes in Christ has eternal life that transcends physical death. Faith does not preserve us from temporal death; but when we die, those who believe and obey, in an instant transition, will be restored to life in the resurrection (1 Thess. 4:16-17). As Christ is the resurrection of the dead, so is he the life of the living—absolute life, having life in himself, for it has been given to him by the Father (John 5:26).

Barclay writes, “Through Jesus Christ we know that we are journeying, not to the sunset, but to the sunrise; we know, as Mary Webb put it, that death is a gate on the skyline. In the most real sense we are not on our way to death, but on our way to life.” Jesus came to give us “abundant life” (John 10:10), because our lives are full of death and we are powerless to arrest it. Because of Christ’s magnanimous death and powerful resurrection, we now can pass from “death unto life” (1 John 3:14) and live now with a “lively hope” (1 Pet. 1:3) for the hereafter.

“Believest Thou This?”

Perhaps this question was asked because it was a proper time for Martha to test her own faith. Jesus said in John 8:24, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” Martha’s confession, “Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son



A first century tomb advertised as Lazarus’ tomb.

of God, which should come into the world,” follows in a wonderful mold of other confessions in the Scriptures including Nathanael’s (John 1:49), Peter’s (John 6:66-69; Matt. 16:16), the centurion’s (Matt. 27:54) Thomas’s (John 20:24-29) and the eunuch’s (Acts 8:37). Perhaps Martha did not know all which that name, “Christ, the Son of God” involved, but all that it did involve she was ready to believe.

Edersheim comments that this must have been a deeply touching scene: the outpouring of Mary’s sorrow, the firmness of her faith and the appeal of her tears. The Jews who witnessed it were likewise as moved as she and wept with her. It is recorded of Jesus that he wept three times, and in every case there is the tragic undertone of man’s doom as a result of his sin and of his death to save man from this fate.

The tears of Jesus show not only his humanity, but also his deity. He came to show God’s love and mercy and to reveal how God cares for us and enters into our suffering (Heb. 2:9-10; 4:14-16). The greatest difficulty in the problem of suffering is the fact that God suffers; yet his sorrowful love for his lost children is the crowning glory of God himself.

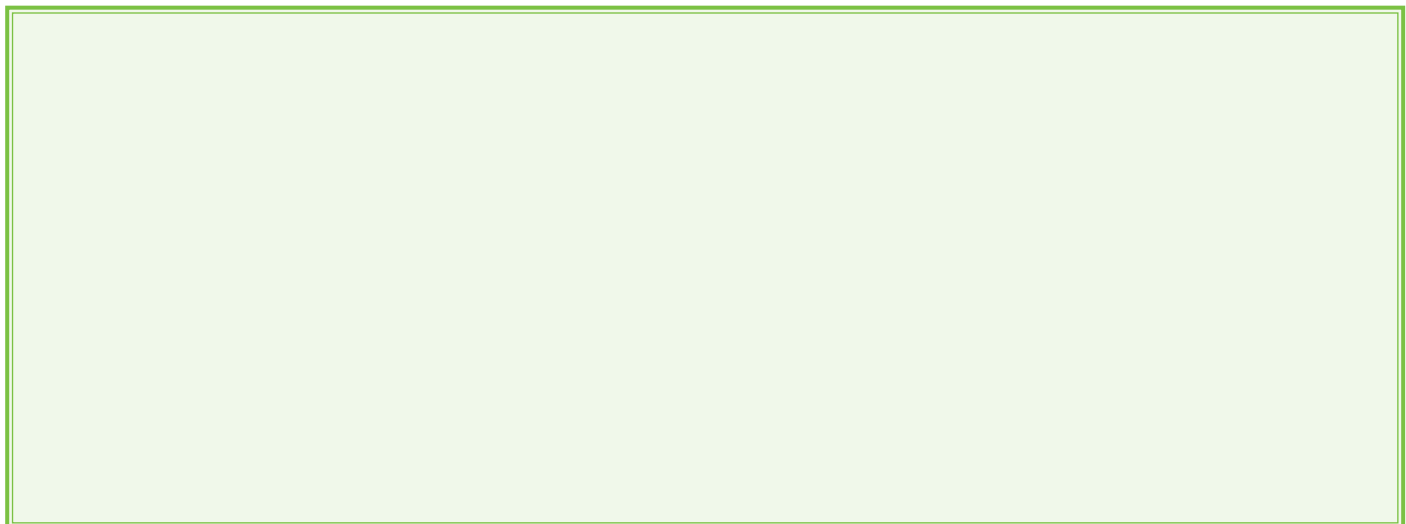
But one loud command spoken into the darkness brought Lazarus forth. No one could possibly conceive of a higher power than the power of raising the dead. There are indications that the pagan world considered it to be even beyond the power of God. Barnes wrote, “Raising the dead implies not merely giving life to a dead body, but also the power of entering the spirit world, recalling the departed soul and reuniting it with the body. In the same manner Jesus will raise all the dead” (1 Cor. 15:51-53). This miracle shows that this is possible! If we are faithful, we will be raised on the last day to spend eternity with the Lord of heaven! “Believest thou this?”

Thinking of the fullness and duration of his life, W.B. Hinson spoke from his own experience just before he died. He said:

I remember a year ago when a doctor told me, “You have an illness from which you won’t recover.” I walked out to where I live five miles from Portland, Oregon, and I looked across at that mountain that I love. I looked at the river in which I rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God’s own poetry to my soul. Then in the evening I looked up into the great sky where God was lighting His lamps, and I said, “I may not see you many more times, but Mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone; and River, I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; and Stars, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets in the great down pulling of the material universe!”

To believe in Jesus means to accept everything he says as true and obey his words (John 12:44-48; 14:15). When we do this we enter into two new relationships. First, we enter into a new relationship with God (2 Cor. 5:14-17). We are reconciled to him because our sins are washed away through baptism (Acts 22:16). The fear of physical death vanishes because death means that we are going back to the One who “loved us, and hath given himself for us” (Eph. 5:2). Second, we enter into a new relationship with life (Col. 3:1-11). We turn away from sin and produce the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23). Life is raised from the death of sin and becomes so rich that it cannot die but must find in death the transition to a higher life! Henry David Thoreau said, “You cannot kill time without injuring eternity.” Let us be obedient and work for “the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

251 Hunters Glen Dr., Lufkin, Texas 75904
kylec@consolidated.net



I Am The Root and The Offspring of David

Frank Himmel

The last of Jesus' "I am" statements is among the richest in background. It is reserved for the last chapter of the Bible. "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star" (Rev. 22:16).

One way of looking at this identification is that it reflects Jesus' two-fold nature: God and man. The word *root* usually denotes the foundation or source of a thing. For example, "The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). Therefore, Jesus can be thought of as the root of David in the sense of being his origin or the foundation of his reign. Because he is God, he is those things. On the other hand, Jesus was "born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3). That proves his humanity. This dual nature answers the question Jesus asked the Pharisees: How can the Christ (Messiah) be both David's lord and his son (Matt. 22:41-45)?

The Greek word translated *root*, however, can also refer to that which springs from a root or like a root. Metaphorically, it refers to offspring. Thayer, Vine, and others concur that this is the meaning in our text. A shoot out of David is the sense. And the point is, Jesus is not merely *a* root or offspring of David, he is *the* root, the object of numerous Old Testament prophecies. Let us briefly review them.

2 Samuel 7:12-16. Underlying all these prophecies is God's promise to David. David wanted to build a house for God. God said no. He then promised to build a house for David; not a physical house, as David was proposing, but a household, a lineage of kings. "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

Solomon was the first in the promised line. He built the temple David had envisioned. That was the initial

fulfillment of God's promise (1 Chron. 22:9-11; 1 Kings 8:18-20). But God had much more in mind. A succession of kings followed Solomon. Jesus, a direct descendant, is the ultimate fulfillment. Before his birth, an angel announced that he would occupy David's throne (Luke 1:31-33). It is really God's throne, the position of rule over God's people. It is God's rule, carried out through David's line. Jesus sat down on that throne in heaven following his ascension (Acts 2:30-36; Rev. 3:21). Hebrews 1:5 quotes 2 Samuel 7:14 and applies it to Jesus.

Isaiah 11:1-10. God's people, including many in David's line, did not remain faithful. Isaiah foretold their punishment. They were proud and lofty, like cedars of Lebanon (2:13). But Assyria was the rod of God's anger (10:5), an axe in his hand (10:15). They and other nations like them would humble Israel and Judah. God would then have to use an axe on these instruments of his to cut them down to size (10:33-34).

When the chopping was over, only a stump or stem of David's house would be left. But all was not lost. "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit." (*Jesse* is evidently used here instead of *David* because the royal family has sunk back to the insignificance from which it came.) This shoot or branch would rule differently. Whereas Assyria conquered and ruled from a spirit of self-will (10:7-11), Branch would have the Spirit of God on him. As a result, he would be a righteous judge and a peaceful ruler (11:2-9). His rod would be his mouth, his words, not a sword (v. 4).

Isaiah had introduced this character Branch in chapter 4. There he was said to be beautiful and glorious, reigning over a holy people (vv. 2-3). Now the prophet adds that those people will include all nations. "Then it will come about in that day that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious" (v. 10). Paul applied this verse to Gentiles in Christ (Rom. 15:12).

Jeremiah 23:5-6. Jeremiah prophesied that David's kingly line in Judah would end with Coniah or Jehoiachin (22:30). Captivity was coming. Would that nullify God's promise? Not at all. The promise of a prospering, continuing line was conditional (1 Chron. 22:13; 28:7). Now that succession was ending. Yet in contrast to self-serving Coniah (and others who preceded him), "'Behold, the days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land.'" See also 33:14-18.

Isaiah 53:1-12. Surely such a king would be welcomed with opened arms, would he not? Not according to Isaiah. "Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

The house of David was surely parched by Jesus' day! An Idumean reigned in Palestine and Romans ruled the world. The priesthood was corrupt and religious leaders cared more about tradition than truth. Into that environment came the root of David. He was born to poor parents in Bethlehem and reared in Galilee. That background had no appeal; indeed, it often raised questions (John 1:46; 7:15, 27). Nor did his appearance draw people to him—either his physical appearance or the kind of king he appeared to be. Thus, his own nation largely rejected the root of their beloved David, just as Isaiah said they would (Rom. 10:16).

Zechariah 3:1-10. Captivity came, just as Jeremiah had prophesied. When it was over, a remnant of God's people returned to Palestine, led by Zerubbabel and the high priest Jeshua or Joshua. The prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged them in the work of rebuilding the temple. In Zechariah 3, the prophet saw a vision in which Joshua the priest was standing before the Lord in filthy garments. Though Satan accused him, God ordered that he be given clean garments, depicting forgiveness. The lesson was, if Joshua would be faithful to the Lord, he would be allowed to continue his priestly service and have access to God.

There was a deeper message, however. Joshua and his fellow-priests were a symbol of Branch (v. 8). Again, the peace and prosperity of his reign are indicated. But whereas in the earlier prophecies the branch or root of David was a kingly picture, this vision adds the priestly function to the portrait.

Zechariah 6:11-13. The final prophecy of Branch ties the others together. God told Zechariah, "Take silver and gold, make an ornate crown and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Then say to him, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices." Notice five things Branch will do.

First, he will branch out from where he is, a lowly origin. Remember, he is a root of the stump of Jesse, a tree hewn down due to disobedience.

Second, he will build the temple of the Lord. That takes us back to the promise to David. Just as the house God promised to build David was a family, so is the house Branch will build. It is the people of God, the church of Christ (Eph. 2:19-22).

Third, he will bear honor. David, "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14), was doubtless the most revered of Israel's kings. Yet his honor and glory pales in comparison to his root, who is above "every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:21).

Fourth, he will rule and be a priest on his throne. That makes Branch like Melchizedek, a simultaneous king and priest (Ps. 110:1-4). The author of Hebrews argues that this could not occur on earth because the Law prohibited it (8:4); Jesus is from the wrong tribe to be an earthly priest (7:14). Jesus is priest in heaven, having taken his seat at God's right hand (Heb. 8:1), the same seat from which he reigns as king (Acts 2:33). That coincides with Jeremiah's prophecy about the end of the kingly line on earth (Jer. 22:28-30).

Fifth, he will provide peace between the two offices. It is peace with God and peace with others in Branch's kingdom. The setting of Zechariah 6 emphasizes that it is a peace which extends to those from afar who come to him, just as Isaiah 11:10 had said.

Conclusion

It is significant that Jesus uses this identification, the root and offspring of David, in his closing signature to the book of Revelation.

Who is Jesus? He is the one who fulfilled all Old Testament prophecies. Let the readers be assured that the prophecies of this final book will also surely come to pass.

Who is Jesus? He is the one who emerged from an apparently defeated line to become King of kings. He was

The I Am

Harold Tabor

The *great question* among all the Jews was whether the Messiah would come during their lifetime. When John the Immerser came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him: “Who are you?” The Jews were not only expecting the Christ, but Elijah and the prophet (John 1:24). John the Immerser would only reply that he was the Forerunner of the Christ (John 1:23, Matt. 3:1, cf. Isa. 40:3-5, Mal. 3:1, 4:4-6). He was not the Christ, Elijah, or the prophet (John 1:21).

Although John was to come in the “spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17), he had a twofold purpose in his preaching. He was to turn the hearts of the fathers back to obedience and he was to make ready for the Lord (Luke 1:17). Jesus identified John as the fulfillment of the one to come in the spirit of Elijah (Matt 11:14). John identified Jesus twice as the “Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world” (John 1:29-30, 36). Jesus was that Lamb (1 Pet 1:19), even the Christ.

After the death of John the Immerser, the same question arose regarding Jesus. Even Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of Man is?” (Matt. 16:13). Their opinions were diverse: some thought he was “John the Immerser, others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one

rejected and put to death, but he overcame and sat down on God’s throne. He therefore was considered worthy to open God’s book (Rev. 5:5). No matter how much enemies seem to be getting the upper hand, remember that Christ and his are the final victors. We can and must overcome.

Who is Jesus? He is our priest, who offered his own blood on our behalf and ever lives to make intercession for us. He is the one who welcomes people of all nations who come to him in faith. Are you a citizen of his kingdom?

7700 Hoover Way, Louisville, Kentucky 40219

of the prophets” (Matt. 16:14). During this ministry, there is no question about the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth. About eighty (80) times in the four gospels the phrase “son of man” is used of Jesus. There was the expectation of the Prophet and the King of the Jews to restore the greatness of Israel. There were those who thought of Jesus as the Prophet (John 4:19; 6:14; 9:17; Luke 24:19).

But the great question asked of Jesus was “who are you?” “Are you the Messiah, which is interpreted, Christ?” There were those like Andrew who thought that he was the Christ (John 1:41).

This *great statement* of Jesus comes in various ways. The general phrase “I am” is used over two hundred times in the four gospels. Jesus’ responses with the statement “I am” in his teaching are most notable in the Gospel of John. These phrases include “bread of life,” “light,” “door,” “good shepherd,” “resurrection and the life,” “way, truth and life.” But the most important statement is when Jesus says, “I am”! He declares his identity as the Son of God (his divinity).

The main purpose of the Fourth Gospel is clearly stated, “that (we) might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing (we) might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31). This was clearly declared in the Prologue of the Gospel (1:1-18). The Word (*logos*) was “in the beginning,” “was with God,” and “was God” (1:1). He is the Creator of all things, and is the source of life and light (1:3-4). The Divine person “came” into this world (1:11); he “became flesh, and dwelt among us” (1:14); and he who did so was “the only begotten of the Father” (1:14); the “only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father,” and who has expounded (declared) him (1:18).

Jesus clearly declares his higher nature. He said: “I am from above” (8:23); “I am not of this world” (17:16); “I and the Father are one” (10:30); “He that has seen me has seen the Father” (14:9; 8:19; 12:45). He also declared his eternal pre-existence that he shared with the Father (3:13; 6:62; 8:42; 17:8).

But the most important statement of his divinity comes after the Feast of the Tabernacles (John 7:1; 8:20, 59), as Jesus taught in the Treasury. Jesus uses the personal pronoun “I” forty-eight times in this discourse (vv. 12-59), more than in any other discourse. While the Jews understood his humanity, they did not understand his divinity. Jesus made the statement “I am” or “*ego eimi*” three times in verses 24, 28, 58 without a predicate and three times with a predicate (8:12, 18, 23).

When Jesus began his discourse with the phrase, “I am the light of the world,” the Pharisees responded with the charge, “You bear witness to yourself; your witness is not true” (8:12-13). Jesus responded, “My witness is true.” He also charged them with not knowing where “I come or go” and stating that “My judgment is true.” The law required two or more witnesses to confirm truth or “true.” One of the “I am” statements is next. Jesus says, “I am he that bears witness of myself and the Father that sent me bears witness of me” (8:18). This is a clear “witness” of the Deity of Jesus. The Jewish response was “Where is your Father?” Jesus again says “I am from above; you are of this world: I am not of this world.” Jesus claims Deity again in contrast to his virgin birth. Man does not know his origin apart from revelation. Jesus next makes a doctrinal statement with the “*ego eimi*” phrase for the first time. The statement is: “except you believe that *I am*, you shall die in your sins” (8:24). The Pharisees still do not understand the statement of Jesus (8:25, 27). Jesus makes the second doctrinal statement with the “*ego eimi*” by stating, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that *I am*, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things” (v. 28). The third non-predicate use of “*ego eimi*” is when Jesus claimed his eternity at the last of the discourse.

Jesus continues his discourse with the conditional statement: “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (8:31-32). The Jews response was: “We are the seed of Abraham and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how do you say: You shall be made free?” Obviously their concept of freedom omitted the Egyptian bondage, Assyrian and Babylonian captivity, and the present Roman “occupation.”

Jesus responds by saying that he knows they are the physical descendants of Abraham. But Jesus said, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham,” and “If God were your Father you would love me: for I came forth and am come from God” (8:42). Abraham is mentioned in nine verses of this discourse (8:33, 37, 39, 40, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58). But the last two are significant because of the topic of the timelessness of Jesus.

The Great Controversy

The last phrase is “Before Abraham was, *I am*” (8:58).

This is the third time in this discourse that the “I am” is used in the absolute sense without a predicate. It is also the third emphatic statement signified by the phrase “Verily, Verily” (8:34, 51, 58). In not one of these “I am” passages (8:24, 28, 58) does the third personal pronoun “he” follow the “I am” in the Greek text. The “he” is italicized and placed there by the translators in the English text to complete the supposed meaning. But the assertion of Jesus is to his absolute, timeless existence and not to his personal identity. Jesus is timeless in his divinity. His humanity is a matter of genealogy and his virgin birth is unique.

Jesus did not say: “Before Abraham was, I was,” but “Before Abraham was, I AM.”

The difference is that Abraham “was born,” came into existence. This is aorist indicative Greek tense and indicates that Abraham “came into being” or “was existing” or “was born.” Abraham had a definite beginning in time.

When Jesus was born at Bethlehem as a baby, he already is existing as Deity, the *logos* (John 1:14). The use of “I am” declares that Jesus did not come into existence before Abraham did. Jesus never came into being at all as Deity, but existed before Abraham came into being. In the Prologue, this is the declaration of John. Jesus, the Word or *logos*, existed before all creation (John 1:1). This is the same contrast that Jesus existed before Abraham was born, between the eternal and the created. This also shows the error that Jesus was a created being.

“I am” is a title of Deity! If the Jews did not correctly interpret the statement and meaning of Jesus, identifying him with the nature of Deity, why did they “take up stones?” Beyond all doubt, the Jews did understand what Jesus was saying.

Jehovah or Yahweh is the most important personal name for God in the Old Testament (Exod. 3:14; Isa. 41:4) and is from the verb “to be” or “I am.” Jehovah (Yahweh) is a combination of the tetragrammaton (YHWH) with the vowels of Adhonay (Hebrew—Lord). This transliterates as Yehowah, but read aloud by the ancient Hebrews and modern Jews as adhonay. It is uncertain when the vowel letters of adhonay were added to four-letter Hebrew word JHWH to form the English word Jehovah. Most early English translations simply inserted adhonay or Lord following the Jewish tradition, in order not to use the name of God in vain (Exod. 20:7).

In Genesis 15:7; Abraham was told that “I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees.” In Genesis 28:13, Jacob was told that “I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac.” In Exodus 3:14, God said unto Moses, “I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM

hath sent me unto you.” In Exodus 6:2-3, Moses was told “I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them.” Several explanations are given in commentaries below.

Exodus 6:3: The words may be considered as used comparatively: though God did appear to those patriarchs as YAHWEH (JEHOVAH), and they acknowledged him by this name, yet it was but comparatively known unto them, they knew nothing of the power and goodness of God, in comparison of what the Israelites were now about to experience (Adam Clarke’s Commentary).

Exodus 6:2-3: In other words, the full import of that name was not disclosed to them (Barnes’ Notes).

Exodus 6:1-9: 1. From God’s name, Jehovah, v. 2, 3. He begins with this, I am Jehovah, the same with, I am that I am, the fountain of being, and blessedness, and infinite perfection. The patriarchs knew this name, but they did not know him in this matter by that which this name signifies. God would now be known by his name Jehovah (Matthew Henry’s *Commentary on the Whole Bible*).

Exodus 6:1-6: The divine promise not only commences in v. 2, but concludes at v. 8, with the emphatic expression, “I Jehovah,” to show that the work of Israel’s redemption resided in the power of the name Jehovah (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*).

By the personal name of the “I AM,” Jehovah or LORD has revealed himself as the Eternal one and Deity who always exists.

There is a remarkable similarity in Psalms 90:2. “Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You *are* God.” This statement implies the continuing existence of Deity without reference to time. Time is marked into sections of past, present or future. But eternity is continued existence without reference to time. Again, the contrast is between the created and the creator or Eternal One.

Another passage is Isaiah 44:6, “Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God.” The statement of Revelation 22:13 suggesting the Eternal nature of God. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” All of these verses contradict the Islamic and Mormon concept of God.

Jesus was truly a human being in every way that can be predicated of unfallen man (Heb. 4:15). Jesus was one person and not a double personality. Jesus lived with all of the fleshly appetites and died in the flesh on the cross. Yet Jesus was truly a Divine being united in the one person.

The eternal Logos entered a whole human nature at the supernatural conception. From that moment, the two natures coexisted and lived in one body. Within the one Person of Jesus, there were two natures inseparably united, and yet not mingled or confounded, wholly Divine, and wholly human, one common life. The end result is the incarnation, the God-Man (*theanthropos*). The dual natures in Jesus were without confusion, change, division, and separation. There was the Divine that always remained the Divine and the human always remaining the human, yet the two natures always remained continually as one common life.

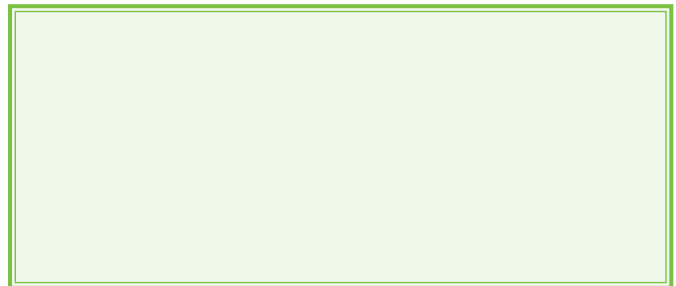
The humanity of Jesus; the divinity of Jesus; the one person of Jesus and the two natures of Jesus: around these four points all the Christological controversies of the first four centuries after Christ have centered.

The *Great Controversy* continues today with the question, “Who do you say that I am?”

Jesus said to her (Martha), “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world” (John 11:25-27).

The response to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is the deciding question. It is the crowning proof of the Divinity of Jesus. Seeing is believing. The Apostle John declared: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3). Thomas declared “My Lord and My God.” Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed” (John 20:28-29). Do you believe the Jesus is the Christ the Son of God?

TABORHAROLD@cs.com



“Final Prophet” continued from front page

Now my next comments are directed at our liberal viewers. How can you support a group as nakedly, pardon the pun, radical as the ACLU? This isn't about freedom. This is about imposing a radical secular progressive agenda on a country that has traditionally voted on public policy issues. If the live sex act initiative was put on the Oregon ballot, it'd be voted down big. Remember, Oregonians voted against gay marriage.

So once again, the ACLU is using an activist court to undermine what the folks want. This isn't democracy. This is judicial fascism.

It's also a joke. The founding fathers didn't write the First Amendment with live sex shows in mind, OK? Everybody understand that? You can easily pervert the Constitution by saying every kind of expression is protected, but again, that would lead to chaos and conflict.

“Talking Points” believes the 400,000 members of the ACLU should wake up and smell the totalitarianism. This organization is bent on undermining freedom, not fighting for it. And everybody should understand that.

And that's “The Memo.”

Here are some issues the ACLU supports:

- Legalization of homosexual marriage
- Legalization of child pornography
- Legalization of prostitution
- Legalization of live sex acts in public
- Legalization of sex between adults and children
- The ACLU defends the North American Man Boy Love Association whose motto is “sex before 8 or it is too late.”
- Removing “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance
- Removing our motto “In God We Trust” from our money
- Forcing the Boy Scouts to accept homosexual scout leaders
- Removing prayer from school and public events
- Abortion on demand, without parental consent
- Legalizing illicit drugs
- Physician assisted suicide
- Partial-birth abortion
- Mandatory sex education
- Legalized polygamy
- Tax supported profane art

Here is what the ACLU is against:

- Parental notification for minors having abortion
- School vouchers
- Filters on public library computers
- Student led prayer in schools
- Nativity scenes on public property
- Sex offender registries
- Broadcast decency laws
- “Choose Life” license plates
- Tax exemptions for churches
- Posting of the Ten Commandments on public property
- Prayers before high school football games
- Parental consent laws
- “Abstinence before marriage” sex education (Donald E. Wildmon, American Family Association)

“Child to Anger” continued from p. 2

one day for doing the same thing he was not punished for doing the day before, he does not know how to act. About all that he learns is that he better see what mood Mom and Dad are in before he does whatever brought him punishment on this occasion.

2. Embarrassing, ridiculing, and belittling. Sometimes parents err in disciplining their children by embarrassing them in front of their friends. This is more likely to be a problem as the children grow older. This approach to discipline damages and destroys parent-child relationships. When a child is publicly humiliated in front of his friends, he will consider himself wronged regardless of how justified punishment of his behavior might have been. I have heard parents belittle their child, even in the presence of the child, in such a way that one can see from the expressions on the child's face that a deep-seated resentment is felt toward the parent.

3. Showing partiality toward the children. Sometimes one child receives preferential treatment at the hand of the parents. Jacob showed this kind of treatment toward Joseph and Benjamin because they were the children of his most beloved wife. Isaac and Rebekah sinned against Esau and Jacob by showing partiality toward the two children, Isaac toward Esau and Rebekah toward Jacob. The conflict and confusion that this triggered among the children is recorded in Scripture. Parents must discipline wrong behavior regardless of which child is guilty. When they punish one child for doing the forbidden thing and allow the other child to get away with doing the same thing, they build resentment in the heart of the punished child.

4. Unfair comparisons. Children are not all equal. Some children are skilled in mathematics, some are not. Some have learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, attention deficit disorder, etc. Some children have autism or sensory integration disorders. These will affect how well the child learns and functions in school. Sometimes parents have unjust expectations of their children and make unfair comparisons. A “C” student who struggles to make a “B” and a lazy “A” student who makes a “B” have both made a “B,” but one should be praised and the other challenged to do better. How sad to have a parent say to the “C” student, “Why don’t you make A’s and B’s like your brother?” Children will resent the unfair comparisons. The struggling child will become frustrated, feeling that he never can do enough to please his parents or to be as good as his brother.

5. Parents who are not united. When mother and dad are not united about how to discipline the children, they have an almost guaranteed recipe for disaster. Children can detect that they are not united and will play one parent against the other to their advantage. Usually disagreement between parents occurs when one parent believes the other parent is too harsh. This starts a vicious cycle. When the one parent is “too harsh,” the other parent compensates by trying to make up for the other parent’s harsh punishment. He/she undermines the punishment of the “harsh” parent in such cases. As a result, the harsh parent acts harsher and the lenient parent acts more leniently. So long as the two parents are not on the same page, the children will manipulate this to their own destruction.

6. Disproportionate punishment. The punishment should be proportionate to the offence. When one punishes with severity the least disobedience, the child will feel that he has been mistreated. And what would you think if the civil government threw someone who littered in jail for thirty years? You would think the punishment was overly harsh and be critical of the judge who administered it. Similarly, the child feels that he has been mistreated when the punishment is not proportionate to the offense and resents it.

7. Spanking in anger. It is true that children sometimes make parents angry by their misconduct. It is natural that parents have anger, but it would be wrong to sin against the child in a fit of anger. Sometimes children are spanked to vent the parent’s anger. Discipline should not be administered for the purpose of venting the parent’s anger but for love for the child, to direct him to produce proper behavior.

8. Badgering. Sometimes a parent thinks he can instill proper behavior by badgering his children. Nagging and badgering are irritating to everyone. How does one avoid nagging and badgering? By enforcing his word by consis-

tent discipline. The child will learn that the parent means what he says when he says it once. He does not have to be told ten times to do something.

9. Abusive language. Parents sometimes abuse their children by loud, abusive speech. Among the kinds of behavior Christians are to avoid is “clamor.” The word *krauge* means “shouting, clamor of excited persons Eph 4:31. Of people shouting back and forth in a quarrel” (Arndt and Gingrich 450). Another word for abusive speech is *loidoria*, “verbal abuse, reproach, reviling” (Arndt and Gingrich 480). The word appears in 1 Peter 3:9 and a cognate of the word *loidoros* (“reviler, abusive person,” *Ibid.*) occurs in 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:10. Sometimes parents verbally abuse their children, telling them how sorry a person they are, cursing them, and otherwise demeaning them. Such conduct destroys the fragile egos of children and creates in them a low self-esteem. Children with low self-esteem are vulnerable to anyone who flatters them. Young girls with low self-esteem are especially vulnerable to men’s flattery.

10. Parents who are not there. Some men conceive children and take no active part in rearing their children; some parents are so involved at work that they have no interaction with their children; some children are tossed from one relative to another because the mother doesn’t want to be tied down rearing children. Whichever is the case, the child is deprived of the fatherly and motherly attachments so necessary to his proper development. Tossed around children seldom turn out well. Many of them develop a deep-seated anger as a result of this neglect and rejection by their parents.

11. Parents who do not enforce their word. We have a generation being taught that spanking is child abuse. As a result, we have a generation of parents who are afraid to spank their children. While all of us can agree that child abuse is wrong, there is nothing wrong with spanking children to re-enforce the oral instruction given. When children have no fear of the consequences of disobedience, there is no respect for the one who gives the commands. Each of us has witnessed parents who tell their children over and over to do something without enforcing their word with any kind of discipline, parents who coax their children to do what they tell them to do, parents who threaten their children but never follow through their threats, etc. Such parents rear undisciplined children who create disorder and chaos wherever they are. One has to remind himself that the problem is not with the children but with the parents. Such children seldom have respect for authority wherever it is present (civil government, school, office, etc.).

Conclusion

Parenting skills are learned. There are no perfect parents and neither are there any perfect children. But parents who resolve to be guided by the word of God can rear godly

children in an ungodly world. I see such children all over the country in the meetings that I conduct. They truly are a joy to those who are around them. There are other children in churches who have such a depressed and angry expression on their face that one knows there are many problems below the surface just waiting to erupt. What kind of parent have you been? Look at your children and take a good self-assessment.

6567 Kings Ct., Avon, Indiana 46123, mikewillis@indy.rr.com

Field Report

New Congregation in Madison, Wisconsin

On September 11, 2005, the Madison Area Church of Christ began meeting in the Fitchburg Conference Room of the Quality Inn and Suites off Fish Hatchery Road and Highway 12-18. They meet at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday for Bible study and worship service starts at 10:30. They have a Tuesday night Bible study at the home of Dan Kittleson, 1710 Buckingham Road, Stoughton, WI 53589, 608-877-9180. They request prayers as they strive to serve God and spread the gospel in that area. If interested in assisting them as a preacher (several congregation may help them support a preacher should someone desire this work), contact Dan Kittleson at the above address and phone number.

Quips and Quotes

Painful Choice

“A *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) article from late August claimed that an unborn child is unlikely to perceive pain until the 29th week in the womb. Reviewing studies on the topic, the article’s authors concluded there is ‘limited’ evidence that fetuses perceive pain before the third trimester.

“The article gained notoriety when *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that two of the study’s five authors had ties to the abortion industry. Susan Lee worked for eight months for the organization now called NARAL Pro-Choice America. Eleanor Drey is medical director of the abortion clinic at San Francisco General Hospital.

Fetal pain is becoming the newest battleground over legal abortion. Advocates on both sides have argued about whether unborn children at least 20 weeks old feel pain and thus should be given pain-killing medicine during abortions.

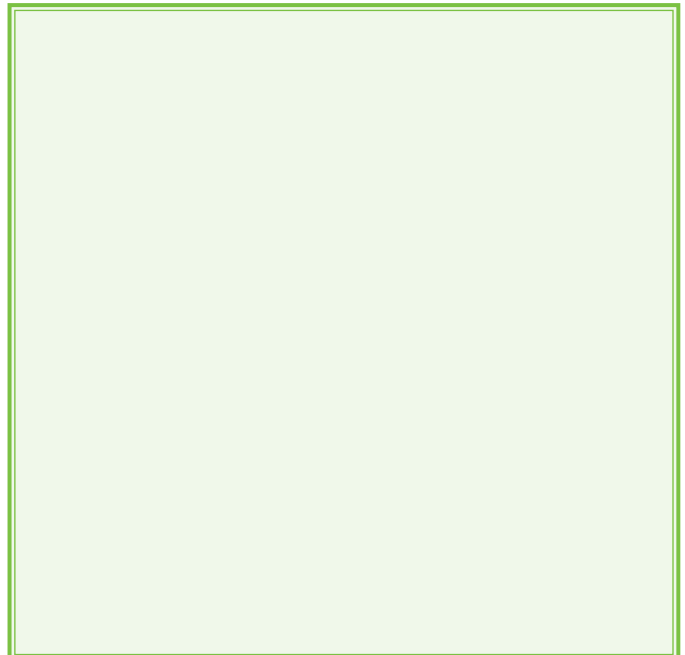
The JAMA article distinguished between pain and stress-inducing stimuli. The researchers said feeling pain requires that the thalamus and cerebral cortex of the brain be connected, which can start at the 29th week. Earlier responses to outside stimuli, though they may look like reactions to pain, are purely physical reactions, they said” (*Christianity Today* [November 2005], 21).

American Baptist Exodus

“The Pacific Southwest region of the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) has begun defecting in the largest church exodus from any denomination over the presenting issue of homosexuality. Underlying issues, according to leaders, include the authority of Scripture and church discipline. Representing more than 300 churches, the region’s board of directors voted September 8 to begin withdrawal. At least four other regions are considering leaving the ABCUSA, a member denomination in the National Council of Churches.

“The ABCUSA officially states that ‘the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.’ However, gay-affirming congregations remain affiliated with the denomination. When conservative regions have disfellowshipped such congregations, those congregations have simply affiliated with a more liberal ABCUSA region.

“This summer, conservatives failed to convince the denomination to apply church teaching on homosexuality. The defeat made conservatives despair of making any headway on this issue in the future, says Bill Nicoson, executive director of American Baptist Evangelicals (ABE), a 13-year-old renewal group” (*Christianity Today* [November 2005], 23).





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