

The Keys Of The Kingdom

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To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them pick up their copy today. Use this link to direct them to our page. http://jfmiller.com/keyssofthekingdom/?page_id=1316 .

May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff

Editor's Notes

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Good and Evil

*Jim Miller
Gray, Maine*

If we break things down to their simplest form, there are only 2 choices: good or evil.

Good

αγαθοεργέω

agathoergeō

Thayer's Definition:

1) to work **good**, to do **good**, to do well, act rightly

Part of Speech: verb

Evil

αδικημα

adikēma

Thayer's Definition:

1) a misdeed, **evil** doing, iniquity

Part of Speech: noun, neuter

I will presume that those reading this know what “good” is and that we are instructed to “do good,” as John said:

Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God (3 John 11).

Paul instructed Titus: *Tit 3:1-2*

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men (Tit. 3:1–2).

James warns:

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin (Jam. 4:17).

We should also remember the reminder Paul gave to Timothy:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

To the Thessolonians Paul's instructions were clear:

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good (1 The. 5:21).

Today with all the twisting of of God's word going on we need to heed Paul's word even more. Evil has become acceptable to far too many in this world and it creeps into every aspect of our lives if we are not careful.

This is the struggle man has faced down through history. It all began in the garden with the serpent and Eve. We all know how that ended up don't we?

The thing about evil is, it tries to look “good” so that it may deceive and destroy. Whereas good always seeks to do that which is right and just. I believe we need to go back to looking at things in the light of good and evil instead of all the names we give to both such as “Liberal” and “Conservative” or “Left” and “Right,” and such like. Looking at things as either good or evil will help us better live a life that is Godly and righteous.

Now we need to ask who determines what is good and what is evil? The answer should be clear—God does! He has given us His blueprint to follow. We have been clearly told in the Scriptures that we have all we need to please God, simply look at what Peter had to say:

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Pet. 1:3–4).

You really can't get much clearer than that. The question is, who will you serve God or Satan?

In times past it was much easier for people to know the difference between good and evil; clear lines where drawn by parents and the church. Preachers and parents taught their children and congregations what sin is and condemned it

openly. But today no one wants to hear about sin; they want it hidden with new names such as “alcoholism” (i.e., "drunkenness") and being “gay” (i.e., "homosexuality"). Such things as gambling are no longer considered a "sin," but are accepted and commonplace. It is so bad that you can't go anywhere in public without hearing filthy language and seeing both men and women walking around half dressed. Biblical morals are now considered to be nothing more than old fashioned behavior. Evil has perfected the art of looking good. It starts small and then steamrolls over all it touches. Just recently some folks I know wanted to send some kids to a summer camp, and when they could not raise the money by asking for donations, they held a raffle (a form of gambling) and exceeded the amount they were trying to raise. They were so happy, yet they forgot what Paul taught:

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Rom. 6:15–16).

As Christians we are called out of this world no longer to be slaves of sin. We are to be lights shining in the darkness, bringing honor and glory to God. Just as Isaiah told the Israelites of his day, we too need to take heed of his words:

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 5:20–24).

There was a time, and not so long ago, when we were considered a good nation as far as morality was concerned. Sadly, looking around us today it is clear that we have quickly become a people akin to the heathen nations of the past and present. There was a time when such things as marriage were respected; homosexuality and abortion were abhorrent and being a single parent was an exception. Gambling was looked on as an evil; now it is a norm. Sin was not glorified, glamorized, or condoned by the majority of people.

So what has happened?

Answer: Men turned away from God and abandoned His salvation by allowing sin to become their master. Men either repent and seek to do better with each day, allowing God's Word to work in their lives, or they continue to allow sin to rule, thus waxing worse and worse, as Paul told Timothy:

But evil men and women shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived (2 Tim. 3:13).

Such is the case today. People have become less sensitive to sin than ever before, tolerating things that our forefathers would never have dreamed of.

The Bible and prayer have long ago been removed from our schools. Homosexuals daily parade around, proud of their sin, and we are told that their lifestyle is perfectly acceptable and moral. Filthy language has become accepted as normal, even among the very young. Our government sponsors social programs which only encourage more slothfulness.

The majority of people in our nation seek to glorify sin and make it more and more respectable. The news media, television programs, movies, videos, games, even sports are some of the avenues used to glorify sin. We contend with a constant campaign of evil, and many Christians have given up and are accepting the idea that nothing can be done.

When we turn a blind eye to sin we legitimize that activity in the eyes of the world.

We are God's children, and as such we MUST take our stand on God's Word and oppose this evil of Satan. We can and should teach our children to take the same stand, and we must set the proper example for them:

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

Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you (Tit. 2:6-7).

As a parent, one should always be aware of what children are being taught in the

cesspool we call public education. We must stand ready to counteract the sinful teachings of those who would indoctrinate our children. We do so by teaching them the word of God:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:3–5).

Hiram Hutto wrote in 1979:

Just as goodness stems from the good, and kindness from the kind, so worldliness stems from the world ("the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," 1 John 2:16). It has both its origin and fruition in the kind of thinking and/or action which springs from such considerations. Fundamentally, worldliness is an emphasizing (which often runs to obsession) of that which is temporal, material, physical (which frequently involves the sensual) at the expense of (and more often than not, to the exclusion of) that which is spiritual.

It is the opposite of spirituality. Clearly this can involve "a multitude of sins." As a rule, however, worldliness is thought of in terms of that which is either immoral or tends to immorality, and, to be sure, there are many worldly people who hate both God and all who would live godly. Yet there are many others to whom immorality is abhorrent, who nonetheless have little or no interest in God or spiritual things; who emphasize the material, the physical, at the expense of, and all too frequently, to the exclusion of, the spiritual. All such are worldly. They "mind earthly things." And they do this, not only in their own lives, but so uphold it, exalt it, and encourage it, that such have come to be looked upon by most people as not only not degrading, but positively desirable, respectable.

Liberalism and progressivism, which stand in deep contrast to all that is good and righteous, are pure evil. They bring with them destruction that can be seen all around us. Evil may have its way here on earth, but we who seek a higher calling will have a reward beyond measure when the Lord returns. Our hope and joy need to be in standing against this evil that so easily besets

us. We need to be shouting from the roof tops that Christ is king and salvation can only be found in Him. Let us get back to calling evil what it is and good what it is, and let us do good and be lights set upon a hill for all to see.

As Christians we are in a constant war against the evils of this world, we must always be ready to fight against those who lurk in the darkness seeking to deceive and destroy that which is good. False teachers are evil doers they no longer are content to hang out in the corners where it is dark they flaunt their evil deeds trotting out all kinds of new doctrines twisting god's word till it is unrecognizable. These false teachers, evil workers, and workers of unrighteousness hate the light of God's Word, for in it they are exposed for what they truly are:

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

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

(2 Tim. 3:1-5) This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

We have been warned about the methods of "the rulers of the darkness of this

age:

(Eph. 6:12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

These evil doer's that dwell in darkness venture into the light to deceive. Paul said they were "deceitful workers" who "transform themselves into ministers of righteousness" as does Satan who "transforms himself into an angel of light":

(2 Cor. 11: 13-15) For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Remember those bullies who, when the teacher showed up, suddenly turned into the nicest children? Such are they that do evil today. Can you say hypocrisy? We truly must keep our:

(Heb. 5:14)"senses exercised to discern both good and evil".

We must be strong enough and willing to expose these sheep in wolves clothing and expose them for what they are (Matt. 7:15). Friends the only way to expose evil even when it parades around as good is to get back to the Bible and do true good at all times.

2Ti_2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Till Next We Meet
God Bless

**Shipwreckers-
The Bane Of
Preaching
Schools**

*1Ti 1:19b
...Some... concerning
faith have made
shipwreck:*



This is a new website created to expose the Compromised/liberal teaching institutions that claim affiliation with the church. The following is from our home page and you will find a link to the site at the end.

The Shipwreck of Colleges and Schools of Preaching

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3).

Why and how did compromise and/or liberalism come to dominate the preaching schools and colleges of today? This Site is dedicated to trying to answer these questions while showing that (1) compromise and liberalism have already destroyed the “Big Gun” Colleges and (2) the way that compromise is having a devastating effect on our smaller schools of preaching. These smaller schools, begun by congregations to replace the colleges that went off headlong into error, are now teetering on the edge because of their compromises.

There was a time when men who were sound in the faith taught younger men in the church how to preach and teach. We believe this should still be the norm. However, as sadly seen in these institutions today, this is no longer the case. Most people in the congregations have been dumbed down to the point that they believe that unless a preacher has a piece of paper stating he has been trained formally, he is unable or unfit to preach. Read the rest on our site.

[Click Here](#) to visit our site.

SHALL WE SURRENDER THE SCRIPTURAL PURPOSE OF BAPTISM?

*Dub McClish
Denton, Texas*

The subject of the one age-lasting baptism (Eph. 4:5; Mat. 28:19–20) has stirred discussion and controversy for centuries. Men have hotly contested various facets of the subject in countless conversations and thousands of debates. At least as early as the twelfth century men and women were brutally persecuted, even burned at the stake, because they dared oppose Roman Catholic infant “baptism.” Countless sermons have been preached and pages written on baptism marking this as a significant subject even from the days of John.

Why Controversy on Baptism?

It is ironic that there should be so much controversy over baptism when one considers the plainness and clarity of the New Testament’s teaching on it. All such controversy would end were all men as noble as the Berean Jews (Acts 17:11). Comparatively few are willing to bow in humble submission before the throne of the King of kings. Sad to say, men continue to wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, often defining words and interpreting statements to fit their biases.

When men “gladly receive the word” they do not quibble over what inspired men teach about baptism, but immediately comply (Acts 2:41, KJV). Just as clearly, when men seek to avoid the Gospel’s straightforward teaching on this subject, they indicate their contempt for the Word. While some are sincere in their errors, many who teach heresy on baptism know exactly what they are doing. A quarter century ago I would have had in mind only denominationalists in the foregoing descriptions. Now, however, these attitudes and actions are every bit as descriptive of some who were once among us, but who now—at least in heart and attitude—no longer are. The statements of some indicate their willingness to give up all of the New Testament ground on baptism—ground regained by great effort and at immense cost over many generations. New Testament teaching on baptism, especially on the purpose of the act, is so pivotal that to surrender it is

to surrender the very heart of the Gospel—redemption through the blood of Christ. When one corrupts baptism he emasculates God’s glorious plan of salvation. All who are concerned with pure doctrine and practice—and with primitive Christianity—will ever be concerned with what the Scriptures teach about baptism.

The Scriptures specify every particular concerning baptism, including its element (water), its action (immersion), and its authorized subjects (believers who confess their faith and repent of their sins). We must understand, comply with, and contend for each of these. The Scriptures also specify in clarion terms the purpose of New Testament baptism. The purpose of the act continues to spark much controversy. Is baptism a condition of salvation or a “sign” of salvation “after the fact”? Is forgiveness of sins granted before one is baptized or in the act of baptism? Is baptism unto or because of salvation?

The Scriptural Purpose Set Forth

Unprejudiced readers of the Bible cannot fail to see the connection Scripture makes between baptism and salvation in numerous explicit statements (e.g., Mark 16:15–16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:20–21). To teach thus is not a third cousin to teaching that water washes sins away, but is a “straw man” created by men desperate to deny Gospel Truth. I have never heard or met anyone of whom I am aware who so teaches. Obviously, if there were forgiving power in water, the Pre-incarnate Word could have stayed in Heaven.

The old song has it just right: “What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus” (Rev. 1:5; cf. Mat. 26:28; John 1:29; Rom. 5:9; Heb. 9:22; 1 Pet. 1:19–20; et al.). Acts 22:16 does not come close to saying that water washes away sins, but it does explicitly tell us when—in what act—sins are washed away by the blood of Christ. The passage is explicit: that act is baptism. The Bible gives only one means of entering into the death of Christ (in which he shed His blood) so as to access the cleansing power of His blood: BAPTISM (Rom. 6:3). Thus, no baptism—no blood; no blood—no cleansing; and no cleansing—no Heaven. If this simple, Scriptural summary does not convince men of the necessity of baptism for one’s salvation, they cannot be convinced.

Denominational Deceivers and Fellow-travelers

At least since the sixteenth century when Martin Luther invented his “salvation

by faith alone” plan, religionists have been deceiving the world about baptism’s purpose. Perhaps ninety-five percent of Protestantism, following Luther, denies the undeniable Scriptural connection between baptism and forgiveness/salvation. During his recent Nashville, Tennessee, crusade, Billy Graham (in a television interview) “quoted” both Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38, as follows, respectively: “He that believeth...shall be saved”, and “Repent...for the remission of sins.” (Most denominational preachers try merely to rationalize these unmistakably clear statements away; Graham just pompously erases them!)

It is bad enough that most denominationalists deny Truth on this point. It is worse when leftist preachers and professors still pretending to be among us demonstrate their apostasy by surrendering this Scriptural ground. Men such as Carroll D. Osburn and Max Lucado have openly declared that the Scriptural purpose of baptism is a matter of indifference to them. Several congregations and their respective preachers joined with Franklin Graham’s campaign in Lubbock in April, and several Nashville “Churches of Christ” did the same with Billy Graham in July. Every time one endorses and extends fellowship to baptism-hating denominationalists he implicitly neuters baptism’s Scriptural purpose.

Must One Understand Baptism’s Purpose?

Germane to a discussion of the purpose of baptism is the question, “Must the sinner understand that baptism is necessary for salvation?” My answer: “Must the communicant understand the purpose of the Lord’s supper for his partaking to be acceptable to God?” Paul’s answer: “For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body (1 Cor. 11:29). The same principle applies to singing and praying (1 Cor. 14:15). How can one’s “baptism” be more than a physical bath if he does not understand, or, if understanding, he denies its Scriptural purpose?

A question is, “Can one be taught incorrectly/unscripturally on baptism and somehow be correctly/Scripturally baptized?” Apparently, Paul did not believe so (Acts 19:1–5). In Ephesus he re-taught and correctly baptized about a dozen souls who had been taught and had submitted to John’s obsolete baptism. Doubtless, they had sincerely sought to please God in submitting to John’s baptism. Surely, Paul’s behavior here is instructive.

False Brethren and Fatal Compromises

Such men as Rubel Shelly, Doug Foster, and Jimmy Allen would have given their blessing to the misinformed Ephesians. These men are on record advocating that one can be taught incorrectly, yet be baptized correctly. They deny that one must know baptism's purpose for it to be efficacious. Several years ago Shelly opined that, as long as one was baptized in order to "please God" or "obey God," that this constituted sufficient "purpose" for the act. One should want to please God in all things, including baptism, but such is not a "purpose" of, but a motivation for, baptism. Let us not confuse motive and purpose.

Shelly has also averred that baptism is acceptable as long as it is for "a Scriptural reason." This implies that there is more than one Scriptural purpose for the act, which the Scriptures deny. Foster (in a Wineskins article) and Allen (in an entire book advancing his view) went to great lengths a few years ago basically to argue that the action is the essential ingredient of baptism. They allege that as long as a believer is immersed, God will take care of the "purpose," even if the candidate is ignorant of or disagrees with it. (By what reasoning is the action important if the purpose is not? I predict that they will give up the action, too. Likely, some have already done so.)

There is one—and only one—purpose of baptism. It is expressed in various ways, all of which are equivalent to each other (e.g., to be saved [Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21], to enter the kingdom/church [John 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13], to receive remission of sins [Acts 2:38], to have sins washed away [22:16], to enter into Christ and His death [Rom. 6:3–4], to put on Christ [Gal. 3:27]). It simply cannot be that the sinner's knowledge of baptism's significant purpose is unnecessary!

Another Dire Consequence

Baptism is the New Testament "Red Sea" (1 Cor. 10:1–4), separating God's people from all others. It distinguishes those who are still in their sins from those washed in His blood, those still in the world from those in His saved body of people—the church, those who have no hope from those who have the hope of Heaven.

The doctrines of these false brethren represent a crucial abandonment of fundamental Truth concerning fellowship, as well as salvation. Consistency demands their immediate embrace of millions of denominationalists as brethren, including all of the Baptists, for starters. I strongly suspect that one

reason for their capitulation on baptism is to begin opening fellowship doors that will eventually lead to full amalgamation with denominationalism at large (aping their Disciples of Christ forefathers). Their types long ago lost the capacity to think of the church in any but denominational concepts.

The efficacy of the whole Christian system to save men rests on the sacrificed blood of the one perfect Lamb of God (John 1:29). How dare anyone even suggest that there might be more avenues to the cleansing blood than the one way taught in Scripture! If only the blood of Christ can take away sins (and it alone can [Heb. 9:22; Rev. 1:5]), and If God assigned baptism as the point of contact with the blood of Christ (and He did [Rom. 6:3]), then baptism is manifestly the hinge-pin of the Lord's plan of salvation—the point at which God and man come into fellowship with each other. When one gives up the New Testament doctrine on the purpose of baptism, he makes a fatal capitulation.

[Note: I wrote this MS and it originally appeared as an “Editorial Perspective” in the September 2000 issue of The Gospel Journal, of which I was editor at the time.]

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“Fiddlin’ ‘Em In”

*Jerry C. Brewer
Elk City, Okla.*

7th and 8th grade canoe trip - May 15 & 16

Mid-South Youth camp - July 12-18

“We all had a great time. Some of our most memorable moments were those when we fought snakes, swung from the trees, laughed, ate hot dogs and burgers, had our devotional, sang songs, and just had fun.”

Hamburger and ice cream supper, June 3.

Our church will be taking a group to the Oklahoma Redhawks game on Monday night, June 29. Tickets are \$5.00.

The Summer Kick-Off Lock-in will be tomorrow night (May 29) at the Family Life Center... Be sure to bring a friend, and bring \$3 for pizza and sodas.

Our annual Six Flags trip to Dallas is scheduled for Monday, June 8. ...Cost is \$35 and includes a ticket to the park and transportation in a chartered bus. Sign up this Sunday!

Free sight, hearing and diabetes screenings will be available June 1, 2, and 3, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. These free screenings are sponsored by Edmond Lions Clubs and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma.

“Play Day” - The youth group will be converging on the home of the Rogers on May 30th (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) for volleyball, badmitten (sic), etc.

Bonny Blodgett is performing in a chorus concert at Clover Hill High School on June 4th and 5th at 7:00 p.m. Tickets can be bought in advance or at the door.

June 26-27. Youth Rally with Willie Franklin at Camp Idlewild. Cost is \$15. *
Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social, June 7... Sign the list in the lobby...and indicate the flavor of ice cream you'll provide, and/or if you'll bring cookies or brownies 2
3 (please, only the "finger food" kind).

Last Sunday night, following the evening worship, several of our folks went to Smyrna for bowling. I understand that everyone had a great time. The more folks are involved in any activity of the church, the more they will enjoy being a part of the family here.

If there weren't little clues in the above announcements, you might think they came from club newsletters or local and school papers. They are all taken from church bulletins in Tennessee, Oklahoma, Virginia, Arkansas and Mississippi. All of these betray a concept of the church that is more akin to a social club in which members are constantly entertained than to the church Jesus purchased with His own blood. The denominational industry has always been big on what they used to call "Entertainments." But even one of their own took exception to that concept in a treatise he wrote more than a century ago.

The church has become absolutely insane on the subject of entertaining men. Preachers are sought after who can amuse the people. Meetings of all kinds are designed to please and keep the congregation during the week, while the preacher, with anecdote, sparkling wit, and broad jest, must do the rest of the work on Sunday. Whatever happens, the people must be entertained. The idea being that, if not amused, they will drift away and be lost (Beverly Carradine, D.D. Church Entertainments: Twenty Objections, Syracuse, NY, A. W. Hall, 1891, p. 25).

Solomon said, "There is no new thing under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9), and you can be sure that if it's an old worn out practice of human reasoning, some of our brethren will swallow it hook, line and sinker. Like those whom Carradine

criticized in his day, many churches of Christ have abandoned Biblical truth that men are drawn to Christ by the gospel (John 12:44-45) and adopted entertainment to draw a generation raised on pop culture. With their bows all “rosined up”, they’re intent on “fiddlin’ ‘em in” to the church, but the problem is that they have to keep on “fiddlin’ ‘em in” or they’ll “fiddle out.”

Jesus didn’t die for a social club. The blood He shed at Calvary was for a far nobler and greater purpose than sponsoring a trip to Six Flags, a baseball game, a “Lock-In” (whatever that is), or a choral concert at high school. How sad that so many congregations today no longer consider the church the Lord’s blood bought body in which men are redeemed from sin, but simply a “church family” in which young and old alike are petted, pampered and entertained. They no longer consider it the “kingdom which cannot be moved” (Heb. 12:28), but an adjunct of the theater, the sports arena, a camp or the home. The new birth of John 3 no longer puts them into the family of God (1 Tim. 3:15). To the religious “fun ‘n frolic” crowd, the church has become a social club, designated, “my church family” which bestows the right to be entertained. “Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the market place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced” (Luke 17:31-32). Hear Carradine again:

The whole idea of entertaining...comes from Satan... He knows that if Christ is held up before the people, and men look steady at him, they will be saved... He whispers that Christ alone is not enough to draw souls; that it takes Christ and entertainments. As he discovers his success in blinding the church, he becomes more aggressive, and whispers again that, if the naked cross be held up—the simple, strict, holy life of Jesus be insisted on—then the young people will be driven away. That young people are young people and must be amused... And so he has succeeded, in thousands of instances, in sidetracking the church... As you pass by her doors today, ...instead of sobs and cries of, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ you will be greeted with clapping of hands, rattle of plates and bursts of uproarious applause (Ibid. pp. 26, 27).

Beverly Carradine was born in April, 1848 and died in April, 1931. He was a Methodist preacher, serving that denomination in Mississippi and New Orleans

and was the grandfather of actor John Carradine. Although he was not a Christian, he understood and correctly identified the sin of using the church for something which God never intended, and asked for a “Thus saith the Lord” for the church’s practice. “But let me say, that one will look in vain from the beginning to the end of the Bible for even so much as a hint of church entertainment... Before you commit me to a religious practice, you must show me a ‘Thus saith the Lord’” (p. 33).

To those determined to make the blood-bought church of Christ into a venue of social entertainment, Carradine’s challenge means nothing. They’ll continue to hire “Family Life Ministers,” “Youth Directors,” and “Involvement Ministers” as they go merrily along drawing the masses through entertainment. They will keep their bows all “rosined up” and keep “fiddlin’ ‘em in” to the church until the music stops and the piper must be paid. Meanwhile, the world hurtles toward judgment and eternity.



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“GOD HEARETH NOT SINNERS” John 9:31

Part 2

Michael Hatcher
Pensacola, Florida

GOD HEARS THE RIGHTEOUS

Since we have previously discussed James’ comment relating to the power of prayer, we also should note whom James says has that power. “Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jam. 5:16). James, by inspiration, clearly states that the righteous man’s prayers are heard. There is no mention of prayers by someone other than a righteous man.

The wise man (wiser still because he wrote by inspiration of God) stated, “The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous” (Pro. 15:29). Again it is specifically stated the righteous man’s prayer is heard by God. However, at this point we also begin seeing God’s relation to the wicked (the man who is not righteous); God is far from that man. Being *far* would indicate to us (especially if this is antithetic parallelism) that God would not hear the wicked man’s prayer.

Peter reveals much the same thing when he writes, “For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil” (1 Pet. 3:12). The Lord’s ears are open to prayers of the righteous. We again learn the Lord’s response to those who are not righteous, those who do evil. God is against them or He disapproves

of them, thus He would not hearken to their prayers.

We also need to know who the righteous man is. John answers clearly for us by saying, “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous” (1 John 3:7). Part of God’s nature is that of righteousness. We can possess the same nature as God (2 Pet. 1:4). We can be righteous by doing righteousness. What is the doing of righteousness? The Psalmist said, “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness” (Psa. 119:172). Since God’s commands are righteousness, when we do God’s commands then we are righteous. Paul puts it this way. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:16-17). The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, when we do the gospel of Christ or obey the gospel, then we will be righteous as our God is righteous. Putting it another way the person who, after hearing the Word of God, believes (Heb. 11:6), repents of his sins (Acts 17:30), confesses his faith in Jesus as God’s Son (Rom. 10:10), and is baptized in water for the remission of his sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), and then lives according to God’s Word (1 Cor. 15:58) is the man who is righteous. This is the man who when he prays, God hears.

GOD’S NATURE

One of the attributes of God is that He is **holy**. There are more passages that speak of this nature of God than any other part of His character. “He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and

reverend is his name” (Psa. 111:9). “The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works” (Psa. 145:17). When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne, he also saw the seraphims: “And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3). John reveals: “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (Rev. 4:8). When Peter calls upon all men to be holy, he states that it is because that is God’s nature. “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16). He quotes what is written in and what the theme of Leviticus is.

What is holiness? The basic etymology of the word is “apart from the earth.” It came from the altars which were built apart from the earth. God had commanded that altars be built on stilts or legs so they would be separated from the earth. These altars were referred to as holy. *Holy* is applied in the Scriptures in two ways: Free of sin, and Dedicated or Consecrated. When used of God, it carries the first of these meanings.

God is holy: free of sin. The idea of light as expressed in relation to God is the idea of His being free of sin. John writes, “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). The last phrase is more emphatic in the Greek than in the English. The Greek uses a double negative, which is used to give emphasis; no, not even one speck of darkness in God. *Darkness* stands for sin in the Bible (John 3:19). Thus when John reveals that there is not any darkness at all in God, John is revealing that God does not have any sin: He is free of all sin.

James expresses the same idea when he writes, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jam. 1:17). James identifies God as the Father of lights. It is not just that He is the Creator of lights (sun, stars, etc.), but that all light comes from His nature for His nature is Light. While there is variation with the earthly lights, there is no variation with God. Any way, any time you look at God, there is only pure absolute light. There is never any darkness (sin) in God.

Since God is without any sin, we also notice that He cannot associate with sin because of that holy nature. “*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?*” (Hab. 1:13). That is why Peter reveals that God’s face is against those who are in sin. “For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil” (1 Pet. 3:12). God’s face is turned away from sin, He will not look upon it, He will not come into contact with it, He will not hear it. Notice God’s response when Israel sinned. “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2). God could have saved, but they separated themselves from God. The result was that his face was hid from them and God would not hear them. His holy nature could not associate with their sin. This is also why we are told repeatedly that sin brings death (Eze. 18:4, 20; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1; Jam. 1:15). Death is simply a separation; physical death is a separation of body and spirit (Jam. 2:26), and spiritual death is a separation from God. Sin

brings spiritual death and thus separation from God as expressed in Isaiah. Being separated from God in a state of spiritual death, He will not hear the sinner who prays.

THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE

God gave explicit instructions for the making of first the tabernacle and later the temple. God told Moses concerning the tabernacle: “And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount” (Exo. 25:40). The pattern God showed Moses was a shadow or a type of the church (see Heb. 8-10). While not going into a detailed study of the wonderful parallel between the two, let us notice that which God established.

The tabernacle was surrounded by an outer court. Inside this court on the eastern-most end stood the brazen altar or altar of burnt offerings. Just a little west of that was the brazen laver used by the priest for various washings. In the western part of the court was the tabernacle proper divided into two compartments separated by a veil. The first compartment was the holy place in which there were three pieces of furniture. On the north side was the table of shewbread which had twelve loaves of unleaven bread on it. On the south side was the golden candlestick or lampstand. It had a central stem with three curved branches on each side. Then in front of the veil was the altar of incense or golden altar. Inside the veil was the most holy place or the holy of holies. It contained the ark of the covenant. Inside the ark was the testimony of the Lord and then later a pot of manna along with Aaron’s rod that budded. On top of the ark was the mercy seat and at each end was a cherub. The cherubim were facing each other with their wings stretched forth and covering the mercy seat. This physical tabernacle was only temporary and pointed to a greater and more perfect

tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.

The true tabernacle concerns the church of our Lord. God established the tabernacle to correspond to the church. Let us briefly consider the parallels between the tabernacle and the church. The court represents the world; the holy place represents the church; and the most holy place is the dwelling place of God or heaven. The brazen altar, which is in the court, represents the cross where the Lamb of God shed His blood for man's sins (Gal. 1:4; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 7:26-27; et al). The brazen laver represents baptism where we wash ourselves clean from our sins and then are qualified to enter into the tabernacle (Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5; et al).

When we enter the holy place (which represents the church) we have three pieces of furniture. The first is the candlestick which the priest were to keep burning brightly before the Lord. The candlestick apparently has a twofold application: the Word of God which gives light to the church (Psa. 119:105, 130; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Pet. 1:19; et al); the light Christians are to have before a darkened world (Mat. 5:13-16; Eph. 5:8; Rev. 2:5; et al). On the opposite side was the table of shewbread which represents the Lord's supper (Mat. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; 1 Cor. 11:20-29 et al). Then before the veil was the altar of incense. This represents the prayers of the saints. The golden altar was the closest to the dwelling place of God; the closest approach to the most holy place. The high priest took it into the most holy place when he entered on the day of atonement. The Scriptures clearly state that this represents the prayers of the saints. John writes, "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Rev. 5:8). *Odours* as

translated by the King James means “incense” as translated in the American Standard and New King James. Later Inspiration adds: “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand” (Rev. 8:3-4). God placed the altar of incense in the holy place, not in the court. The altar represents prayers and the holy place represents the church. Thus, prayers can only be by those in the church. To take prayers and place them in the court (the world) is to violate what God established. Whose prayers does God hear? Those who are in the court or those who are in the Lord’s church. No one has the right to take that which God placed in the church and apply it to the world.

THE APPROACH TO THE FATHER

Jesus was giving comfort to His apostles and He tells them that He is going away and prepare a place for them and they know the way. Thomas said they did not know where He was going or the way. Jesus responded: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). There is no way any man can go to the Father except he goes through Christ. Paul puts the same principle this way: “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2:18). Christ is the way and the **only** way to the Father. The **only** ones who would thus have that access to the Father are those who are in Christ. Those who are not in Christ (Christians) would have no way to have access to the Father. Thus, God does not hear a sinner’s prayer.

Closely akin to this, the Hebrews writer states concerning Jesus: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by

him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). Christ makes intercession for those who have been saved by Him. He does not make intercession for the world or those in the world. Yet, if the prayers of those in the world were heard, Christ would also be making intercession for them.

OTHER TEACHINGS

The apostles asked Jesus to teach them to pray. “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1). Jesus then gives the model prayer (what others have erroneously called the Lord’s prayer). Our Lord begins that model prayer with these words: “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Mat. 6:9; Luke 11:2). He taught that we are to address our prayers to the Father who is in heaven. Who has God as a Father? Only a child of God! Those who are not children of God have Satan as their father. Christ stated to the Jews of His day: “Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). A person who is outside of Christ does not have the right to call upon the Father in heaven because He is not his father. Only a child of God can pray to the Father in heaven.

Paul teaches that all spiritual blessings are in Christ: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). *In heavenly places* has reference to the church. Thus, all spiritual blessings are in Christ in the church.

The same act that places one in Christ places one in the church. There are only two passages which teach how we get into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27): both state we are baptized into Christ. Yet, when one is baptized, God places him in the church (Acts 2:41, 47). Thus when one gets into Christ, he is in the church. The question we are now concerned with is: Is prayer a physical or spiritual blessing? While there might be some physical blessings and result associated with prayer, it is primarily a spiritual blessing. Thus, if we have the right to take prayer out of the church and out of being in Christ, then we have the right to take any spiritual blessing out of Christ and the church. Prayer is for those who have qualified themselves by becoming a Christian (one who is in the church of Christ). Those outside of Christ (who are not members of the church of Christ) have no right of prayer.

Peter discusses the husband wife relationship in 1 Peter 3. Specifically he deals with wives who are married to an unbelieving husband and how the wife should act toward him. He then turns his attention to the husbands and directs them how to live with their wives. He says, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pet. 3:7). How and why could their prayers be hindered? They will be hindered when the husband and wife both are not “heirs together of the grace of life,” or when both are not Christians. Why are they hindered then? Because when the one who is a non-Christian prays, his prayers are not heard by God.

We will continue this study next month

Teaching Sound Doctrine

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Teaching Sound Doctrine

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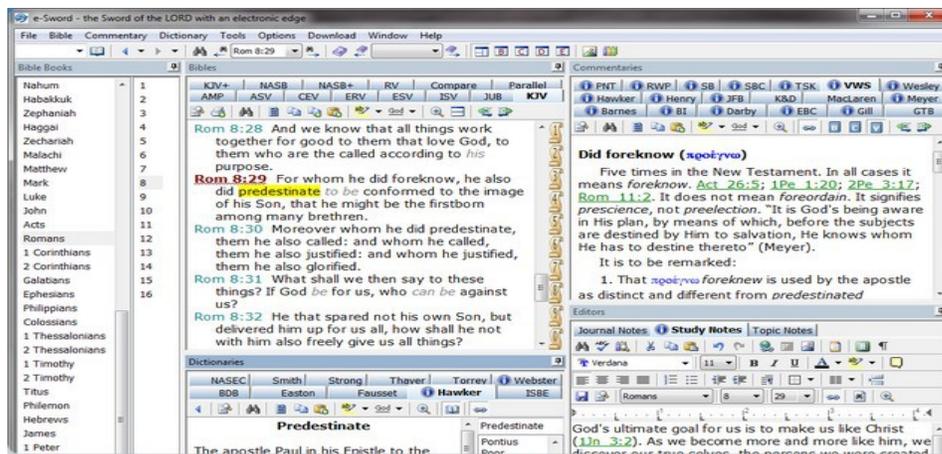
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