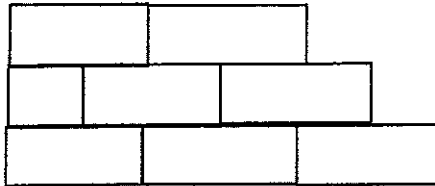
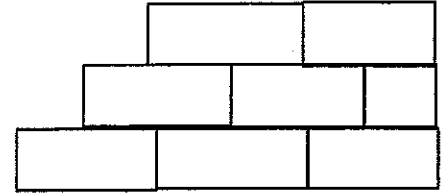


THE FIRST ANNUAL



STANDING IN THE GAP



"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap..." (Ezek. 22:30)

LECTURESHIP JANUARY 27-30, 2000 "THE TRUTH ABOUT ERROR"

THURSDAY (JANUARY 27):

- 7:00 PM The Necessity of Knowing the Difference Between Truth and Error (Jimmy Ferguson)
8:00 PM The Truth About the Need to be a Soldier of the Cross (Keith Mosher)

FRIDAY (JANUARY 28):

- 9:00 AM The Truth About the Need for Distinctive Preaching (Jerry Martin)
10:00 AM The Truth About the Inspiration of the Scriptures (Garland Elkins)
11:00 AM The Truth About Creation vs Evolution (Dan Cates)

Lunch Provided

- 1:00 PM The Truth About Salvation Being Won Only in Christ (Billy Bland)
2:00 PM The Truth About Grace (Gary McDade)
2:00 PM (Ladies' Class - Ladies ONLY) . The Need for Strong Women in the Midst of the Current Struggle (Irene Taylor)

Dinner Break

- 7:00 PM There Can be NO Peaceful Existence Between Truth & Error (Curtis A. Cates)
8:00 PM The Truth About the Second Coming of Christ (Robert R. Taylor, Jr.)

SATURDAY (JANUARY 29):

- 9:00 AM The Truth About Marriage-Divorce-Remarriage (Robert Williams)
10:00 AM The Truth About the "Core Gospel Heresy" (Lennie Reagan)
11:00 AM The Truth About the Possibility of Apostasy (Damon Lundy)

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Dinner Break

- 7:00 PM The Truth About the Church vs Denominationalism (John Shannon)
8:00 PM The Truth About the Operation of the Holy Spirit (Billy Sasser)

SUNDAY (JANUARY 30):

- 9:00 AM The Truth About the Role of Women (David B. Jones)*
10:00 AM The Truth About Acceptable Worship (Bobby Liddell)

Dinner on the Grounds

- 1:30 PM The Truth About Error (Wayne Jones)*
..... **PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN SPEAKERS AT 9:00 AND 1:30 SUNDAY**

We hope everyone will take full advantage of new expanded Winter Lectureship at Nesbit. We feel this is an important topic for today given the conditions which prevail within the walls of God's house. Lectureships like this can help stem the tide of the liberalism and save some who are taken captive by Satan at his will.

For more information contact us:
Nesbit church of Christ
PO Box 383 // 685 Nesbit Rd.
Nesbit, Ms., 38651

662-429-6661 (Office) ♦ 662-429-2794 (Fax) ♦ www.nesbitcoc.org

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THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR

Jimmy Ferguson

Introduction:

1. The first appearance of truth and error: Genesis 2 and 3
 - a. From that time on man has had to make a choice: Deut. 30:19
 - b. II Cor. 2:11 >> One of Satan's devices is that he mixes truth and error. Thus, he can easily deceive one who is not knowledgeable of the truth.
 - c. When there is a lack of knowledge, error can be perceived as truth and wrong can be perceived as right (acceptable) -- Isa. 5:20
 2. Truth is absolute.
 - a. Heb. 6:17 -- (the immutability of His counsel)
 - b. John 12:48 (will be judged by the Word [truth])
 3. We should be concerned with what is happening in the church today.
 - a. Error exists; false doctrines destroy.
 - b. God hates every false way (Psalm 119:104).
 - c. Paul warned the Galatians (Gal. 1:6-9).
 4. In order for us to turn the tide, we must know the difference between truth and error.
-

I. ELDERS SHOULD KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR.

- A. Elders are the front line of defense in the church. (They should think soberly and seriously about their responsibility.)
 - a. I Pet. 5:1-4 [Elders have authority and responsibility and a vital part of their responsibility is tending and protecting their flock. This requires that they know the difference between truth and error.]
 - b. Acts 20:28-30 [Elders are to watch in order that the wolves (false teachers) do not lead any of their flock astray.]
 - c. Matt. 7:15; II Cor. 11:13-15 (Many mix truth with error)
- B. Many elders today are not qualified.
 - a. Titus 1:9 (Holding fast the faithful word)
[If more elders met this qualification there would be fewer false teachers in the church today.]
 - b. If elders confronted false teachers about their error and marked them if they refused to repent then men like Rubel Shelley, Max Lucado, Jeff Walling, etc. would not have the following they have today.
 - c. When elders invite false teachers to speak in their meetings and youth rallies they either do not know the difference between truth and error or they do not care!
 - d. It is a sad day when elders are more interested in large numbers than they are the Word of God!

II. PREACHERS SHOULD KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR

- A. If there was ever a time when we needed faithful gospel preachers who preach with boldness and conviction without fear or favor that time is now!
 - a. II Tim. 4:1-4
 - b. The loose attitude toward truth that many possess today was also present in

Old Testament times (Jer. 5:30-31; Isa. 30:9-10).

B. Preachers must issue a call back to God's authoritative Word.

- a. Still the challenge must be heralded -- Jer. 6:16
- b. We must plead for faithful adherence to God's Word -- but this is predicated upon our knowing the difference between truth and error.
- c. Preaching the truth is not always popular -- Gal. 4:16; Gal. 1:10
- d. Paul taught the whole counsel of God -- Acts 20:27 (He taught them what they needed to hear; this he did with sincerity and simplicity.)
- e. It is tragic that we have preachers today who are more interested in the size of the congregation or the size of their paycheck than they are in standing for the truth.

III. EVERY MEMBER SHOULD KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR.

- A. What do you believe about the church, the organization of the church, plan of salvation, music in worship, etc., and why do you believe it?
 - a. One of our greatest needs in the church today is a membership that is rooted and grounded in the Word of God.
 - b. When our people don't know the Bible, we open the door for every kind of false doctrine imaginable.
-- Matt. 22:29; Hos. 4:6 (This can happen today!)
 - c. When we are not rooted and grounded in the truth, then in many instances we'll not know the difference between truth and error and we can be carried about with every wind of doctrine. (Eph. 4:14)
- B. Why is it that so many members are tolerant of error?
 - a. II John 9-11
- C. What should members do?
 - a. Study; read good sound literature; listen to sound gospel preaching; if you doubt that what you are hearing from the pulpit is true, approach the preacher and elders about it.

IV. TEACH OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR

- A. It is the responsibility of parents to teach and train the children.
 - a. We should teach them the word of God and as their level of understanding increases we should also inform them that there are those who teach error.
 - b. They will be able to recognize error if they have been taught sound words.
 - c. A serious problem: many of our young people go to such schools as Lipscomb University, Abilene, and other places and are unable to recognize error when they hear it.
 - d. The saying: "The church is only one generation away from apostasy."

V. WE NEED TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR BECAUSE WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF A DIGRESSION

- A. We have preachers today who do not talk like Jesus did.
 - a. "Come to us and we'll give you fun and games; entertainment; short talks and call them sermonettes."
 - b. We have brethren who say, "Tone it down, you might run someone off."
 - c. Some of our young people in the church today will never hear a sermon on "Divorce and Remarriage"; or the reason we do not use instrumental music; or the distinctive nature of the church.

B. Examples:

- a. Jeff Walling -- "I don't go around the country preaching against instrumental music."
-- See Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
- b. Rich Atchley -- "Let's not limit the kingdom of God to the size of our brotherhood".
-- See Matt. 16:18,19; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4
- c. Rubel Shelley -- "We do not contribute one whit to our salvation"
-- See Acts 2:38,40; Phil. 2:12
-- Shelley is also on the general committee to bring Billy Graham to Nashville in June of 2000.
- d. Max Lucado -- "I want you to find a church and be baptized, not in order to be saved, but because you are saved."
-- See Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16

CONCLUSION:

1. We must know the difference between truth and error; but we must also act upon our convictions.
2. Satan would have us to overlook doctrinal differences and go along to get along.
3. The unity which the Lord desire and requires us to have is unity **BASED UPON TRUTH!**
 - a. Phil. 3:16
4. Let us seek the old paths, **AND WALK THEREIN!**

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE NEED TO BE A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS

Keith Mosher

INTRO:

An old man accused of deserting his wife was brought before the judge. After the judge had lectured him severely on the sin and trifling character of desertion, he asked the old man, 'What do you have to say,' 'Judge,' answered the elderly man, 'You have me wrong. I'm no deserter; I'm a refugee!' Thinking about this anecdote one wonders what those Christians who become unfaithful or apostate are going to say to the Judge of all when they appear before Him (II Cor. 5:10)?

I GOD'S SOLDIER: A BIBLE TERM

Old Testament usage of the term, soldier, (*ben qedud*) is limited in meaning to actual military persons. In the New Testament at least two applications and three forms of a word are used. Soldiers (*strateum*, a military host) are under command (Acts 23:10); serve (*strateuo*) in a camp; and are, generally speaking, military personnel (*stratiotes*). However, Paul applies the appellation, "fellow-soldier" to Epaphroditus and Archippus (Phil. 2:25; Philemon 2; cf. *sustratiotees*). Paul's usage is spiritual and such usage is also found in Paul's writings to Timothy whom Paul reminds to endure hardness as a good "soldier" (II Tim. 2:3). The latter term is again, *stratiotees*, applied in the spiritual sense, but Paul uses a term "soldier" in the very next verse that demands attention. This last word is *stratologeesantai*.

Bauer informs that *stratologeesantai* is a reference to an enlisted man-one who has been chosen in another's army. The spiritual application of this latter idea is obvious. Christians are enlisted in a great army, the church, to which devotion to serving the Great Commander must be given: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen Mm to be a soldier" (II Tim. 2:4).

Those familiar with military organizations are aware of those called conscripts who are enrolled into service by the draft or compelled to be soldiers because they were captured by the enemy. One expert writes:

The opposite of voluntary enlistment is conscription, carried out by the national state. The resulting military force lacks the moral characteristics of a voluntary army; it is essentially a machine requiring severe discipline, its cohesion being maintained by the threat of punishment. Its great problems, desertion and slackness among the troops, can be kept within bounds only by strong organization and leadership.

The child of God is a *volunteer* not a *conscript*. Surely the Christian's need to desert can not be blamed on some compulsion from God without that individual's being able to choose as Calvinism has long taught. Those who desert God's army have either walked away; been neglected or neglectful; wasted their opportunities; or they have hypocritical hearts (Luke 15-the lost sheep, coin,

prodigal, and elder brother).

No one, according to Scripture, who leaves the church (i.e. deserts God's chosen army) can ever lay the blame anywhere except on self. He is "absent without leave." As a lost sheep he may wander away (cf. Gal. 6:1). Perhaps he has not been taught and therefore neglected as a coin is lost. Or, as so many, he may have wasted the precious gift of salvation (cf. II Peter 2:20-22). However, the worst kind of "soldier" may be like the "elder brother," who only served for self-interest. Even though he was "at home," he was still a deserter!

The Old Testament explains that military men are trained (Gen. 14:14). That is, they are properly taught and experienced. Spiritual soldiers are also strong in the Lord (Eph 6:10). But, today there are more Bibles, more helps in study, and yet, God's "soldiers" know little about God's word. What is wrong?

A soldier is also dependant on his commander (cf. Gen. 14:13; 17:9-10). A good soldier obeys (cf. John 14:15; 7:21-25; Heb. 13:17).

A soldier of any kind is courageous (Num. 14:7-8). He will go wherever he is told (cf. Matt. 28:18-20). God's soldier endures hardness (II Tim. 2:30-4).

A good soldier does not fight his own comrades. God's soldier fights alongside his brethren and does not "shoot" his own men (Eph. 4:32; Num. 32:32).

Finally, God's good soldiers pray (Judges 1:1-2). Those ancient Israelites asked the Lord for help in battles and God's soldier must not forget to pray (Acts 28:6; Phil. 4:6-7).

II GOD'S SOLDIER: DESERTION IS POSSIBLE

A most popular doctrine of many Protestant groups is the impossibility of a Christian's apostatizing. Sometimes this teaching is popularized as "once saved always saved." This "perseverance" of the saints error is wedded to the doctrines of original sin, God's selecting the saved, and the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in order for one to be empowered to respond to God, since man's sinful nature **cannot** respond. A verse often used by these "Calvinistic" advocates is I John 3:9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The background of the teaching that a soldier of Christ can not so sin as to be considered a deserter and deserving of punishment is an ancient teaching known as gnosticism.

Gnosticism is not directly referred to in the New Testament, but its "mystery of iniquity" was already at work in the apostolic church (II Thess. 2:7). The gnostic influence was not full-blown until the second century and it is hard precisely to define the doctrine since there were a variety of teachers and shades of opinions among those ancients. However, Greek philosophy, Phrygian angel worship and the occult, and Judaism were factors in the formation of the movements (Col. 2:8-23). The gnostic (to know) boasted that he alone had, subjectively, the knowledge of salvation. Scott writes:

"A section of the church was dissatisfied with the simplicity of the

gospel, and sought to advance to something higher by adopting the current speculations."

The gnostics were much concerned with the origin of evil and their esoteric "secret" was that flesh is evil and since Jehovah and Jesus created flesh these latter two were not the ultimate "god" to whom one could look for salvation. Since flesh and spirit were antithetic in the gnostic system, Jesus and Christ were said to be two distinct beings. And, since flesh is evil one can not affect his spirit by what he does in his body since the "spirit" of man is a separate entity. Once the spirit is "free" from the body either through ascetic or hedonistic activity one can not be lost (See Colossians 2:21-23 where the record from Paul is about those who practice a "neglecting of the body.") The modern form of gnosticism is "once saved always saved." That is, a child of God can not (absolutely can not) so sin in his body as to lose his salvation or "fall from grace."

The epistle of I John (c.a. A.D. 85-90) is a polemic against the rise of gnostic influence. The statement that the child of God "cannot" sin was intended by John as a correction of the gnostic idea that sin in the body does not affect the soul (I John 3:9). One cannot keep sinning and think that he "knows" truth for this is in reality the "spirit of error" (I John 4:6) and is "antiChrist" (I John 4:3; cf. II Thess. 2:1-7). John had already written that for a child of God, to deny that he (as a spirit being per gnosticism) had ever sinned or had sin was deceptive and profane (I John 1:8-10).

The body and spirit are inter-related in sin and salvation (Rom. 6:12) and sins of the "flesh" do affect one's eternal destiny (I Cor. 6:18). The sincere Bible student will recall that listings of sins of the flesh that keep one from heaven were written to Christians (cf. Gal. 5:19-20). Paul ordered that one Christian be delivered to Satan so that Christian's "flesh" might be "destroyed" (I Cor. 5:5). Why would Paul condemn the flesh in order to save the spirit?

The Corinthians were begotten (i.e. "born-again") through the gospel, yet they sinned (I Cor. 1, 5, 11, etc.; cf. I Cor. 4:15). If the seed (Word of God) "remains" in the Christian (I John 3:9), that is if he keeps walking in truth by confessing sin and obeying God, the Christian will not fall away (I John 1:7; II Peter 1:5-11). But the "seed" (Word of God) can be choked out by worldliness (Luke 8:11). A child of God can fall from grace (Gal. 5:4). It was said of Benjamin that the "lad cannot leave his father" (Gen. 44:22). But Benjamin did leave. Often children are told that they cannot play in a street, but often they disobey! For John to write that a child of God cannot sin is to write that such sin is not a life-style for Christians and that God's soldiers cannot ignore the fact that what is done in the body affects the soul.

One Calvinist argued that God's children were "sheep" (John 10:27-28). He further surmised that once one was a "sheep" that one could never become a "goat." Such thinking abuses a figure of speech by making it literal, and such speculation ignores the fact that sheep can go astray, be lost, and be eaten of wolves (Isa. 53:6; Matt. 10:6; Matt. 7:15). A soldier of Christ can be "absent without permission!" He can be lost.

Bible students are well-aware that even Jesus faced the temptation of sin and conquered it (Heb. 4:15). What is the "danger" inherent in a Christian's sins and why warn against such if one can not so sin as to fall from grace? Emotional sinners often respond to questions about their once saved-

always saved view by exclaiming that no amount of sin can separate a child of God from His love. Such sinners are fond of quoting Romans 8:35-39 as a proof-text for their position. First, nothing is mentioned in the latter passage about sin and second, external things such as "creatures," "height," and "depth" etc., are things people fear. Such things hold no fear for the Christian who follows the "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:1), but one's sin can separate one from God if that sin is unconfessed (Isa. 59:1-2; I John 5-16). One can cease to love God even though God's love is constant (Jude 20-21).

A tangential teaching from those who believe that a Christian soldier will never be punished is that though one sins one must and always will come back before one dies. (Some in the church hold such a position on Proverbs 22:6). However, some apostates are pictured in the Bible as without a place to repent for they were returning to Judaism (Heb. 6:6). Other disciples are said to have turned their backs on Jesus "and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). One might also ask whether Ananias and Sapphira ever came back (Acts 5:1-10)!

From I Peter 1:4-5 some Calvinists have argued that one cannot fall because one is kept by God's power. However, the passage reads "kept by the power of God through faith" (I Peter 1:5). Can one stop believing? "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (I Tim. 1:19).

The soldier of Christ can depart from the battle and bring shame to self, the army (church), and his Commander (Heb. 12:2). The Christian serves in a volunteer army and one would think that there would be no reason to leave. Yet many do.

III GOD'S DESERTED SOLDIERS: PUNISHMENT AWAITS

Punishment, which is a penalty inflicted on an offender, awaits not only those outside of Christ, but also those who become unfaithful soldiers (Matt. 25:31-46). The severity of eternal separation from God is a reality for deserters from God's army (Matt. 10:28). Those who teach that a Christian can not fall from grace and so be lost in a devil's hell are caught in their own dilemma. They argue that God chooses the saved and that those so chosen can not resist God's grace and so must become God's children. Such a doctrine makes God responsible for one's salvation and for one's being lost. So, Calvinism insists that no Christian could ever go to hell. The apostle Peter knew of no such teaching and wrote: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Peter 2:20-22).

The Expositor's Greek Testament posits the teaching for the discussion of the above passage as "The consequences of falling away." Those of whom the apostle Peter spoke had once been good soldiers of Christ who had not enmeshed themselves in the affairs of the world (II Tim. 2:4). But, anti-law teachers had invaded their ranks (cf. Rubel Shelly, Steve Flatt, Marvin Phillips, et al. today) and had corrupted the minds of many (II Peter 2:1-19). Compromises of license over liberty and

enticements to the flesh led many ancient soldiers of the Lord from the battlefield of truth. Stachan writes about those:

... who have been impressed with Christian Truth, and have had strength to separate themselves from their own surroundings and customs; but are led to return through the compromises suggested by the false teachers.

For a servant in God's army to give in to doctrinal compromise is deserving of punishment. One can not give licentious license to one's passions whether moral or doctrinal and still please the Lord. The Lord's army marches on the "way of Truth" (II Peter 2:2). Such truth is inherent in Christ's teaching and is the "highway of holiness" (Isa. 35:8). The Lord's army bivouacs along the "right way" (ASV "straight way") (II Peter 2:15). For unfaithful soldiers to take another road exposes them to the enemy and brings dire consequences. The "latter end" of such deserters finds them worse than before they entered God's army (II Peter 2:20)

Imagine a soldier who joins an army at a time when strong, vicious enemies are coming against his country. The soldier is desirous of defending his home and his land and so endures rigorous training, makes many new "buddies," and vows to fight with them to death. On the way home from basic training, however, the soldier catches a ride with someone who seems to have great wealth and charisma. This one begins to entice the soldier to desert and to learn how "not to be a sucker" but to make much money from illicit war-time activities. The soldier is enticed, gives in, and deserts! Later, when the war is finished, the soldier wants to see his "buddies" again but knows he can not. His latter end is worse than the first and no doubt there are many reasons.

The fictitious soldier in the above illustration is now a coward. He has failed his Commander, his "buddies," and his country. His honor, peace of mind, and even his freedom are gone. He faces military charges for desertion in the face of the enemy which violation is subject to death. He also faces the knowledge that many of his friends did fight the battle and many suffered for the cause. All of his life he must remember what he did and to whom he did it.

But even worse than the military deserter is the Christian who deserts his Christ, lets his fellow-soldiers fight the battles, and uses his life to "buy and sell and get gain" (James 4:13). Such an apostate servant of the Lord has, "... trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb.10:29).

In one description of the judgment scene, the Christ taught that there would be witnesses present who "could rise up in judgment" (cf. Matt. 12:41-42). When a Christian deserter faces the "Captain" of his salvation at judgment is it possible that he will be faced with at least the knowledge of those who did remain steadfast? Suppose a mother must face her daughter or a father his son (Matt. 10:35-37)? Is not the latter end "worse" for those who once were good soldiers but now have lost not only as an alien sinner might but also as a dishonored deserter! Is it any wonder that such will be punished and punished much worse than one who never knew the truth? People who have never known battle suffer, but much more those who have known-and deserted! Staff Sergeant Jarvis D. Anderson

wrote:

If you reach your goal of riches; What then? If you dress in pin-stripe britches? What then? When your glory has diminished; What then? And the doctor says your finished; What then? When each fading moment tells, like the echoes from a bell, That you're headed straight for hell; What then?

IV DESERTERS NEED HELP

Several years ago a fellow-preacher told of wondering why the Bible did not contain a course of action for reaching lost children of God. There was teaching on their "lostness," but was there not a plan? Further study revealed two plans from Galatians 6:1-5 and James 5:19-20. Deserters face hell and those who know of deserters face hell if they do not try to reach them.

Plan number one is to get those who are spiritual, to reach out to those "overtaken in a fault" (Gal. 6:1). The term, *spiritual*, is used in I Corinthians 12:1 where the translators added *gifts* to the term. The original is "pneumatikos" which carries the idea, in the Corinthian letter, of a miraculous endowment from God. Some think that such a "spiritual gift" can be ordinary using I Peter 4:10, but at least the idea is that those *especially* able are to go to brethren who are falling away and to *restore* them. At this point, elders, deacons, and preachers come to mind as especially able at least they should be able to reach the unfaithful soldier. Other members should be growing into this ability and, especially if one is teaching classes, studying the things needed to recapture a deserting soldier (Gal. 6:2). (If I were an elder, I do not believe I could sleep very well knowing how many wander away from the church.)

Plan number two involves following the challenge from James: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

Today more than 50% of the churches' members leave for the world. In Memphis, Tennessee alone, there are about 10,000 active members, but there are also nearly 15,000 inactive!

While doing local work at the Gragg Avenue congregation in Memphis, I helped with a survey of out-of-duty members. Ten questions were asked each one and twenty-seven responses began to show a pattern. Not one thought the congregation had been unfriendly, but each one did think that he had "never been a part." Each "deserter" lacked Bible knowledge and each had not been assimilated into the work of the church. (Congregations which do not use new members' in some fashion have an unusually large drop-out rate.) One brother responded that he quit because "The preacher would not let him give his testimony."

Such people as described above need to be converted (James 5:19-20). Too often the procedure is to visit, to tell the one "we miss him," and to tell him how much we "need" him back. The Holy Spirit, through James, instructs Christians to convert ("to turn from and turn to") the delinquent, deserting soldier. The only way to convert someone is to study the Bible with him, but what topics should be studied?

The deserter is cold in heart; he has "left his first love" (Rev. 2:1-4). He needs reminding of Bible authority, the difference between the testaments, what to do to be saved, what the church is, what it means to be faithful, etc. In other words, restudy with him the same things one would study with an alien sinner. This method of "converting" worked for nine of the twenty-seven, longtime delinquents at Gragg Avenue. They repented and returned (Acts 8:22). Some, when reminded of their baptisms and who immersed them and where broke into tears! Truly "Godly sorrow worketh repentance" (II Cor. 7:10).

CONCLUSION:

A Christian soldier enlists in God's army and becomes a chosen warrior. It seems strange that many desert in the face of worldly pleasure or life's hardships. The failure to stand with brethren in the battle against evil so hardens the hearts of some that they find it nearly impossible to return. How ashamed such will be at judgment when they see their fellow-soldiers, battlescarred and weary from the good fight of faith being ushered into heaven while the deserter is sent to hell (II Peter 2:20-22). How deeply the pain of failure will be for the cowardly Christian who failed his Captain's orders and gave in to the enemy!

God wants His children to reach out to such. Perhaps a few soldiers who are "out of duty" can be turned again to their former posts. The battle is the Lord's, but His army must not run away in the heat of the fray. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10).

**THE FIRST ANNUAL
STANDING IN THE GAP LECTURESHIP
January 27-30**

**THE TRUTH ABOUT THE NEED FOR DISTINCTIVE PREACHING
By Jerry L. Martin**

INTRODUCTION:

1. It is a distinct honor to be a part of this first annual STANDING IN THE GAP LECTURESHIP. I appreciate the invitation brother David Jones and this good congregation has extended to me.
2. The theme of this lectureship is designed to show the clear line that is drawn between truth and error.
3. My assignment is to lead us in a discussion of the need for distinctive preaching.
 - A. I wish I could say that every preacher among us preaches the truth in a very distinctive way but they unfortunately do not.
 - B. I many time wish my children could experience what I did growing up.
 1. Every preacher I heard, every congregation I knew, and every school I was aware of taught the same clear, distinct, life changing, spirit-stirring and soul-saving gospel of Christ.
 - C. In too many places today the pulpits ring with many uncertain and confusing sounds.
 1. Some pulpits among us proclaim doctrines that the denominations have never been able to defend successfully.
 2. The sword of the Spirit, which successfully exposed and defeated denominationalism over and over again in the past centuries, has been left in its sheath and in many cases hocked in denominational pawn shops.
 3. Truly there is a need for distinctive preaching today for:

I. WITHOUT DISTINCTIVE PREACHING THERE IS NO SURE FAITH

- A. There are many kinds of faith: shallow faith, empty faith, false faith, deceived faith, shipwrecked faith, etc.
- B. There is only one sure faith that will make one pleasing to God and it comes only God's word is preached (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:14-17).
- C. When one knows God's word (the scriptures) and proclaims them faithfully his message is distinct and those who respond to it in obedience have a faith that is provable and sustainable (Mark 16:15,16; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 4:1-8; 2:2; Matt. 28:18-20; John 20:30,31).
- D. The theatrical social drama of our day may draw crowds but it will not produce faith that is pleasing to God. Only God's Word can produce such faith.
- E. There is an urgent need for preaching that contends earnestly for "the faith that was once delivered to the saints."

II. WITHOUT DISTINCTIVE PREACHING THERE IS NO SANCTIFIED LIFE

- A. Paul delivered a very distinct message to the Romans that called for change in their lives (Rom. 6:1-4; 16-18).
- B. An obedient response to distinctive preaching makes one a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Pet. 2:3-9).
- C. There is no fellowship with God without sanctified lives produced by the light of His Word (1 John 1:1-7).
- D. When the preaching is "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" our lives become as distinct as the preaching and thereby hid in Christ (1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2; Gal. 2:20; 3:26,27).
- E. Distinctive preaching will cause us to give ourselves as a living sacrifice to God and cause us to determine to never conform to the world by helping us know the difference between the two lives (Rom. 12:1-3; Titus 2:11,12).

III. WITHOUT DISTINCTIVE PREACHING THERE IS NO SAVED SOUL

- A. Jesus told those Jews who believed on Him, that the only way to know the truth and be free was to continue in His words (John 8:31,32). That's pretty distinct isn't it?
- B. It pleased God through the "foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).
- C. Jesus is the only one with the authority and words of salvation (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Heb.1:1,2; John 6:66-68).
- D. It is only the distinctive preaching of the truth of the gospel that purifies the soul (1 Peter 1:22-25)
- E. It is only distinctive preaching of the word that will save man's soul (James 1:21; 1 Cor. 1:18).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Dear folks, the souls of mankind are at stake. The preaching of the gospel is the means of salvation (Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:15,16; 1 Tim. 2:4).
- 2. There is no other gospel, no matter what man may claim (Gal. 1:6-9).
- 3. We must determine to continue to distinctively declare the same gospel "in season and out of season" (1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:1-4).
- 4. Our spiritual inheritance is at stake. We must distinctively declare the whole counsel of God and never cease commending one another to God and the word of His grace (Acts 20:27,32).

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Garland Elkins

INTRODUCTION

- A. The truth is important. We should be willing to pay any proper price to obtain the truth (Prov. 23:23). Having obtained the truth we should not part from it for any consideration.
 - B. What is the truth? It is God's word (Jno. 17:17).
 - C. Only the truth can make us free from sin (Jno. 8:32).
 - D. Through the obedience to the truth we "purify our souls" (1 Pet. 1:22).
- I. The Bible is the inspired word of God.
- A. The Bible is here. It is either the work of man or the work of God, or is it the work of God and man?
 - 1. The inspiration of the Scriptures means that God dictated what the writers said (2 Pet. 1:20,21).
 - 2. Man did not produce the Bible. He does not possess the ability to write the Bible.
 - 3. The Bible is beyond the reach of human authorship.
 - B. Even if man could have written the Bible he would not have done so.
 - 1. It condemns too many things that men enjoy doing.
 - 2. It commends too many things that men do not like.
 - C. The Bible was produced by the cooperation of God and man. "Men spake from god, being moved by the Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).
- II. What do we mean when we say the Bible is the inspired Word of God?

A. When we speak of the inspiration of the Scriptures we mean that God dictated what the writers said (1 Cor. 2:13).

B. The Bible claims to be inspired.

1. 2 Tim. 3:16,17.

2. 2 Sam. 23:1,2

3. Jer. 1:9

III. Jesus endorsed both the Old and New Testaments.

A. Lk. 24:44

B. Mt. 10:19,20.

C. Both the “what” and the “how” means that the Bible is verbally inspired.

D. Inspiration did not make a writer omniscience, but he was guided in what he preached and wrote by the Holy Spirit and there was no possibility of his making a mistake, or of teaching error because he was guided by the Holy Spirit (Jno. 16:13; Jno. 14:26).

IV. A few of the many evidences of the inspiration of the Bible.

A. The following are a few brief evidences of inspiration.

1. The Bible has anticipated and answered the major departures from the truth (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

2. Many of the errors of Catholicism and Protestantism are anticipated long before they occurred and the Bible supplies the answers to them.

B. The Bible though not a book on science, yet when it does speak on a subject on which science speaks there is always perfect harmony.

C. The Bible is impartial.

1. Moses one of the greatest of men yet his sin at the water of Meribah resulted in God not allowing him to enter Canaan (Num. 20:9-12).
 2. Peter was a great man yet he denied the Lord, and the Bible gives a record of it (Lk. 22:54-62).
- D. The Bible does not satisfy curiosity (Jno. 8:1-8).
- E. The unity of the Bible is a mark of its inspiration.
- F. The prophecies of the Bible prove its inspiration.
1. The prediction of Joshua relative to the rebuilding of Jericho is an evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures (Josh. 6:26; 1 Ki. 16:34).
 2. The prediction of the young prophet from Judah is another evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Ki. 23:15-20).

Conclusion:

- A. The Bible is the inspired Word of God and should be received as such (1 Thess. 2:13).
- B. The following beautiful tribute to the Bible was written by an anonymous writer:

This Book contains: The mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true and its decision immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to supply you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven is opened, and the gates of Hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be open at the judgement, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents. ---Selected

THE TRUTH ABOUT CREATION VERSUS EVOLUTION*

Daniel F. Cates

INTRODUCTION:

1. The subject at hand is, in effect, the most important battle in the spiritual war in which we are engaged (Ephesians 6:12).
 - a. It is Gettysburg, San Juan Hill, the Somme, Iwo Jima, and Normandy all rolled into one.
 - b. The battle that rages between the doctrines of creation and evolution is that which effects all of us, and indeed all of society.
 - (1). We are not merely pushing air when discussing these important matters.
 - (2). Rather, we are battling a very real enemy even among those of our own number.
 - (a). In Tennessee, within the past ten years, a teacher in a Christian academy taught theistic evolution in the classroom; he was dealt with.
 - [1]. Theistic evolution is a doctrine that compromises the account of creation by saying that the evidence for evolution is so compelling that God must have used evolution as a tool.
 - [2]. To believe such is to err.
 - [a]. That takes away from the power of God to work apart from , or above, natural processes.
 - [b]. It denies evidence that backs creation.
 - [c]. It denies plain Bible doctrine.
 - (b). In Arkansas, within the last three years, an elementary school teacher in a Christian academy gave the children a handout teaching evolution and told them to keep in it their desks.
 - [1]. When questioned she admitted she believed evolution was a fact.
 - [2]. She has been dealt with.
 - (c). While those who were teaching these errors have been dealt with, how do you erase what has already been implanted, how do you “strike it from the record?”
 - (3). If there is a God, and there is, then we have a very real responsibility to accept His Word, to obey Him, to glorify Him, and to defend the Truth of these things.
 - (a). We are not without aid, for the pages of the Bible defend her Author and His works.
 - [1] Genesis 1:1 and its context present the beginning of all physical things, *In the beginning God created the*

heaven and the earth.

- [2] Genesis 7,8 present the account of the flood that shaped creation into that which we see today.
- [3]. Psalm 19:1 reads, *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork.*
- [4]. Psalm 139:14 records the reaction of David to His Creator, *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*
- [5]. Psalm 148 portrays the praise due the Creator.
- [6]. Colossians 1:16 sets forth the who behind and the why of creation, *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.*

(b). Furthermore, the world around us aids us in the defense of creation.

- [1]. The evolutionist argues that we cannot see creation and therefore are unable to defend it as scientific; they fail to recognize, or mention, that such things (necessary to evolution) as spontaneous generation and macro-evolution **have not been observed, cannot be tested, and cannot be reproduced**, and are therefore no more scientific than that which they attack.
- [2]. While we could not have seen the process of creation we can see its effects in the same way that we can see that God is behind all though no man has seen God.
 - [a]. We do not see the wind but we see its effects.
 - [b]. We do not see thought yet we know it occurs.
 - [c]. We cannot see many things that we see the effects of, and yet we do not question such..

2. There is no middle ground between creation and evolution.

a. Statements verify this.

- (1). G. Richard Culp, quoted by Dr. Frank Allen in The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe stated, "We stand either with God and His teaching of creation or we stand with the evolutionist in opposition to Him . . . there can be no compromise."
- (2). Julian or Aldous Huxley, quoted by Curtis A. Cates, Sr. in the 1983 Memphis School of Preaching lectureship, said, "Evolution is directly antagonistic to Creation . . . makes it impossible to believe

the Bible.”

- b. Necessary conclusions verify this as shown in this paraphrasing of the Institute for Creation Research’s 1982 *Impact*, nos. 95,96.
 - (1). The creation model demands . . .
 - (a). Sudden creation.
 - (b). Narrow limits of variation (micro-evolution-DFC).
 - (c). Mutation and natural selection insufficient to cause macro-evolution.
 - (d). Man and apes have a separate ancestry.
 - (e). Geology fashioned largely by catastrophic processes.
 - (f). Earth created recently (>10,000 years ago).
 - (2). The evolution model demands . . .
 - (a). Naturalistic processes.
 - (b). Variation among kinds (macro-evolution-DFC).
 - (c). Mutation and natural selection have resulted in all the kinds that have existed.
 - (d). Man and apes emerged from a common ancestor.
 - (e). Geography fashioned largely by uniformitarianism.
 - (f). Earth formed several billion years ago (ca. 4.6 billion years ago-DFC)
- c. If there is a contrast between creation and evolution, then there is a necessary contrast between Christianity and evolution; Robert R. Taylor, Jr., addressing this in the 1983 Memphis School of Preaching lectureship observed that “the two systems (Christianity and evolution-DFC) contrast relative to . . .”
 - (1). “. . . Origins.”
 - (2). “. . . Man’s fall.”
 - (3). “. . . Man’s nature”
 - (4). “. . . Morals.”
 - (5). “. . . Marriage.”
 - (6). “. . . Destinies.”
3. This lesson will provide a trench from which the Christian soldier may fight.
 - a. There will be a definition of terms used in the creation and evolution controversy.
 - b. The tenants of the Theory of Evolution will be examined; including it attacks on creation, and its own weaknesses.
 - c. The Bible doctrine of the creation will be examined; including a look at the evidences for God’s existence, as well as a look at the implications of the global flood of Genesis 7,8.
 - d. Then a very important question will be asked and answered: Why would one believe in evolution?
 - e. As a conclusion a look will be taken at what belief in creation requires of a person.

I. DEFINITION OF TERMS.

- A. Apparent age-The idea that things were created in such a way that they appeared older than they were (e.g., Adam and Eve would have been created as adults, not children).
- B. Catastrophism-The view that the geological evidence that we see today was largely a result of catastrophic events; specifically the flood mentioned in Genesis 6,7, and the events immediately before (e.g., the fountains of the great deep opening up-Genesis 7:11), and those immediately after (e.g., the recession of excess water from the land masses).
- C. Creation-The view that a divine power created out of nothing all of the parts of the universe in six literal days.
- D. Entropy (The Second Law of Thermodynamics)-The Law that states, "It is possible to completely convert work (bulk, ordered kinetic energy) into heat (random, disordered kinetic energy), but not vice versa."
1. In effect then this is the idea that the universe is "winding down."
 2. This directly violates a term I was taught by an evolutionist in an Historical Geology class, "No vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end."
- E. Geological record-The evidence provided by the appearance of fossils at various levels in the layering of rocks (i.e., stratigraphic layers) that correspond to dates on the geological time chart, thereby allowing one to match up rocks to fossils and fossils to rocks to get a date for each.
- F. Geological time chart-The history of the earth (typically, different sources will provide different dates).

TIME OF START*	ERA	PERIOD	EPOCH	ABOUT**
4.6 billion years ago	Precambrian			Jellyfish, amoebas, worms
570 million years ago	Paleozoic	Cambrian		Protozoans, trilobites
505 mya	Paleozoic	Ordovician		Snails, jawless fish, echinoids
438 mya	Paleozoic	Silurian		Sea scorpions, corals, sharks
408 mya	Paleozoic	Devonian		Starfish
360 mya	Paleozoic	Mississippian (a.k.a. Carboniferous)		Amphibians, clams, and
320 mya	Paleozoic	Pennsylvanian (a.k.a. Carboniferous)		lungfish
286 mya	Paleozoic	Permian		Ammonites
245 mya	Mesozoic	Triassic		Ichthyosaurs, tyrannosaurs
208 mya	Mesozoic	Jurassic		Flying reptiles
144 mya	Mesozoic	Cretaceous		Ancient birds, snakes
66 mya	Cenozoic	Tertiary	Paleocene	Kangaroos, horses, elephants
58 mya	Cenozoic	Tertiary	Eocene	Alligators
34 mya	Cenozoic	Tertiary	Oligocene	Apes, bats
24 mya	Cenozoic	Tertiary	Miocene	Whales, sabertooths
5 mya	Cenozoic	Tertiary	Pliocene	Gorillas
1.6 mya	Cenozoic	Quaternary	Pleistocene	Hominids
10,000 years ago	Cenozoic	Quaternary	Holocene/Recent	Modern human beings

*-Time of start taken directly from UALR "Historical Geology" class notes

**-.About adapted from The New York Public Library Desk Reference

G. Law of Biogenesis-Life comes from life.

H. Macro-evolution (The General Theory of Evolution)-As defined by Garry K. Brantley, "... life initially arose and has since developed, divergently and progressively, by a purely naturalistic process (e.g., a monkey evolving into

- a hominid (ape man)-DFC).”
- I. Micro-evolution (The Special Theory of Evolution)-Again as defined by Brantley, “limited alterations can be observed within phylogenetic (within the same kind/phylum-DFC) boundaries (e.g., Shetland ponies compared to the huge Clydesdales, miniature Chihuahuas in contrast to the Great Dane, etc.).
 - J. Mutation-Defined by a Biology textbook, “Any change in DNA.”
 - K. Natural selection (Survival of the fittest)-Presented in Darwin’s On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection, it is the supposed “engine” by which evolution takes place, specifically it is the idea that the species that are best adapted to a certain environment will most likely survive and pass on their genes to future generations.
 - L. Punctuated equilibrium-Popularized by Stephen Jay Gould, this is the view that the changes that occur causing one species to evolve into another are punctuated and not gradual (i.e. it may only take a short while (geologically speaking) for a lot of change to occur); this view is rejected by many evolutionists, for it is a compromise of sorts due to the lack of fossil evidence for gradual evolution, i.e., transitional fossils.
 - M. Theistic evolution-God used evolution to his advantage allowing theism to match more easily the evidence presented by evolutionists.
 - N. Transitional fossils (Links)-Fossils which represent the gradual transition from one kind of animal to another.
 - O. Uniformitarianism-The view that gradual uniform natural processes have resulted in the geological evidence that is seen today.

II. THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION.

- A. What is taught by the Theory of Evolution?
 - 1. The following is taken from a current Biology text book.
 - a. “Species adapt in response to changes in their environment.”
 - b. Natural selection is the engine of evolution.
 - (1). Individuals vary from others.
 - (2). “Organisms produce many more offspring than will survive to reproduce”
 - (3). “Organisms compete for necessary resources . . .”
 - (4). “The survivors live to reproduce and pass their adaptations for survival on to their offspring.”
 - 2. The earth is supposed to be ca. 4.6 billion years old, and that time is supposed to be verified by the geological record/time chart.
- B. How does evolution attack creation?
 - 1. Bert Thompson lists several ways, and answers them in the tract, “Creation’s Critics Countered.”
 - a. “Creation is not scientific, because creation is not testable, reproducible, or repeatable . . .”

- (1). This was addressed earlier in this lesson.
 - (2). Thompson answers, “. . . the General Theory of Evolution (organic evolution) also fails to meet all three of these criteria . . . Neither creation nor evolution is testable, in the sense of being observable experimentally. Both, however, can be stated as **scientific models.**”
- b. “. . . at least it (evolution-DFC) is based on **natural** processes, whereas creation is based on supernatural processes.”
- (1). Whether creation or evolution be accepted, both demand that circumstances be quite different from what they are now, and both rely upon miracles.
 - (2). Thompson points out that science is a search for knowledge, and, “**There is nothing about true science that excludes the study of created objects and order.**”
- c. “Creationists are nothing more than pseudo-scientists, and should not be regarded as ‘real’ scientists like evolutionists.”
- (1). Thompson refers to this as a “scare tactic.”
 - (2). If this is true then the following (from Paul S. Taylor’s Eden Communications), and thousands more, are/were pseudo-scientists:
 - (a). Charles Babbage, who helped develop computer science.
 - (b). Francis Bacon, who developed the Scientific Method.
 - (c). Wernher von Braun, who was responsible for getting America’s space program off of the ground.
 - (d). James P. Joule, whose name is a unit of measurement in Chemistry.
 - (e). Matthew Maury, who discovered the Psalmist’s “paths of the seas” (Psalm 8:8).
 - (f). Sir Isaac Newton, who among other things is connected with the Law of Gravity.
 - (g). Louis Pasteur, the bacteriologist.
 - (h). Plus several praised in my Historical Geology class: Georges Cuvier, Carolus Linnaeus, Gregor Mendel, Nicolas Steno, and Leonardo da Vinci—all pseudo-scientists?
- d. “The creationists’ ‘ulterior motive’ . . . to get their own religious views taught in public schools . . .”

- (1). Another "scare tactic."
 - (2). "The laws allowing the teaching of creation forbid exactly that (religion in public schools-DFC)."
 - (3). "Some of the most outspoken critics of religion in the public schools (e.g. religions like secular humanism, etc.) are the **creationists**."
- e. This last attack will be shown to be wrong as this study continues: "The creationists never are able to support their own case with evidence(s). All they can do is attempt to 'tear down' the evolutionist's case with 'negative evidence.'"
- C. What are weaknesses of the Theory of Evolution?
1. There are evidences that would tend to disprove evolution-space will only permit a small number of these.
 - a. Evolution demands an increase in complexity as time goes on, thereby violating the Second Law of Thermodynamics.
 - b. Life cannot arise from non-life, and yet somewhere along the way that has to have taken place for evolution to be true.
 - (1). Furthermore, man with all of his capability cannot create life, and yet it is to have happened by chance?
 - (2). Sir Fred Hoyle, an evolutionist, said the likelihood of that chance occurrence was equivalent to believing that, "a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials there-in."
 - c. It, though a theory, cannot be demonstrated in the laboratory, neither has it been observed.
 - d. There is a noticeable lack of evidence in the fossil record of the aforementioned transitional fossils.
 - e. A creationist interpretation of evidence is typically as acceptable as an evolutionist's interpretation of it.
 - f. Not really specifically about evolution, but no one can tell where the first matter (for the Big Bang) came from.
 - g. Fossilized trees have been found that extend vertically through "millions of years" of rock strata/layers.
 - h. Many traits shared by all mammals, and most animals, are not seen in men.
 2. There are unkind statements about evolution, spoken by her own proponents-only a few of many are entered here.
 - a. Dr. Hubert P. Yockey wrote, "One must conclude that, contrary to the established and current wisdom, a scenario describing the genesis of life on earth by chance and natural causes which can be accepted on the basis of fact and faith has not

yet been written.”

- b. In Jepsen, Mayr, and Simpson’s Genetics, Paleontology, and Evolution is written, “. . . many ‘links’ will continue to be missing.”
- c. About the “missing links,” Darwin wrote, “. . . this is perhaps the most obvious and serious objection which can be urged against the theory.”
- d. R.L. Oldershaw wrote, “Both the ‘Big Bang’ model and the theoretical side of elementary physics rely on numerous highly speculative assumptions.”
- e. Kenneth Hsu, an evolutionist though not Darwinian who is the Earth Science Head at the Swiss Institute of Earth Sciences, stated, “The law of natural selection is not, I will maintain, science. It is an ideology, and a wicked one, and it has much interfered with our ability to perceive the history of life with clarity as it has interfered with our ability to see one another with tolerance.”

III. THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF CREATION.

- A. Evidences prove that there is a God.
 - 1. The need of man to worship, or his religious instinct, indicates that something instilled that in him.
 - 2. The cosmological argument shows the universe is not eternal, therefore there had to be first cause, a prime mover, or an unmoved first mover.
 - 3. The esthetic argument described by Roy J. Hearn as providing man’s “faculty that enables (him-DFC) to appreciate beauty.”
 - 4. The moral argument used so well in debate by Thomas B. Warren; i.e., there is a moral quality, or nature, found in man.
 - 5. The teleological, or design, argument states that the universe has a design and therefore requires that there be a designer.
 - 6. The ontological argument philosophically affirms that God must exist for He is the greatest being of which man can conceive.
- B. Among numerous scientific evidences that the world was created are these:
 - 1. Complexity does not result from chance, and random mutations do not cause improvement.
 - 2. Design is seen in nature.
 - 3. The Bible documents the creation and the first life (for which evolution can provide no answer).
 - 4. Organisms reproduce only their own kind of offspring.
 - 5. Matter cannot create itself, and matter cannot come from nothing naturally.
- C. The world around us is evidence of a global flood.

1. Stratigraphy throughout the world points to the layering caused by water deposition.
2. Mammoths have been found quick frozen at the poles with tropical foliage in their mouths.
3. Tree fossils have been found slicing through several layers of sediment.
4. Many fossils are found in mass graveyards.
5. Coal could have easily formed under flood conditions.
6. The plains and canyons of the world are evidence of large amounts of water run-off.
7. Many other evidences come to mind as evidence of the flood's effect on the geological features of the earth.

IV. WHY WOULD ONE BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION?

- A. Many are drawn in by the Theory of Evolution because they simply know no better.
 1. Joseph Goebbels, of Nazi fame, said, "If you tell a lie big enough, and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it."
 - a. If our own schools teach such error, what can we expect out of schools where evolution is glorified?
 - b. How is a child to know to search for another way if he has been taught that the Theory of Evolution is as sure as the Theory of Gravity (I thought it was a Law), or the theory of relativity?
 2. Some are drawn to it because many religious leaders accept evolution on the grounds that they simply cannot answer the questions it raises.
 - a. This is the official stand taken by the Catholic church.
 - (1). According to the 11-4-96 *US News and World Report*, "In 1950, Pope Pius XII called evolution a 'serious hypothesis.'"
 - (2). The same article went on to note that in the fifth century, "St. Augustine warned against a literal reading of the Genesis creation account."
 - (3). And now according to the article, "John Paul II went further than previous popes in declaring that a 'convergence' of scientific evidence gathered in the past 50 years makes 'a significant argument in favor of this theory.'"
 - (4). A headline in a Rome newspaper according to the article said, "The Pope Says We May Descend From Monkeys."
 - b. In the November 26, 1998 *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* a Catholic Cardinal, John O'Connor, is quoted as saying,

“Perhaps the spirit of God that breathed forth life into Earth . . . was a lower animal.”

3. Hosea 4:6a could well be applied here, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*
- B. Many are pushed into the evolutionary corner by others.
1. Peer pressure exists even among scientists, and the label of “creationist” could be damaging to one’s career.
 2. A winner of the Nobel Prize, Hannes Alfvén, wrote of such demand for conformity, “If scientific issues always were decided by Gallup polls and not by scientific arguments, science will very soon be petrified forever.”
- C. Many leap in happily.
1. William Jennings Bryan, the prosecutor in the 1925 Scopes “Monkey” Trial had a standing offer of “\$100 in cash to anyone who signed an affidavit declaring that he personally was descended from an ape.”
 - a. The \$100 was never claimed.
 - b. Today people are lined up and falling over each other for the privilege to do that very thing . . . for free!
 2. They seek to justify lives of indiscretion and sin.
 - a. If you take away the Omnipotent Creator then you take away any limits or responsibilities He has set forth; i.e., you become your own god (e.g., humanism).
 - b. Earl G. Hallonquist wrote, “. . . the possibility of life originating and developing by chance anywhere is absolutely nil. Yet, otherwise intelligent men and women would rather believe such an impossibility than to believe in the obvious alternative of creation by a Supreme Being. The explanation for this must be spiritual-‘the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not’ (II Cor. 4:4).”
 - c. Aldous Huxley in Ends and Means wrote, “I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reason for this assumption . . . For myself, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political.”
 3. They seek to have the power that God alone possesses.
 - a. Of man’s ability to rule himself and others, Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in Beyond Good and Evil Section V-187, paragraph 1, “There are moralities which are meant to justify their creators before others. Other moralities are meant to calm him and lead him to be satisfied with himself. With yet others he wants to crucify himself and humiliate himself.

With others he wants to wreak revenge, with others conceal himself, with others transfigure himself and place himself way up, at a distance. This morality is used by its creator to forget, that one to have others forget him or something about him. Some moralists want to vent their power and creative whims on humanity; . . .”

- b. In honesty I will try to accurately frame and quote Stephen Jay Gould who said (in perhaps the context of his departure from typical Darwinian evolution), there is an “intellectual joy at apostasy.”

CONCLUSION:

1. Likely you understood the danger of evolution before this lesson, but perhaps this lesson has either made you more aware, given you a better understanding, or given you more hope about what tools the creationist has available.
2. There are many great sources for seeking answers to the questions posed by evolutionists.
 - a. Books are too numerous to mention, but anything presented by Apologetics Press is worthy of study.
 - b. Many web sites are dedicated to the fight against evolution, among them are:
 - (1). www.apologeticspress.org
 - (2). www.icr.org
 - (3). www.christiananswers.net
3. If the creation is truly what happened, and it is, then God and His Word must be taken seriously as well therefore whatever responsibilities are set forth therein must be met.
 - A. We must build faith (Hebrews 11:6) upon the knowledge that the Bible provides (Romans 10:16).
 - B. We must determine that we will turn from the ways of an ungodly world in repentance (Acts 26:20).
 - C. We are required then to confess Christ before men (Matthew 10:32).
 - D. We must then be immersed (Romans 6:4,5) in water to have our sins remitted (Acts 2:38), i.e., washed away (Acts 22:16).
 - E. Then we must live a life of faithfulness in service to the One who created all and has prepared a home for the faithful in eternity.

*-All sources used are either specifically listed or are available through the material that I have used in preparation of this study.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION BEING WON ONLY IN CHRIST

Billy Bland

TEXT: Phil. 3:7-8

Purpose: To show where salvation is located, and the importance of being there.

INTRO:

1) Appreciate invitation from Nesbit congregation to be a part of this lectureship.

2) Regarding text:

- Paul.
- (1) If anyone was ever Christ-centered in life and preaching, it was the apostle Paul.
 - (2) In Context, Paul warning against Judaism 3:2-3
 - (3) Paul had credentials as a Jew. 3:4-6
 - (4) He gave it all up for Christ. 3:7-8

3) In this discussion we are going to see the only place where salvation is located.

I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1) "The truth"

- (1) Abundance of false doctrine as to how and when one is saved.
- (2) Interested in "the truth."
- (3) Where are we going to find "the truth?" Jn.8:32, 16:13, 17:17

2) "Salvation"

- (1) Deliverance
- (2) Delivered from something to something.
- (3) Luke 15:32 ("was dead" - "is alive"; "was lost" - "is found")
- (4) Col. 1:13

3) "Won" = To obtain, to possess

4) "In Christ" = spiritual location.

II. WHERE SALVATION IS NOT FOUND.

1) After Jesus was resurrected, women were searching for Jesus in the wrong place. Empty tomb. Mk. 16:6 (apply to people searching for Christ in wrong place today).

2) Where salvation is **NOT** found:

(1) In the doctrines and commandments of men. Mt. 15:6, 9; Gal. 1:14 ("faith only" Js. 2:24, etc.)

(2) In man-made organizations. Mt. 15:13, Psa. 127:1

(3) In the world. (Lost - II Cor. 4:3-4)

(4) Salvation not found outside of Christ. II Tm. 2:10, Eph. 2:12

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING IN THE GOD-APPOINTED PLACE.

1) Noah's day - in the ark. Gen. 6, 7-5, II Pet. 3:20

2) Moses' day - in the house with the blood on it. Ex. 12:7, 13, 22-23

3) In Rahab's day - in the house with the scarlet thread. Joshua 21:18-19

4) Today: in **Christ**. II Tm. 2:10, Eph. 1:7, 2:13, 1:3

IV. HOW DOES ONE GET "INTO CHRIST?"

1) Jesus invites all to come unto Him. Mt. 11:28-30, II pet. 3:9

2) How?

(1) Believe **unto** righteousness. Rom. 10:10

(2) Repentance **unto** life. Acts 11:18

(3) Confession **unto** salvation. Rom. 10:10

(4) baptism **into** Christ. Rom. 6:3-4

3) To be "in Christ" is to be in His body, the church. I Cor. 12:13, Eph. 1:22-23; 2:16, 5:23

CONCLUSION:

1) Today, have seen the truth about salvation being won only in Christ.

2) Important to be in the God appointed place (Ark, house). Mt. 16:26

3) Are you "in Christ" now?

THE TRUTH ABOUT GRACE

Gary McDade

The Nesbit Church of Christ is commended for presenting this much needed series of lectures by such an impressive array of faithful and able gospel preachers. "The Truth About Error" is an instructional lectureship the content of which will benefit our brotherhood for years to come. The words of the late evangelist R.N. Hogan reflect years of sage observation on this point:

I am afraid that we have been too complacent with just having the truth and have not exerted enough energy in exposing error. We must remember that honest souls are at stake and many of them have been, and are yet, being called to their reward without a knowledge of the truth, but wholly blinded by the doctrines and commandments of men. It is time and past time for all true children of God to rise up, acquire the necessary zeal, and put a halt to the uninterrupted parade of false doctrines that are engulfing multiplied thousands of honest souls in our land today.

This lesson will give "the truth about grace" and then expose the error and its corrupted source on the subject currently being experienced within the churches of Christ today.

The word "grace" from the Greek *charis* appears 126 times in the New Testament according to Young.¹ A simple definition of the word is "unmerited favor." Thayer wrote concerning grace, "The apostles and N.T. writers at the beginning and end of their Epp. [epistles] crave for their readers the favor ('grace') of God or of Christ, to which all blessings, esp. [especially] spiritual, are due. . . . Moreover, the word *charis* contains the idea of kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved."² Bauer wrote that the word has to do with "the gracious intention of God . . . and of Christ, who give (undeserved) gifts to men."³ Christ's sacrifice on Calvary expressed the pinnacle of God's grace toward man. The writer of Hebrews said, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). With the appearance of the grace of God there comes the attendant responsibility to modify one's behavior and so present one's life that good works are manifest evidence of submission to the will of God.

In Titus 2:11-15, Paul gave a detailed discussion of the subject of grace. He wrote,

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

The following chart will help analyze biblical grace from this passage and show it to be more than the

grace only advocates wish to consider on the subject of grace.

THE GRACE OF GOD

"That brings salvation" (v. 11)	... <i>that is</i> ...	LIBERATION
"Hath appeared" (v. 11)	... <i>that is</i> ...	REVELATION
"Teaching us" (v. 12)	... <i>that is</i> ...	EDUCATION
"That denying . . ." (v. 12)	... <i>that is</i> ...	SEPARATION
"We should live . . ." (v. 12)	... <i>that is</i> ...	SANCTIFICATION
"Looking for . . ." (v. 13)	... <i>that is</i> ...	ANTICIPATION
"Looking for . . ." (v. 13)	... <i>that is</i> ...	MOTIVATION
"Redeem and purify" (v. 14)	... <i>that is</i> ...	EDIFICATION
"Zealous of good works" (v. 14)	... <i>that is</i> ...	MATURATION
"Speak, exhort, rebuke" (v. 15)	... <i>that is</i> ...	EVANGELIZATION
"With all authority" (v. 15)	... <i>that is</i> ...	AUTHORIZATION
"Let no man despise thee" (v. 15)	... <i>that is</i> ...	CONSIDERATION

In summary, grace teaches the Christian to practice soberness, to be patient ("looking for that blessed hope"), to produce ("zealous of good works"), to present a pure life as a "peculiar people," to preach the word ("these things speak"), and to be proud ("let no man despise thee").

The medium by which God's saving grace is conveyed is the word of God, which is also called "the word of his grace" (Acts 14:3). And, concerning it Paul said, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). God's grace is in truth (Col. 1:6). Paul was called by God's grace (Gal. 1:15), and so were the brethren in Galatians (Gal. 1:6). The brethren in Achaia had "believed through grace" (Acts 18:27). In Colossians 1:5, 6, "the word of the truth of the gospel" is parallel to "the grace of God in truth" showing that the medium by which the grace of God is conveyed to man is the word of God. In consideration of these facts, the grace of God takes on a more objective connotation wherein we read of Christians standing in the true grace of God (I Pet. 5:12), growing in the grace of God (II Pet. 3:18), and serving in the grace of God (Heb. 12:28).

The salvation of men from sin is by means of the grace of God. Paul explained this in Ephesians 2:4-10:

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us [made us alive, ASV] together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding

riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

The expression "dead in sins" emphasizes the inability of man to perform any meritorious work or works that would effect or bring about his salvation. As Isaiah wrote centuries earlier, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isa. 64:6). Upon man's helpless state Paul again commented, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:6-9). Man's need of salvation found answer in the amazing grace of God.

"The truth on grace" declares that "grace reigns through righteousness." In Romans 5:21, there appears this vital treatment of God's saving grace, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." For centuries men knew being informed by the Psalmist, "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psa. 119:172). Since God's grace reigns through righteousness and all God's commandments are righteousness, then grace reigns through the commandments of Almighty God. The inimitable N.B. Hardeman beautifully illustrated how the free gift of God's saving grace is appropriated through the commands of God. Hardeman said:

Let me illustrate: Water so necessary to the human family, is absolutely free and positively abundant, but it runs in channels. I cannot go out here in some field and sit there pining and weeping away my time, begging for water, and expect God to bring it and give it to me in spite of myself; but I know this: that water has its channels in which to run, either in our streams or under the surface of the earth; and if I will dig down deep enough, I will find the channel and nature's beverage absolutely free. This is God's law, and I must conform to it if the blessings are mine.

God has ordained that grace, by which men are saved, shall run through the commandments of God. Therefore, the man that is saved by grace must conform to God's commandments, for that is the law by which men are saved, if saved at all.⁴

Appropriating the saving grace of God through the commandments of God's law eliminates any grounds for personal boasting. As Paul taught, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (Rom. 3:27). Some within churches of Christ are finding it difficult to reconcile the doctrine of grace with the doctrine of the law of faith as it relates to Christians today. The problem seems to center around a redefining of the word "grace." To the meaning "unmerited and undeserving favor" is added the concept that there is nothing anyone could do to appropriate God's saving grace. An operative verse in this discussion is Romans 11:6 where Paul said, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." The context demonstrates

that not just works of any kind or sort are under discussion but works which the Israelites were depending upon for their salvation, that is, works of the law of Moses. In verse one Paul identified with Israel's plight by saying that he himself is an Israelite. In verse five he affirmed there is a remnant according to the election of grace from among the Israelites who are yet to be reached. In verses six and seven Paul proved that Israel will not obtain its goal of favor with God under the law of Moses. Their salvation would come by grace or not at all because Israel sought salvation by the works of the law of Moses and through no other means. But, the law of Moses had been taken away as a binding law on anyone at Christ's death on the cross. The Colossian correspondence contained the truth that made that clear, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). The sentence, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works," is teaching the same principle as Colossians 2:14. John wrote that ". . . the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). It is an unscriptural overstatement to say there is no law today because we are under grace when in reality there should be no boasting today because we are under the law of faith (Rom. 3:27).

Also, the relation of faith and grace is presented in Romans. The apostle wrote, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. . . . Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 4:16; 5:1, 2).

Were it not for faith, or as Paul just mentioned the law of faith (Rom. 3:27), salvation could not be by grace because faith allows entrance into God's saving grace. The two then, grace and faith, are inseparable qualities. Works are associated with faith, for ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). James further commented, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26). The premier biblical example of grace, faith, and works combining to bring about salvation is found in Noah who lived before the law of Moses was given. As God was contemplating the destruction of the world in the great flood, the Bible says, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8). God told Noah to make an ark 300 cubits in length, 50 cubits in width, and 30 cubits in height, fill it with animals and food as God described, and get in it with his family (Gen. 6:14-7:1). The comment, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he," in no way countermanded the grace of God. Regarding Noah's faith, the writer of Hebrews said, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7). God's grace coupled with God's commands and Noah's faith brought about Noah's salvation. It was not legalism then nor is it now to say God's grace coupled with God's commands and our faith brings about our salvation. One who so believes and practices is not a legalist but an "heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Another way to explain "the truth on grace" is by looking at the New Testament itself. On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took the cup and had his disciples drink it and said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). A testament is a will. The will of Christ contains the doctrine of Christ on grace. Hebrews 9:15-17 reads:

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

The late Foy E. Wallace, Jr. once observed concerning this text:

The apostle approaches the gospel through the illustration of a legal will, in the text just read. "Where a testament is there must of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: and it doth never avail while he that made it liveth." When a man makes a will, does the fact that he names certain conditions in the will, upon which his estate is to be administered to the individuals named in the will as beneficiaries, destroy the grace of the testator who made it? Conditions in the will do not destroy grace. The grace of the testator is in his will; it is the grace of the testator that made the will; the will is the product of his grace; and the fact that he named certain conditions upon which the benefits of that will are to be administered, does not vitiate the grace of the testator in the will. Conditions are not incompatible with grace. So it is with the question of salvation. The fact that God has conditioned salvation on certain acts of faith and obedience does not vitiate his grace. The gospel is not incompatible with grace.⁵

An ever increasing roll call of preachers are teaching that salvation comes by grace alone. Almost two decades ago the scholarly Rex A. Turner, Sr. warned:

There is within the churches of Christ a growing misconception of the subject of grace. To illustrate, a gospel preacher and graduate of a denominational seminary is reported to have said in substance, "There are two classes of preachers in the churches of Christ--those that believe that the sinner is saved by works and those who believe that a sinner is saved by grace. I believe that the sinner is saved by the grace of God." Another preacher is reputed to have said that grace excluded all law.⁶

The grace alone doctrine is becoming popular among the membership at large. Bobby Duncan, who passed to his reward just weeks ago, wrote:

I heard of one lady who left a good congregation of God's people and started worshipping with a congregation across town. When she was asked why, she said: "Over here we have grace. We can do what we please without being made to feel guilty. We are free." Some have expressed the same erroneous idea with reference to the use of instrumental music in worship. "Maybe it is out of harmony with the New Testament, but the grace of God will cover us anyway."⁷

At the Nashville Jubilee, in 1991, Rubel Shelly, who clearly has established himself as one of the leaders in the departure from the faith and is a key player among those whom William Woodson in his book, *Change Agents and Churches of Christ*, styles "Change Agents" said:

And, no, I'm not going to debate anybody on the theory whether salvation is by grace and grace alone; because the Bible just makes that too plain. In affirming that, I do not deny human responsibility. Of course, we have responsibility. It's faith. But I'm saved after I have believed; I'm saved by what he did, not by my faith, and not by anything that in obedience to Christ I have done to demonstrate that my faith is genuine.⁸

On February 3, 1991, Garland Elkins challenged Rubel Shelly to debate the issue. Shelly had written, "It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation."⁹ Woodson had it right when he said at the Harding University Graduate School of Religion Preacher's Forum in 1992, "Those who are now teaching salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, among us have moved away from the faith and practice of churches of Christ."¹⁰

Just how far afield the grace alone doctrine is taking some is evidenced in the July 15, 1993, edition of *Banner of Truth*, in which Walter W. Pigg reported:

The Daily Herald, Columbia, TN, April 30, 1993, carried an article on the "Religion" page entitled, "Denominations come together to worship." The activity, called "Come Together 93," was described as "an interdenominational and area-wide worship time." *The Daily Herald* says further, "A group of local pastors from many different denominations and independent churches is sponsoring the first-of-its-kind event, which will be highlighted by praise and worship." *Rubel Shelly* is billed as "the key speaker." . . . It is nowhere said that he is a member of the church of Christ.¹¹

The salvation by grace alone movement within the church recoils at the suggestion of law as has already been shown. At the HUGSR forum Shelly stated, "Only where there is no law can there be no transgression with its accompanying wrath. . . ."¹² Later in the forum he denied saying, "There is no law."¹³ What he said is a matter of record. Those of us in attendance at the forum heard him make the statement. Even if he did not know the record would be printed in book form, no one owes him an apology for printing what he said. Had he wished to retract the statement that would have been fine, even complimentary to him. But, instead he simply demanded that he did not say it. When the book was printed he made no effort to correct, amend, or retract the statement. In fact, he has done much to verify that his beliefs are compatible with the statement. The New Testament still says it is "the law of faith" (Rom. 3:27), "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2), "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2), "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25), "the royal law" (James 2:8), and "the law of liberty" (James 2:12). Christ does not speak of obedience in negative terms. In fact, he speaks of obedience in essential terms. Jesus, the Savior, said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Again, Jesus said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things

which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Hebrews 5:9 plainly tells whom Christ will save, "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Yet, in spite of the doctrine of Christ on obedience one would still say, "Anyone who attempts to be justified before God on the basis of obedience to law seeks a righteousness that is not by faith, but by works. They, then, have fallen from grace."¹⁴

The previous statement by John Mark Hicks, professor of New Testament at Harding Graduate School of Religion in Memphis, Tennessee and co-founder of The Cordova Community Church, "a church of Christ", in Cordova, Tennessee, disparaging obedience to Christ's law causes the question to emerge, "How, then, does a person have assurance of favor with God apart from simply doing what his word says?" In answer, Hicks says:

Our assurance, then, is not rooted in whether we have been good enough, or whether we have reached a certain level of sanctification, or whether we have done enough. Our assurance is based on God's promise in Christ which we have received through his inspired word. God says: "If you will believe in Jesus and enter a relationship with me through baptism, then I will account you righteous. If you will submit your life to me and continue to trust in my Son throughout your life, then you can be confident of your salvation." This confidence is conveyed to us weekly when we commune with Christ in the Lord's supper where we are assured by faith that Christ is ours as surely as the bread is eaten. The cross is our boast; it alone is the ground of our salvation. Baptism and the Lord's supper are our objective means of faith.

God has given his church two objective markers of his love for us--baptism and the Lord's supper. When we approach the cross through submissive faith in the context of baptism and the Lord's supper, then we are assured of our relationship to God.¹⁵

Two observations must be made. One, Hicks uses the very language he condemned earlier when he said, "If you will submit your life to me," and "submissive faith." The meaning of obedient is "submissive to the restraint or command of authority."¹⁶ His statement about those who try to be obedient to God have "fallen from grace" has now boomeranged on him. Two, his discussion of how "God has given his church two objective markers of his love for us--baptism and the Lord's supper," sounds dangerously like he is advocating sacraments. Compare this language from those who know how to promote so-called sacraments, "The term sacrament refers to a very special kind of symbol in which God himself can be found and worshipped."¹⁷ Now, note Hicks' statement, "This confidence is conveyed to us weekly when we commune with Christ in the Lord's supper where we are assured by faith that Christ is ours as surely as the bread is eaten." The Catholics teach, "The central, vital moments of our lives as touched by Christ are called sacraments."¹⁸ Hicks says, "Baptism and the Lord's supper are our objective means of faith." Why limit the vast array of biblical teaching all of which produces faith (Rom. 10:17) and gives assurance of God's love (Rom. 8:31-39) to only two items? Even if Hicks is not paralleling sacraments to "objective markers" or "objective means of faith," he is still making the same mistake the Catholics have made in limiting God. The Psalmist said, "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (Psa. 78:41).

But, salvation is not by grace alone as is being widely advocated. Guy N. Woods offered a sage word of caution in saying that salvation is not by any one item alone. He wrote:

We must be careful that we do not minimize one doctrine of scripture by overextending another one. This is an ever present threat to proper exegesis, and one against which all of us need ever to be on guard. Men often do this and thus greatly mislead others, even in those instances where the doctrine they emphasize, when considered in relation to other teaching of scripture, is true.¹⁹

Additionally, Woods' observation about the multifaceted nature of salvation is timely:

Salvation is attributable to many things in the scriptures. God saves; Christ saves; we are saved by the revelation of truth made by the Holy Spirit; we are saved by grace, by faith, by works, by baptism--by ourselves! (Acts 2:40). God saves us by having given us a plan whereby we may be saved; Christ saves us by having executed this plan, and the Holy Spirit saves us by having revealed this plan. We are saved by grace, because of God's love for us; by faith, since it is the motivation which leads us to accept the plan; by works because through keeping God's commandments we appropriate salvation; by baptism, because it is the final and consummating act of salvation. To select one of them--baptism, for example--and to insist that because it is said that "baptism doth also now save us" (I Pet. 3:21), we are therefore saved by baptism *alone* is to be guilty of grave and fatal error, but error no more grave, nor less fatal, than to assert as some among us today do, that we are saved by grace apart from, and independent of, the conditions on which the Lord bestows salvation.²⁰

In closing out the canon of scripture the apostle John wrote concerning who would be granted by God's saving grace the sublime privilege of entering the celestial city of God. John wrote, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). His words were not devoid of grace nor did they advance a system of meritorious works whereby one could be saved. But, rather, John was teaching the amazing grace of God which had reached down to fallen man through Christ and was inviting humanity to be saved from sin and its devastating consequences by grace through faith. For, as everyone knows, the closing sentiment of the Book Divine which is by inspiration given was penned by the apostle John and reads, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22:21).

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THE TRUTH ABOUT GRACE

(Titus 2:11-14)

The grace of God is one of the greatest subjects in all of the Bible:

- a. **Acts 4:33** *And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*
- b. **Acts 11:22-23** *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.*
- c. **Ephesians 1:6** *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*
- d. **Acts 20:32** *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

The word grace literally means the "unmerited or undeserved favor of God toward men."

It is through the grace of God that we have hope of eternal life: **Romans 5:2** *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

There are many false doctrines being taught about grace in the religious world today:

- a. **Jude :4** *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- b. In our lesson we are going to learn "the grace of God in truth:" **Colossians 1:6** *Which is come unto you, as [it is] in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as [it doth] also in you, since the day ye heard [of it], and knew the grace of God in truth:*

PAUL POINTS OUT WHAT GRACE PRESENTS TO PEOPLE (v.11)

A. The Grace of God Presents Salvation by...

1. Presenting a Person through which man can be saved - Jesus Christ
 - a. **Romans 3:23-25:** *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*
 - b. **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*
 - c. **Romans 5:8** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*
 - d. **Hebrews 2:9** *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*
2. Presenting a Plan through which man can be saved - the Gospel
 - a. **Romans 1:16** *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.*
 - b. **I Corinthians 1:18** *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*
 - c. **James 1:21** *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

B. The Grace of God Presents Salvation to all men:

1. ***Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,***
2. ***Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.***

C. Even though the Grace of God is presented to all men, not all men will accept the gift of God's grace:

1. Remember that God's Word presents a plan by which man can be saved - the Gospel.
 - a. The Bible speaks of the word of God as being a message of grace:
 - 1) ***Acts 14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.***
 - 2) ***Acts 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.***
 - b. We know that men can reject and often do reject the word of God:
 - 1) ***John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.***
 - 2) ***Mark 7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.***
 - c. Thus, it follows that men can reject the word of God's grace and as a result - reject grace.
2. Remember also that God's grace presents a person by which man can be saved - Jesus Christ.
 - a. Jesus is the gift of God's grace:
 - 1) ***John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.***
 - 2) ***II Corinthians 9:15 Thanks [be] unto God for his unspeakable gift.***
 - b. Men can and do often reject Jesus Christ: ***John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.***
 - c. Thus it follows that men can reject Jesus Christ, the gift of God's grace, and as a result, reject grace.
3. The presentation of God's grace does not mean that all men will be saved. The Bible teaches differently:
 - a. The majority of the people will be lost: ***Matthew 7:13-14: Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.***
 - b. Many religious people will even be lost: ***Matthew 7:21-23: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.***
 - c. In fact, the Bible even teaches that some who are given the grace of God can and sometimes do, fall from it:
 - 1) ***Galatians 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.***
 - 2) ***Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,***

- 3) **Hebrews 10:29** *Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*
- 4) **Hebrews 12:15** *Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble [you], and thereby many be defiled;*

AUL POINTS OUT WHAT GRACE PREACHES TO PEOPLE (v.12)

A. Paul says that grace teaches or preaches **negatively**:

II Timothy 4:2 *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

Jeremiah 1:10 *See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.*

1. Denying ungodliness

- a. **Psalms 1:4-6** *The ungodly [are] not so: but [are] like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*
- b. **I Peter 4:18** *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*
- c. **II Peter 2:6** *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned [them] with an overthrow, making [them] an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;*

2. Denying worldly lusts

- a. **I John 2:15-17** *Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*
- b. **James 4:4** *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*
- c. **I Peter 2:11** *Dearly beloved, I beseech [you] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

3. Paul says that grace teaches or preaches **positively**

1. Live soberly

- a. **I Thessalonians 5:6** *Therefore let us not sleep, as [do] others; but let us watch and be sober.*
- b. **I Peter 5:8** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

2. Live righteously

- a. **Acts 10:35** *But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*
- b. **I John 2:29** *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*
- c. **Romans 12:17** *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

3. Live godly

- a. **I Timothy 2:2** *For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*
- b. **I Timothy 4:7-8** *But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself [rather] unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*
- c. **II Timothy 3:12** *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

2. Even though our world is very corrupt today, God expects us to live as grace teaches and preaches us to live. Notice Paul said, "...in this present world"

AUL POINTS OUT WHAT GRACE PROVIDES TO PEOPLE (v.13)

Grace provides people with hope:

Romans 5:2 *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

2. **II Thessalonians 2:16** *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given [us] everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,*
3. Without grace, we as sinful human beings would have no hope. Sadly, many people are wandering about without this hope which the grace of God provides to them that obey.

3. Grace provides people with confidence:

Hebrews 3:6 *But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*

Hebrews 4:15-16: *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

1. Grace provides us with the confidence we need to wait for the second coming of Christ:
Titus 2:13 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*
2. Many people live in fear of the second coming of Jesus, but not Christians. Christians look forward to that day because they know through the grace of God and their obedience to His will, heaven will be their home.

AUL POINTS OUT WHAT GRACE PRODUCES IN PEOPLE (v.14)

1. Grace produces people that are pure:

1. **I John 3:3** *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*
II Timothy 2:22 *Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

3. Grace produces people that are peculiar:

1. **Exodus 19:5** *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth [is] mine:*
2. **I Peter 2:9** *But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

2. Grace produces people that are zealous:

1. **Revelation 3:19** *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*
2. **Titus 2:14** *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

VISION:

Grace is a marvelous subject when it is properly understood.

Sadly, many souls have not yet reaped the benefits of God's great grace.

Hebrews 5:8-9: *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

Have not taken advantage of the grace of God, why not now??

THE NEED FOR THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE IN THE PRESENT WORLD

Irene C. Taylor

INTRODUCTION

There is much truth in the saying that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." In God's perfect plan, who has the greater opportunity to train and mold the character of the child?

When woman vacated the home for the workforce, she vacated her greatest power base for good! The result is a society of confused young people who no longer know right from wrong. No one was home to teach them!

You are doing the Lord's work when you train your children for Him. It will not make the headlines in today's paper but it will be noticed by the God of heaven.

BIBLE MOTHERS WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

I. JOCHABED--EARLY TRAINING IS CRUCIAL! (Ex. 2:1-10; 6:20).

A. In a time of great persecution this mother dared to protect her child from death.

B. She was procured to care for Moses during those crucial, formative years. She had to make them count!

QUESTION: What if, upon hearing the decree that all male babies were to be killed, Jochabed had merely wrung her hands and bemoaned his fate rather than taking action?

LESSON LEARNED: The early, formative years are the foundation upon which character is built. Love instilled begins before birth.

Babies CAN learn!

II. HANNAH--DESIRE FOR MOTHERHOOD (1 Samuel 1,2).

A. Hannah prayed to God for a son.

B. She promised to lend him to God all of his life.

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- C. She taught him to love God and obey Him.
- D. She kept her vow to God! She was a woman of her word.

QUESTION: What if she had been careless in training Samuel? Would he have been of much benefit to the Lord's work?

LESSON: Every child has a right to be wanted--even if not planned!

III. MARY--A WORTHY MOTHER (Matt. 2; Luke 1).

- A. Mary was a pure woman, favored of God.
- B. She taught her son respect for both parental and heavenly authority (Luke 2:51).
- C. Though she did not understand all that was involved, she recognized that her son was special (John 2:5).
- D. She saw that her son developed in all aspects, including the spiritual (Luke 2:52).

QUESTION: Would Mary have been deemed a proper mother for the baby Jesus if she had followed the ways of the world?

LESSON: We do our children no favor by allowing them to act disrespectfully toward God and/or parents.

IV. LOIS AND EUNICE--A LOVELY LEGACY (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15).

- A. Grandmother Lois trained daughter Eunice to love God and His will.
- B. Mother Eunice passed this precious legacy on to son Timothy in spite of her non-believing husband (Acts 16:1).
- C. Because of an unfeigned faith bequeathed by a godly grandmother and mother, Timothy was trained to be of real service to God and Paul.

QUESTION: What if either Lois or Eunice had neglected training Timothy in spiritual matters by both example and word?

LESSON: It takes only one generation to lose valuable servants to the Cause of the Lord.

The Need For The Hand That Rocks The Cradle In The Present World

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HOW CAN MOTHERS TODAY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

- A. The hand that rocks the cradle directs the child's path.
- B. MOTHERS need to return to their God-given role in the home. Let MOTHER be there to rock that cradle! The "village" will not do it right!!
- C. There is no substitute for the influence of the Christian home which daily practices Christian standards.
 1. Begin the day with prayer.
 2. End it with a family devotional.
 3. Have family meals--together.
- D. Teach/train in lessons for life.
 1. Instill a deep love for God.
 2. Discipline! (Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 23:13).
 3. Instill a deep respect for human life at all stages.
 4. Instill the need for truth and honesty. Not a "Do as I say" philosophy but "Do as I do right."
 5. Show the beauty of moral purity.

CONCLUSION

If Christian mothers diligently do their work for the Lord in the home, we can train our children to accomplish needed changes (for truth and right) in the church and society in general.

One mother plus one mother plus one mother---plus God can win! Let's not break this chain or weaken it in any way. If we can save our children we are, in no sense, a failure. Let us be content to rock the cradle that will make a difference! There are some things money cannot buy and your child's soul is one of them. Be proud to be a mother for God.

THERE CAN BE NO PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR

Curtis A. Cates

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Never in the history of the world have truth and error been compatible.
- B. There can be NO concord or fellowship between truth and error (II Cor. 6:14-16).
- C. A great battle has always been waged between everything that is good and everything that is bad, between God and Satan, between morality and immorality.
- D. No person can be neutral in this battle; he or she will be for the Lord or for Satan (Matt. 12:30), and it has eternal implications.
- E. Evidence that truth and error cannot co-exist will be presented from three areas: Foundational Principles, Old Testament Examples and Warnings, and New Testament Examples and Warnings.

II. EVIDENCE FROM FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- A. First, the nature of God proves the incompatibility of truth and error.
 1. "...for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God" (Josh. 24:19; cf. I Sam. 6:20; Psm. 99:9; Isa. 5:16).
 2. God is unable to be in the presence of or sanction evil (Hab. 1:13).
- B. Second, the fact that the Godhood is the epitome of truth proves the incompatibility of truth and error.
 1. "...it is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18).
 2. Christ is the Truth (John 14:6).
 3. The Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of truth" (John 14:17).
- C. Third, that Satan was cast out of heaven with his angels proves the incompatibility of truth and error.
 1. This bright, pure archangel fell because of pride (I Tim. 3:6).
 2. "God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell [Tartarus]" (II Pet. 2:4).
 3. Satan and his angels "kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6).
- D. Fourth, the fact of man being a free-moral being proves the incompatibility of truth and error.
 1. Free-moral will means the ability to make choices.
 2. To be able to choose demands the existence of alternatives.
 3. The positive divine command given to Adam and Eve, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil proves that truth and error cannot co-exist peacefully (See Gen. 2, 3).
- E. The lie of Satan proves the incompatibility of truth and error.
 1. "...hath God said...?" "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:1-5).
 2. Lies [false doctrine] cannot exist with truth—are attacks on the very nature of God.

- F. The penalty for error proves the incompatibility of truth and error.
 - 1. Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden.
 - 2. Sin separated them/separates us from God (Isa. 59:1,2).
 - 3. The ultimate penalty for violating God's law, eternal punishment in hell [ETERNAL SEPARATION from God, II Thess. 1:6-9] proves the grievous nature of any and all sin (John 12:48). Who will defend the averment that those separated from God by false doctrine while they live will be suddenly ushered into His eternal presence when they die?
- G. The fact that the only begotten Son of God had to shed His innocent blood for human redemption proves the incompatibility of truth and error.
 - 1. God cannot pass over [forgive, fail to punish] even one unrequited sin (Rom. 6:23).
 - 2. Since man by transgressing God's law sins and thereby commits spiritual suicide, taking his own spiritual life, he is thereby guilty and cannot be the innocent lamb to pay his own penalty for sin.
 - 3. Only the innocent Son of God could pay the price (John 1:29; cf. Rom. 3:21-26).
- H. The fact that there is a divine pattern of morality, ethics, and doctrine proves the incompatibility of truth and error—God's sacred revelation.
 - 1. God has given His blueprint for the church/kingdom, just as He gave the blueprint for man in other dispensations.
 - 2. The New Testament is a pattern, the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42).
 - 3. It is the one rule [kanon] by which all must walk (Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:16; Heb. 8:4-6).
 - 4. It is "sound words" (II Tim. 1:13).
- I. That the Word of God must not be added to, taken from, or substituted for proves the incompatibility of truth and error.
 - 1. See Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5,6; Revelation 22:18,19.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit speaks expressly, understandably (I Tim. 4:1) that some would speak lies [false doctrine, error].
 - 3. Such departures from the truth bring anathema from the just and holy God (Gal. 1:6-9).
- J. The judgment of the great day proves the incompatibility of truth and error.
 - 1. God is jealous of His Word.
 - 2. Even persons do not want to be misquoted and misrepresented and take serious pains to keep it from happening; misrepresentations and coming with false words as spoken by another bring about severe personal problems and relations; it is infinitely more severe to change God's pattern and words!
 - 3. If teachers are spreading false doctrine, they shall be damned (Jas. 3:1; Col. 2:8; Gal. 3:1; I. Pet. 4:11; II Tim. 4:2).
 - 4. We must discern BETWEEN "the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (I John 4:1-6).
 - 5. Those teaching or encouraging false doctrine have not God (II John 9-11).

K. The fact that there is a great gulf between paradise and torments in the intermediate state and that heaven and hell are two different places proves the incompatibility between truth and error.

1. See Luke 16:19-31.

2. See Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:11-21:8.

III. EVIDENCE FROM OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES.

A. Cain offered unauthorized, unacceptable worship and was rejected.

1. Read Genesis 4:1-16.

2. The grain offering was not by faith (Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17); it was to be a blood sacrifice, prefiguring the cross. See Jude 11.

B. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire.

1. It was not commanded, thus unauthorized (Lev. 10:1-7).

2. See the same principle in Colossians 3:17.

C. Saul claimed obedience, yet had not performed God's commandments (I Sam. 15).

1. He did not obey; partial obedience is not enough.

2. Compare Matthew 4:4.

D. The false prophets claimed to speak for God (Ezek. 13).

1. They built the wall with untempered mortar.

2. Destruction came.

E. Seek the old paths (Jer. 6:16).

1. New is not always best.

2. "We will not walk therein!"

IV. EVIDENCE FROM NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

A. Ananias and Sapphira lied relative to their giving (Acts 5:1-12).

1. God exposed and deposed that sin from His faithful people.

2. His people multiplied.

3. The church must be kept pure (I Cor. 5; et al.).

B. Contrast the Jerusalem church (Acts 2:42) with the Corinthian church (I Cor 1:10ff).

See Paul's threat to come to Corinth with a rod (I Cor. 4:21).

C. Paul commanded the Ephesians to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). Away goes "Big F, Little f" fellowship.

D. To remove oneself and/or a congregation from the pure gospel is to remove oneself from grace (Gal. 1:6-9).

1. See Acts 13:46.

2. It is to be destroyed, uprooted come judgment day (Matt. 15:9,13).

V. CONCLUSION

A. God's people hate what God hates.

1. God hates iniquity with a Godly hatred.

2. David hated every false way (Psm. 119:104).

B. The wages of sin is eternal destruction, thus must not be fellowshiped.

C. Those teaching, defending, causing division with false doctrine must be marked (Rom. 16:17,18).

- D. Only those in faithful, continued fellowship with God are in the light (I John 1:3-7).
- E. Light of truth can have NO PLACE with the darkness of false doctrine, not in heaven NOR here!
- F. Those who have followed Satan and his lies here [have been his slaves] will not receive the gift of heaven, the reward of Christ's slaves [Christians] over there.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

- A. There are 300 or more prophecies about His first coming recorded in the Old Testament. These He fulfilled precisely and preciously
- B. Significantly, there are also 300 or more allusions to His second coming in the New Testament.
- C. About 1 out of every 25 verses in the New Testament speaks of His second coming.

HIS SECOND COMING: SOME ERRORS

- A. The date setters.
 - 1. The Thessalonians were misled at this point (2 Thessalonians 2:1ff).
 - 2. Those who thought He would come around A. D. 1000.
 - 3. William Miller and the dates he set in 1843-44.
 - 4. 1914, 1918, 1925, 1937, 1945, 1975, 1988, 1989 have all been projected as dates when He would come.
 - 5. Many thought He would come surely before 1999 ended. Jeane Dixon was of this mistaken number. A big add appeared in The Commercial Appeal in August of 1999, to the effect that He will come back VERY SOON! All of these have missed it badly.
- B. The A. D. 70 fallacy which teaches that He came back in that year. This movement is sometimes called Realized Eschatology or Max Kingism. Elaborate on other injurious errors taught by this system.
 - view
- C. The premillennial / of His second coming. They say He failed the first time to establish His kingdom but will surely do so when He comes the second time. But note in refutation Matthew 3:2; 4:17;

10:7; Mark 9:1; Luke 10:9; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28;
Revelation 1:9.

D. Those who deny He will ever come again.

I. THE SECOND COMING: SOME TRUTHS

A. Where is the promise of His second coming? (2 Peter 3:3ff).

1. Embedded in divine testimony (Acts 3:20; John 14:1-3; Matthew 25:31-33. The Holy Spirit inspired all of these .
2. Embedded in angelic testimony (Acts 1:9-11).
3. Embedded in apostolic testimony (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 2 Peter 3:10-14; John 5:28,29; 1 John 3:1,2).

B. Reasons for which He is not coming back.

1. To be virgin-conceived and virgin-born.
2. To be the Babe in Bethlehem's manger.
3. To be a growing boy in Nazareth and a man with a mission on earth to accomplish.
4. To engage in a time-consuming ministry.
5. To be maligned, mistreated, misunderstood, mocked, arrested, tried, condemned, crucified, buried and raised again.
6. To set up His kingdom. This He did when here then or soon after He returned to the Palace of the Universe.

C. Reasons for which He is coming the second time.

1. To fulfill all Scriptures relative to His second coming--some 300 or more.
2. To raise the dead (John 5:28,29).
3. To judge mankind (Matthew 25:31-33; Acts 17:31; Romans 14:10, 12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
4. To pronounce judgments or sentences on the wicked and present

rewards to the righteous (Matthew 25:34ff).

D. What should we be doing till He comes?

1. Worship faithfully and fervently (Acts 2:42; Hebrew. 10:25).
2. Work fervently (I Corinthians 15:58; Titus 3:1,8,14).
3. Watch with diligence (Mark 13:32ff).
4. Wait with patience (Luke 12:36ff).

CONCLUSION:

The clock of life is wound but once.

And man has not the power to tell

Just when the hands of the clock may stop,

At late or early hour.

Now is the only time you own.

Live, love, work with a will,

Place no faith in tomorrow.

For then the hands of the clock may be still.

The Truth about Marriage-Divorce-Remarriage

Nesbit Church of Christ

1/29/2000 by Robert E. Williams

INTRODUCTION:

It is certainly my pleasure to speak on this lectureship. I thank the brethren at this congregation for inviting me and having enough confidence in me to allow me to speak on this challenging and ever-changing subject. Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage is certainly a problem in our society today. God knew that men would deviate from his plan so he put instructions in His Divine Word to guide us into the right path.

There is indeed much confusion and error on this subject. We know that the world does not meet the standard for morality. So we do not find the answer to the false teachings around this subject from man but God's holy Word.

This topic divides easily into three divisions; Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage. We are going to look at the truth, some errors and refutation of the some of the primary errors on each.

MARRIAGE

Marriage is the oldest institution known to man. God realized that man needed something better than the animals for his companion. He made him and helpmeet (Gen. 2:18-24). God thought enough of marriage to make it a priority for Adam. Eve was custom made for Adam. In the world today there is a casual attitude about marriage. Many approach marriage with the idea that I can just get a divorce if it doesn't work. I know of some that were given this bad advice before marriage.

Marriage was intended to be a permanent arrangement (Romans 7:1-3; Matt. 19:6). One writer said that "our problem is not that divorces are too easily granted; the real problem is that marriage vows are too carelessly made". The world needs to know that marriage is not a temporary contract but a life long commitment. We need to spend more time teaching our young people the permanency of marriage. Some of the problems lie in the fact that many go into marriage with false expectations about what marriage should be all about. While romance is a part of marriage it is not the sole purpose and foundation of marriage. Eros (the power of sexual attraction) is not the foundation of marriage. Rather, Agape (self-giving love) is the foundation (I Corinthians 13:4-8). Marriage is compared to the Church and it's relationship to Christ (Eph. 5:32). Christ is totally committed to the Church (Matt. 28:20). We are part of his own body (I Cor. 12:27). Likewise man and woman become one in marriage (Gen. 2:24).

The purpose of marriage is procreation, companionship, and to avoid fornication (Gen 1:28; 2:18; Rom 7:1,2). God intended for marriage to be between a Man and a Woman.

God made Adam and Eve and not Adam and Steve. God did not give man the ability to procreate apart from the Woman. This is why I know that Marriage between the same sexes is wrong. If it is good for one person it is good for everyone. If everyone practiced homosexuality what would happen to the human race in one generation. Man is the only animal that distorts his original purpose (Ecc. 7:29). Every thing else stays within the bounds, which God has set. Animals do just what God intended for them to do. We don't see Homosexual animals.

The plan of marriage is for man to have a family, which is a picture of our spiritual relationship to our heavenly father. There are roles in marriage. There is a role for the husband and there is a role for the wife. One of our main problems in families today is the lack of obedience to God's Word. God's Word never changes (Ps. 119:160; I Pet. 1:25; Matt. 24:35). Society does not set the standard but the Word of God. It does not matter what the culture is. If it violates a principle of God then the Culture needs to change and not the Word of God. The role of the man is to Provide for his family (I Tim. 5:8). The women are to be keepers at home (Titus 2:1-4). It does not matter what society says, these verses are still in the Bible. Off course they are not saying that women cannot work out side of the home. What these verses do teach is that there is a primary responsibility for each mate. We may chose to do many things in life but none of them supersedes our primary purpose. All of us can chose many occupations but our occupation does not eliminate our responsibility to God. We should be faithful in attendance regardless of our careers. So it is with the Marriage relationship. If one chooses to work out side the home God still expects him or her to fulfill his family responsibilities.

Marriage is to be a pure relationship (Matt. 19:6). No one or anything is to separate the marriage. Notice that I said anything. Some times it is not people that separate but things. Some times we want too much. Some times individuals are too selfish. Marriage counselors will tell you that one of the main problems with couples is narcissism. Too many Individuals are hung on themselves. All they think about is what I want (me! me! me!).

There are many false views of marriage around today. There is a movement to legalize homosexual marriages. Which is totally against Biblical principals (Gen. 1:27). Male and female made he them. I have to believe that God knew what he was doing. Yet men want to tell us that God is pleased with Male and Male. It doesn't matter if the entire world embraces the homosexual life style it still will not make it right.

There are many that want to legitimize living together. They want companies to extend the same privileges to couples shacking up as married couples. Living together without the idea of commitment does not create a marriage. Sex belongs in marriage (Heb. 13:4). The physical relationship alone does not constitute a marriage. When Paul made the following statement in I Corinthians 6:16 he was not making the point that this constituted a marriage. "What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Paul is simply stating that when one makes a physical union of this nature he defiles his spiritual relationship with God. Notice what Jesus said to the Woman at the well in Samaria in John 4:18 "for thou has had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly." It is true that marriage ceremonies take many forms. But there is one common element in all of them. The couple makes a public declaration that they are committing to each other as husband and Wife according to the laws of the land. In most cases the wife takes on the husbands name. The optimum Word is most cases. In our society many chose not to change their name. This is not good in my estimation but they are still married. Since marriage is a picture of the Church, we know that Christians are to wear the name of Christ (II Tim. 2:19 "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, let every on that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity". Rom. 7:2 "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of (her husband)."

DIVORCE

The latest static's indicates that approximately 50% of all marriages end in divorce. America has the highest divorce rate of all countries in the world. Many are getting married with the idea that they can simply divorce if things don't work. The general attitude of people is somewhat relaxed toward divorce. It has become an accepted event by society. I read about a company that has started selling divorced rings. This is an old trick of Satan. He always tries to minimize and normalize sin. Once this is done it is easy to get people to accept it. He makes us think that every one is doing it. The stress chart ranks divorce second only to death. Most people that go through a divorce will tell you that it is very difficult to endure. In most cases all parties are hurt tremendously.

The world believes that one can divorce for any reason. Many States have passed a no fault divorce. God intended for there to be one man and one woman for life. God never intended for man to divorce (Matt. 19:6-9 "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder). He simply allowed it because of the hardness of their hearts. Notice Matthew 19:8 "He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." They were going to do it any way so God

wanted to legislate it. In the Greek New Testament the verb translated to divorce is *apolluo*. The root meaning of *apolluo* is "set free, release, pardon or let go, send away, etc."

The law of Moses stated in Deuteronomy 24:1 "when a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house." The "bill of Divorcement" is found at least three times in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 24:1; Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:8). The bill of divorcement was known in rabbinical circles as the *get*. It was a written document composed of twelve lines. The numerical value of the Hebrew *g* (*gimel*) is 3 and the value of the *t* (*teth*) is 9. So the *get* (*gt*) had a numerical value of 12. In the *get* the following lines appear: "thou hast until now been my wife, but now be thou released, set free, and put away. So that thou mayest be thine own mistress in the future, and mayest marry with it completed freedom, the right to marry again."

In the Law of Moses the right of divorce could be forfeited under at least two circumstances. If a husband falsely accused his bride of unchastity, the father of the bride would bring proof of her virginity. The girl would be the man's wife, and "he may not put her away all of his days" (Deuteronomy 22:19). A second circumstance is that of a man who lay with a virgin who was not betrothed. He would be forced to marry the girl, and he may not put her away all his days (Deuteronomy 22:29).

The Old Testament custom of divorce enters into the New Testament picture in the story of Mary and Joseph. While the two were betrothed, Mary was found with child and Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily" (Matt. 1:19). The betrothal was so binding that it took a divorce procedure even to break it. Also there seem to be two different ways a divorce could be obtained. "The alternatives were exposure by public repudiation or quite canceling of the bond of betrothal." Joseph chose the latter of the alternatives, the easier on Mary.

Divorce is a very serious step and is not to be taken lightly. That's why it is imperative that we teach our young before they enter into a relationship that could adversely affect the rest of their lives.

REMARRIAGE

There are many opinions about remarriage. The primary question is can the guilty party? Some have suggested that remarriage has a bearing on the divorce rate appearing so high. It is because many who remarry end up divorcing again because they

take themselves and their problems into their new relationship. I suppose this is as suitable place as any in this lecture to mention some of the false teachings about marriage, divorce and remarriage. Goebel Music in his book entitled Divorce stated twenty-five false teaching on this subject, which are prevalent today.

1. The deserted "believer" of I Corinthians 7:15 is free to remarry, and that with God's approval.
2. The "Guilty party" of Matthew 19:9 may, with God's approval, form another marriage.
3. The teaching of the Lord in Matthew 19:9 applies only to a Christian married to a Christian (covenant passage).
4. Every person may continue in the particular marriage situation in which he happens to be at the time he is immersed, regardless.
5. The non-Christian is not under, that is, amenable to the law of Christ on marriage.
6. Repentance means, if one says, "I'm sorry, and I do not intend to do it again," that he is free to live in that particular relationship (God-sanctioned and God-approved).
7. The "sin," if there be such, is in the "divorcing," not in the remarriage.
8. The "sin" is not in the divorcing, but in the "remarriage."
9. The teaching of Christ in Matthew 5 and 19 is, in reality, a fuller explanation of the Law of Moses.
10. Unless you can find the teaching of Matthew 5 and 19 reiterated after the day of Pentecost, it is not a part of the New Testament, and we are not bound by it.
11. Death constitutes the only Biblical cause, ground, for remarriage.
12. Divorce and remarriage can take place "without cause" (scripturally speaking).
13. Divorce and remarriage can be for any legal or justifiable cause, and not be considered sinful; laws of the land being "of God."
14. Divorce and remarriage is all right if before baptism, because baptism makes an "unholy" union "holy" (all sin is washed away in the act of baptism).

15. If a person is "unhappy" in his marriage, he can divorce and remarry, as it would be an "unreasonable" thing if he had to stay in such a marriage, and we know (Romans 12:1) our service to God is "reasonable."
16. If a person "lusts in his heart" (Matthew 5:28), he has committed adultery, therefore, can divorce and remarry. The Bible actually mentions three types of adultery; Mental, Spiritual (James 4:4), Physical (Matt. 19:9). The physical consequences are different.
17. If a person commits "spiritual adultery," the innocent has the right to divorce and remarry.
18. If a person commits "fornication before marriage" (note it is "before" and not "after" marriage), then the innocent one in said marriage can divorce and remarry.
19. It is no longer valid to restrict the meaning of "adultery" to the teaching of Matthew 19:9, that is, we need a new definition for the word "adultery."
20. When either marriage partner fails to "function" in the marriage, it is no longer "a marriage," therefore, there is the right to divorce and remarry.
21. Not a one of us can keep God's laws. When you break one you have broken them all, including the marriage law (James 2:10)... our God is a FATHER, not a LAWYER!
22. The "unbeliever" of I Corinthians 7:15 is the "believer" who becomes an "unbeliever, unfaithful to the church." Therefore, since that one has become an "unbeliever" and "departed," you are no longer "under bondage that is, "no longer bound."
23. The word "depart" as used by Paul in I Corinthians 7:10-11 has the meaning of "divorce," and this, in the "technical" sense.
24. Either spouse can "up and separate" (without a spiritual reason), by any legal means available, and there is "no sin" in the separation, even if it is permanent.
25. "let each man have his own wife" (I Corinthians 7:2) teaches that one hundred percent of the men and women today have to right the remarry (marry).

It is obvious that it would be extremely difficult for the average person to keep up with all of these errors and their various details. What we need to know is the Truth and any thing that contradicts the Truth is not to be accepted. When bankers teach tellers to

recognize a counterfeit they don't go and get a sample of all the counterfeit money but they teach the tellers very clearly what the real thing looks like.

The Bible teaches that only the innocent party can remarry. Matthew 19:9 states that "whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." It is clear from this verse that the guilty party cannot remarry because whoever marries him or her commits adultery. The following verse shows that the Apostles understood what Jesus was saying. The conclusion that they drew shows that they understood that Jesus was saying something different and stricter than what they had been taught. "His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry". They could clearly see the seriousness of marriage. The only people who are allowed to remarry are (1) those who have been previously married but whose former companion is dead (Rom. 7:2). (2) Those who have been previously married but whose former companion was guilty of Fornication (unfaithfulness to the marriage vow). Those who cannot remarry are (1) Those who have a living former companion who was not put away because of fornication. In Matthew 19:9, Jesus said "... and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery". Also compare to Matthew 5:32. (2) Those who marry anyone who has a former companion (still living) who was not put away because of fornication. In Matthew 19:9, Jesus said "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:32). (3) Those who were put away because of their unfaithfulness (Matt. 5:32).

CONCLUSION

God's law applies to all men regardless of whether they are Christians or not (Matthew 28:18). Regardless of what position one takes on the amenability of non Christians to the Law of Christ, Jesus erases it with this statement in (Matt 28:18). Either he has all authority or He doesn't. He states that all power in Heaven and in Earth had been given to him. If he did not rule over the Gentiles before his resurrection, He is stating that he now has the Authority. God made all men and He intends that all men obey Him (Heb. 5:8,9). While there are many views, interpretations, and excuses to divorce and remarry, Matthew 19:9 stares them in the face. "*Except it be for fornication*" we cannot divorce. But what about the innocent children? "*Except it be for fornication*". What about two people who have accumulated possessions? "*Except it be for fornication*". What if the first spouse was not from God? "*Except it be for fornication*". What about those who did not know? "*Except it be for fornication*". We could go on and on but the point is the answer is simple. Follow the Word and we can see only one reason.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ERROR
WINTER LECTURESHIP-NESBIT CHURCH OF CHRIST
JANUARY 27-30, 2000
THE TRUTH ABOUT THE "CORE GOSPEL HERESY"
Lennie Reagan

There comes a time when we must decide the path that we are going to travel in life. Are we going to pursue that which is right or do we decide to travel the path of least resistance? The same decision is going to be made by the leadership of a congregation and I am grateful that this congregation and her leadership have been faithful to do that which is right. This lectureship is further evidence of that decision.

I am thankful for David, Miss Kathy and their family. I rejoice for the good that has been and is being accomplished by their faithfulness and love for the Lord's church and the souls of all men.

As the evangelist for the Coldwater church, I appreciate the fellowship of the Nesbit congregation and the good example they set as a people following the Bible. Their desire to stand against error and to speak the truth in love is worthy of imitation and commendation.

I am grateful to be able to hear the preachers on this lectureship set forth in simplicity the truth about error. Their sermons are well planned and proclaimed in like manner. Thank you for a job well done. I am honored to be a part of this good work and would like to express my thanks to the men of this congregation and to brother Jones for this invitation.

As with the other speakers, there is no ill will or private agenda I have; I love truth; but, I hate error. However, with every bit of strength I have, I will expose error and those who proclaim. I don't think that makes any one special, this house is full of godly men and women who will gladly die for the name of the Lord Jesus. As we ought, we love their souls and wish for them to repent and for all men to stand before God justified.

In this session, I would like to make sure we have an understanding of what is being advocated by those who endorse the core gospel idea and then let's examine it's content by the absolute and objective standard of authority, the Word of God.

President Bill Clinton, in his State of the Union Address on January 23, 1996, verbalized the very heart of those who embrace the ideal behind the infidelity of the core gospel heresy. President Clinton said: "*We are bound by a faith more powerful than any doctrines that divide us--by our belief in progress, our love of liberty and our relentless search for common ground.*"

This is precisely the theme of those who make a religious application of this idea with a core gospel message. The theme simply states that there is a "bull's eye" of the gospel, wherein lies salvation and everything else is secondary. Those doctrines which occupy the secondary issues are going to be determined by the opinions within various religious groups.

Let's spend a few minutes to identify what is placed within the core of the gospel message and see how this puesday-gospel is applied and out into practice. When we identify the core, we are going to be able to tag what they suggest is essential to salvation.

Bill Love authored a book titled: *The Core Gospel: On Restoring the Crux of the Matter*, and he identifies the core gospel as the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Brother Love also suggests this core of the gospel is always and only that which should be preached. To do less than this,

according to him, is to misplace our emphasis and to render impotent the power of the cross.

It is with enthusiasm brother Love points to Paul and his preaching of Christ and Him crucified; but, what is brazenly missing from this equation is the connection of Paul's writing much of the New Testament and those doctrines, however incidental their connection to the cross, are a part of Christ and Him crucified. And that's truth every person here understands as we read of Philip going down to the city of Samaria and preaching Christ unto them (Acts 8:5). Luke, by inspiration, defines for us what it means to preach Christ: *"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women"* (Acts 8:12).

And you know this was not an isolated incident; for, in latter part of Acts 8, Philip repeats the process in preaching to the Ethiopian eunuch: *"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus"* (Acts 8:35), and we are able to behold the results of preaching Jesus as the eunuch is obedient to the gospel of Christ.

Brother Love is not the only person to pick up this deadly doctrine and desire to deceive the hearts of the innocent; but is followed by an entourage of those who seek to educate and enlighten the unlearned. Brother Rubel Shelly defines his concept of the core gospel in a speech to the Pentecostal Christ's church in Nashville on April 13, 1994. In his introductory remarks, he stated:

"We come from different backgrounds and traditions. And sometimes those backgrounds and traditions become so important to us that we forget really that the kingdom of God is wider, deeper, larger, greater than any of those particular streams or traditions (Amen from the audience). The streams and tributaries flowing into the larger kingdom of God we would do well not to build dams on each other's little rivulets. So I want to be a part of anything and everything that I consider holy and of God."

Throughout the rest of that ear tickling session, brother Shelly sets forth the freedom he and those who follow his doctrine have from liberalism and legalism. Now, listen carefully please, as brother Shelly centers in on the bull's eye of the core gospel:

"I will never relinquish my commitment to the view of Christ that is taught in Scripture... The virgin born, bodily raised, God incarnate, the Word becomes flesh to live among us... I will never move away from the affirmation of Scripture as the infallible Word of God, God breathed, and accomplishing His purpose of revelation to show us everything we need to be equipped unto righteousness. My faith is grounded in a risen Savior...it rests on the authority of an inspired Word...it is informed daily by the presence of His Holy Spirit...living and moving among His people...but when you get me outside that core of orthodox Christian affirmation, I call that the bulls eye....there is the core....there is where salvation is and there is where the fellowship of the saints is based..."

Notice with me the things which are excluded from the core where salvation is, and placed in the realm of the opinion of men. Again, from the same pernicious presentation:

"...then outside you have discipleship issues...maybe in the next ring outside the bulls eye..then

out of different traditions people come up with different answers about shorts or dancing...I can't make that decision for you and I cannot from the pulpit bully and intimidate people whose faith in the Lord is as real and genuine as mine and whose decision is not the same as mine. Maybe you go one more ring out in this target...and here you get our denominational traditions...you know, I, I don't mind anybody knowing that I am from an acappella tradition, but, folks, I, I don't regard that a heaven and hell issue."

Now, listen as he makes a joke about the way God has commanded us to worship Him with singing: *"There ought to be an acappella tradition within Christendom, I think we are the best candidates."* In the background, on the audio tape, you can hear this Pentecostal audience, being led by a man who knows better, laugh at what my Savior died to purchase.

Allow me to present one more application of the core gospel doctrine implemented into practice by the escapades of brother Shelly and the Woodmont Hills Family of God. From the weekly newsletter, *Love Lines*, dated September 29, 1999, we read:

"Woodmont Hills supports the decision of Dr. Graham and his ministry team to be in Nashville. Even though traditional revivals and crusade events are no longer believed to be the best way to reach people with the message of Christ, the uniqueness of this event stands to make it effective in reaching many who don't know Christ.

It is important for the members of our church family to understand why we will be enthusiastic participants. Billy Graham presents Jesus Christ as mankind's only hope for eternal life. 'My one purpose in life,' he insists, 'is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which I believe comes through knowing Christ.' If it is right to link arms with other believers to oppose pornography and drugs, surely it cannot be wrong to join with them to preach Christ crucified.

The invitation to be given each evening will be for persons to make a decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Respondents will then make a self-designating choice to be counseled about the meaning of their decision by people from several different groups. We will be working closely with the campaign effort to advise and teach those who mark 'Church of Christ.' We will also try to connect such persons with a congregation that can minister to them appropriately and help them in their spiritual pilgrimage.

With the blessing of our shepherds, Rubel Shelly is serving as a General Committee Member on behalf of this outreach effort. Several of our shepherds wrote letters of invitation to Dr. Graham to encourage him to come to our city. Training sessions for crusade workers will be hosted on our property. And we ask all of you to pray for the success of this effort to exalt Jesus in our great city."

This article is in keeping with the agenda of the "core-gospelers" as they view the Lord's church as one of many ways to come to salvation. The "other believers" addressed are among those who hit the "bulls-eye" and accept the Deity of Christ and upon that they are considered worthy of spiritual fellowship by the partakers of the core gospel heresy.

Larry West, in the Tulsa Soul-Winning Workshop, preached a sermon titled, "Blessed Assurance." His thesis was a need to confront others with the gospel message. As I listened to

brother West make that statement, I thought to myself, "Is he going to preach the truth?" but my words were short lived as he went on to give his definition of the gospel. He used several scriptures in a weak attempt to show that the gospel is limited to the death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ. According to brother West, this gospel is for lost audiences and not for believers.

After his presentation, I asked brother West how that definition would affect a person who was a member of the Baptist church. Would they need to know that Bible teaches baptism is for the remission of sins, or "once saved always saved" is an erroneous doctrine? He replied, "*The gospel is not condemning 'once saved always saved'*". If someone is confronted with brother West's gospel and already believes in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, are we to accept this person as a New Testament Christian? We are according to brother West. You see, they accept the "core gospel, the bulls eye of salvation."

Max Lucado offers his contribution to this apostasy. In swapping pulpits with the Trinity Baptist church in San Antonio, Lucado said: "*Some people see it as a compromise. This is not compromise. What we have in common is greater than our differences. Whenever I see a man call God, Father, I see a brother.*" It was in that sermon which was titled "Life Aboard the Fellowship" that Max made this comment: "*There is but one ship, one Captain, one destination. I have visited with some people who think they are the only ones on the ship.*"

Lucado received an award from the Baptist General Convention of Texas for the books which he has authored and his work in communications. In presenting this award to Lucado, the president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas said the award was a way "*...to say thank you for what you do, and the way you have demonstrated the values that we Texas Baptists hold dear.*" You remember the Baptist preacher with whom Lucado swapped pulpits? This is what he had to say about the books Lucado has written: "*Max, I'm happy that you've written all these tremendous books; but, I wish they'd been exclusively for pastors. If you hadn't made them so easy for lay people to read, we pastors could have gotten lots of sermon material from them.*" Can you imagine someone taking all the bulletin articles brother Jones has authored and using them as a source of sermon material in the Baptist church just up the road? That fellow would not get through the first sermon before he was fired! Yet, you can take brother Lucado's material and preach it in a denominational church.

So, the bulls eye of the core gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ--the deity of Christ. Therein lies salvation and as long as anyone hits that bulls-eye, you have a friend among the core gospel advocates. Everything else, doctrine such as dancing, immodesty, church organization, instrumental music in worship, giving, when and if to partake of the Lord's Supper, and every other aspect of the gospel of Christ, lies in regions beyond the real important matters and are to be determined by personal likes and dislikes.

Brother Shelly, as he again stands before the Pentecostal Christ's Church offers this advice:

"We're brothers because of common parentage. We're brothers because we have the same Father....we'd better learn to affirm that there are things larger than those inconsequential differences that allow us to be the body of Christ..."

Let's spend just a few minutes as we examine exactly what is suggested by this counterfeit gospel. The core gospel has a pragmatic philosophy which is the seed bed of this heresy which identifies the worth or meaning of an idea based on the practical consequences. In other words, if

an idea or course of action has the desired effect, then it is determined to be good. If that idea or course of action does not seem to work, then it is determined to be wrong. This philosophy rejects the notion of absolute right and wrong, good and evil, and truth and error. Truth is defined as that which is useful, meaningful and helpful to their goal.

Some things associated with pragmatism are good. For example, if a dripping faucet works fine after you have replaced the washers, we can correctly identify the washers as the problem. But when pragmatism is used to make judgments about right and wrong and truth and error as the standard of authority in religious matters, it will always clash with the Word of God. Truth is not determined by testing what works and what does not work in view of the goals of men.

Let me give you an example. We know the gospel does not always produce a positive response: *"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness"* (1 Corinthians 1:22-23). We also learn from God's Word that a majority reaction does not validate an idea into truth: *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"* (Matthew 7:13-14).

The primary concern with the core gospel gurus is unity. They are willing to downplay doctrine for the sake of unity because they believe that doctrine is divisive; thus, doctrine is viewed as a secondary issue. This movement emphasizes brotherhood and personal experience and will de-emphasize doctrinal differences. Doctrine, according to them, should be both fluid and adaptable--certainly not something for which we should contend.

When we consider the verbal and practical applications of the core gospel heresy, there are some conclusions which cannot be ignored.

#1. If this heresy is true, then we have to conclude there is no absolute, objective standard of authority and we really cannot know what is truth.

Now, I openly admit this response is rather simple; but, Christ said: *"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). We have the spiritual kinfolks of Pilate with us today who nonchalantly and casually dismiss truth, the pursuit, obedience, and defense of it, with the same spineless question asked by Pilate: *"What is truth?"* (John 18:38). My friend, rest assured, we don't have to worry one minute about the identity of truth, if we are willing to accept what Christ teaches. In what is truly the Lord's prayer, Christ petitioned the Father: *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"* (John 17:17).

#2. If this false message stands as truth, then we have to conclude that baptism is not essential for salvation and men are saved by faith only.

If salvation is found in the suggested core of believing/accepting the Deity of Christ, then baptism is not essential to salvation. "But, Lennie, I've heard them teach the need for baptism." I don't doubt that for a second--I've also heard core gospelers teach the need for baptism. But, friend, that is not the same as saying baptism is essential for salvation. Not long ago I had the opportunity to ask a preacher for a congregation in Birmingham, AL. Christ's church, formally the Inner City church of Christ, a couple of questions. I asked him was baptism essential. His reply: *is important.*" Well, baptism is important to a Baptist and other denominational groups. I asked again, "Is it essential?" His patience and tolerance wore a little thin and our conversation was soon

ended. And that is exactly the conclusion which is taught and accepted and multitudes are being led and deceived to believe that they are saying baptism is essential for salvation. If that is what they are trying to say, then say it! But they are not going to say that. When that biblical stand is taken, their ungodly union and fellowship with the denominational churches is going to end.

Paul, in writing to the church at Ephesus, declares by inspiration: *“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism...”* (Ephesians 4:3-5). According to the proponents of this heresy, the one faith refers to the atonement and the Deity of Christ. But that’s not how the one faith was used in the New Testament. To the Christians at Rome Paul wrote:

“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” (Romans 1:16-17).

It is within this system of faith that the way God makes men righteous is revealed. The system of faith includes; but, is not limited to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. In Acts 13:7, Sergius Paulus desired to hear the Word of God; but in verse eight, Elymas sought to turn the deputy from the faith. Verse nine, Paul refers to the faith as *“...the right ways of the Lord...”* Verse 12, Luke records the deputy’s astonishment to the system of faith which was taught and Luke refers to it as *“...the doctrine of the Lord.”* Paul declares that men must be obedient to the gospel of Christ to be saved (1 Thessalonians 1:6-9). Can we be obedient only to the Deity of Christ? Not according to the Word of God; but, according to the enlightened ones, we can.

#3. If this core gospel error is true, we have to conclude the distinctiveness of the Lord’s church has been devoured in the pot of division and denominationalism.

In the estimation of those who hold dear this malignant message, the Lord’s church is nothing more than a flea on a dog’s back. We are just a speck when we look at the big picture of the entire fellowship. Well, I’ll let brother Shelly tell you how he feels about this matter. Again, from his shameful, weak, disgusting, sickening confession to the Pentecostal Christ’s Church in Nashville, Shelly said: *“You know the joke don’t you?...of Peter bringing the new guy into heaven, and they walk by a group of people off to themselves....and Peter says, Shhhh! Don’t make any noise going by; that’s the church of Christ group and they think they are the only ones up here....(the Pentecostals think that is just hilarious) Shelly continues: “...aw, you know that one...You’ve told it on us...Don’t play naive with me... From the audience you hear: “I confess.” Can you imagine, mocking the body of Christ,, His church which was purchased by His blood? Can you imagine despising the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in such a despicable attitude and action? By the way, it is this same core to which Shelly and others have pledged their loyalty; but, yet, he will ridicule and criticize the very thing he endorses as the basis of fellowship with God and all men. Why not spit in the face of God?*

There is no fellowship with unbelievers, righteousness has no common ground with unrighteousness, there is no participation between light and darkness (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) and to say there is when God says there is not, well, is to call God a liar. And that is exactly what this heresy does. Thank you for your good attention and patience.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF APOSTASY

Introduction

- I. A very popular doctrine among many in the denominational world is the idea once a person has been saved he or she cannot do anything to jeopardize their eternal destiny in Heaven. The "Christian" can sin as often as he/she desires without the fear of losing their soul in Gehenna Hell. Thus, the impossibility of apostasy is taught.
- II. This doctrine is more widely known as "Once Saved, Always Saved" or "Perseverance of the Saints" and is a major tenet of Calvinism.
- III. Every doctrine taught must be closely scrutinized and compared to the Bible to determine if there is Scriptural authority for teaching it (Col. 3:17).
- IV. I propose to each one that the idea of the impossibility of apostasy, the doctrine of "Once Saved, Always Saved" is false; it is not taught in the Scriptures.

Body

I. The Old Testament reveals it is possible to apostatize.

1. When Adam and Eve were created they, like everything else, "was very good" (Gen. 1:31), thus they were children of God. God forbid them to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and said, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). In other words, they would die physically and spiritually. Genesis 3 records how they disobeyed God, subsequently were punished and driven from the garden and in need of a redeemer (Gen. 3:15; Matt. 1:21); thus they apostatized and were lost (cf. Rom. 5:12).
2. When Cain and Abel offered up sacrifices to the Lord, Abel's was accepted, but Cain's was not. God said to Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Gen. 4:7a). Had Cain done as Abel did his sacrifice would have been accepted by God, but because he offered the wrong sacrifice he did not do well, and was in sin; thus he apostatized and was lost.
3. The account of Balaam the prophet reveals it is possible to apostatize. Balaam was a prophet of God who, in the beginning, seemed to have the desire to follow the Lord (Num. 22:18), but in the end was executed by Israel along with the Midianites (Num. 31:8). Thus he apostatized and was lost.
4. First Kings 13 gives the account of the man of God who came and prophesied against the idolatrous altars which Jeroboam had built. God had instructed this prophet not to eat or drink anything while in the land nor return the way he had come (I. Kings 13:8-9). But, an old prophet deceived him and persuaded him to return with him so he might eat and drink (I. Kings 13:18-19). For his disobedience to the Lord he was slain (I. Kings 13:24). Thus

he apostatized and was lost.

5. Perhaps the passage which is the most plain and crystal clear in its refutation of the impossibility of apostasy doctrine is Ezekiel 18:24, 26. One who is righteous (saved) who sins and does not repent will die (spiritually) for his iniquity. Thus, any child of God can apostatize and be lost.

II. The New Testament reveals it is possible to apostatize.

1. The account of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) refutes the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy. The rich man (in torment) knew who Abraham was and even called him "father" (v. 24). The word "father" was not a title, but rather a term of recognition. Abraham was his father in the physical sense, his forefather. The rich man was of the seed of Abraham, a member of the nation of Israel and was, therefore, a child of God. But, how did this child of God end up in eternal torment? Because he apostatized and died in his iniquity. Furthermore, the rich man knew his five living brothers (also children of God) had lived wickedly just as he had and would, likewise, be lost if they were not warned (v. 27-28). He knew his brethren needed to repent (v.30). Why did the rich man desire his brothers be warned to repent? Because he knew firsthand it was possible to apostatize and be eternally lost,
2. The grievous error of Peter and Barnabas (Galatians 2:11-14) refutes the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy. These two apostles of Jesus Christ, obviously, were children of God, but they were guilty of bigotry and hypocrisy. They demonstrated prejudice towards their Gentile brethren. Paul rebuked Peter publicly "because he was to be blamed" (v.11) because he and others with him "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" (v.14). Paul even went so far as to call them sinners in verse 17! If their sin could not cause them to be lost, why did Paul rebuke them? Even if their actions offended the Gentile brethren, causing them to sin, why would it matter? According to this false doctrine the Gentile brethren would still be saved also. Paul rebuked them because they had apostatized and were in danger of losing their souls.
3. Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:24-27 refutes the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy. These were Jewish Christians (saved people) who were leaving Christianity, even renouncing Christ as their savior. They were enlightened people (6:4) who were falling away (6:6). They were Christians who were sinning willfully, not repenting, and referred to as adversaries who would be devoured (10:24-27). If they are adversaries who would be devoured then they apostatized and are now lost eternally.
4. Second Peter 1:10 refutes the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy. Peter is writing to his brethren (Christians) and exhorting them "to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall (*stumble* -- ASV, 1901)." If we don't do these things, shall we stumble? Yes! And if we stumble, we have apostatized and are eternally lost.

5. Second Peter 2:20-22 refutes the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy. Those who "have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" are Christians. But they are again entangled in the pollutions of the world (sin) to the point that sin has overcome them (they have died) "the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." How is it worse? (v.21) Because they have apostatized, died in their sin, and are eternally lost. It would have been better for them never to have heard the gospel and been lost as a result than to have heard it, obeyed it, left it, and as a result lost as well. In eternity they will always remember they were once saved, but decided to cast their salvation away.
6. First John 5:16-17 refutes the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy. John identifies "a sin unto death" and "a sin not unto death." The sin not unto death is that sin which has been repented of. The sin unto death is that sin which has not been repented of. The former action will save the Christian, the latter will cause him to be lost. Thus, a brother in Christ can apostatize and be eternally lost.

III. Belief in the false Calvinistic doctrine of Impossibility of Apostasy negates several Biblical subjects and principles.

1. *Repentance* (II. Cor. 7:10; James 5:16; II. Pet 3:9; I. Jn. 1:9). Why would there be a need to repent if the individual cannot be lost?
2. *Sin* Why would anyone need to be concerned with sin if the "Christian" sinner cannot be lost?
3. *Godly living* What would be the benefit of trying to live as Christ did if it doesn't really matter? Why not just take our ease, live, "eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19) for tomorrow we die?
4. *Worship* Worshipping God really would be unnecessary and irrelevant. Not worshipping God could not cause us to be lost eternally. Why waste our time worshipping when we could be using that time to sleep, vacation, fish, hunt, or do whatever our heart desires?

Conclusion

- I. The doctrine of impossibility of apostasy is not taught in the Scriptures. There is no authority for believing or teaching it.
- II. Even some of our own brethren who claim they do not believe in "Once Saved, Always Saved" in reality do believe it if they have strayed away from the Lord and refuse to see their error and repent.
- III. We must prepare ourselves to defend the Truth against every false doctrine of man including one which gives people the false hope of salvation *in* their sins.

THE TRUTH ABOUT MIRACLES
Mk. 16:15-20

Thesis: to show the purpose and duration of miracles.

Introduction:

1. Miracle:
 - a. (Jimmy Eaton, "What is a Miracle?" Gospel Advocate, Nov. 8, 1934, p.1066)
"Simply stated a miracle is an interference with natural law by Divine power. Our world is governed by natural laws. While these laws are powerful, amazing, mysterious, even awesome, there have been times in the past when they have been suspended, interrupted, altered, reversed, set aside or interfered with. When this has happened a miracle has occurred.
 - b. (J.T. Hinds, "What is a Miracle?" Gospel Advocate, Nov. 8, 1934, p. 1066).
It may be said, first of all, that miracles are acts or results that are not in harmony with the ordinary workings of natural laws. This conflict must be real, not just apparent; otherwise some natural explanation might be found for it, or might exist if not found.
2. The ability to work miracles is powerful credentials that one represents God.
 - I. The credibility of Jesus' miracles.
 - A. Jesus performed more than 3 dozen miracles which are recorded in the gospels.
 1. Power over nature, calming a storm (Matt. 8:23-37).
 2. He could supernaturally manipulate material objects, turn water into wine (Jn. 2) and multiply loaves and fishes (Jn. 6).
 3. He exhibited authority over physical disease, he healed a man born blind, a feat never before done in the history of the world (Jn. 9).
 4. He raised the dead (Jn. 11).
 - B. The miracles that Jesus performed were subject to empirical knowledge.
 1. The water into wine (Jn. 2:9) could be tasted.
 2. Thomas could feel the wounds in the hands and side of a resurrected Lord (Jn. 20:27).
 3. The restored ear which Peter cut off could be seen (Lk. 22:51).
 - C. Jesus performed miracles in the open, among friend and foe.
 1. There was the feeding of the 5,000; at other times he would be in the synagogues or in the streets.
 2. These miracles were performed in the presence of great crowds.
 - D. Jesus' enemies never accused him of failing when he performed a miracle.
 - II. Contrast, modern miracles today.
 - A. First, simply because something is difficult to explain does not make it a miracle.
 1. Some speak of the miracle of birth, granted it is a wonder, it's an amazing thing, but not a miracle.
 2. There are magicians that can do some amazing things which I cannot explain, but simply because I cannot explain does not mean they cannot

be explained.

- B. Power of suggestion, some people are told they are healed and they feel better.
 - 1. 55% of people who are in hospitals or go to doctors have psychosomatic problems.
 - 2. Spontaneous remissions, about 1 in 80,000 cancer patients are healed with no explanation.
- C. Time and chance come into play, "I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding; nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happened to them all" (Ecc. 9:11).
 - 1. We can be lucky or we can be unlucky.
 - 2. There are those who want to take good fortune and say it was a miracle, but good luck is just fortunate chance.
 - 3. There is luck or chance in this world.
 - 4. Solomon said, time and chance happens to them all, and it is still that way.
 - a. Luke 10:30-31, "A certain man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho fall among thieves, and by chance a certain priest came by...by chance.
 - b. Charles Darwin thought that if God existed, then everything is predetermined all the way down to a dog swallowing a gnat at a certain moment.
 - c. The Bible doesn't teach that.
 - 5. Now, Rom. 8:28, God can work all things for good, but sometimes we are just lucky.

III. Confusion over Mark 16.

- A. People have a tendency to take two things from this passage, namely, healing and speaking in tongues and simply ignoring the handling of snakes and the drinking of deadly poison.
 - 1. In Mk. 16, Jesus said, "if you drink any deadly thing it will not hurt you."
 - 2. The word "if" is an important key.
- B. There are those who accuse us of not believing Mk. 16 because we don't follow the signs of the believers (Mk. 16:15-20).
 - 1. First, there are those who deny the authenticity of the passage.
 - a. You do not find this in the Vaticanus or the Sinaiticus manuscripts.
 - b. The New English Bible has this note that these verses do not appear in some of the ancient manuscripts.
 - c. Now, while it is true that this passage does not appear in those two manuscripts that does not settle the issue.
 - d. The Vaticanus does not contain either I or II Timothy, nor Titus, Philemon, nor Revelation.
 - e. Shall we therefore on the basis of the omission of these books from the Vatican manuscript conclude they really do not belong in the

- canon?
2. On the other hand, the Sinaiticus, dating back to 340 AD, contains some of the apocryphal books, like the epistle to Barnabas, and part of the Shepherd of Hermes.
 3. Shall we therefore on this basis conclude that these should not be in the canon?
 4. Then there is the Chester Beatty papyri, out-dating both these, dating back to 250 AD, on display in Dublin, which includes these verses from the 16th chapter on the book of Mk.
- C. Others have repudiated the authenticity of these verse on the basis of the church fathers repudiating them.
1. Yet, in the writing of Irenaus, who goes back to the early 200's, we have him quoting from these very verses.
 2. There is good reason to conclude that these verses are authentic.
- D. There are others who say that Jesus is speaking figuratively.
1. Oral Roberts, book The Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Value of Speaking in Tongues Today, says on page 16, "Taking up serpents does not refer to handling snakes, this was an idiom of the east that referred to enemies.
 2. He is saying the handling of snakes if figurative while the speaking in tongues is literal.
 3. Well, if the taking up of serpents doesn't mean to take up serpents, then to speak in tongues doesn't mean to speak in tongues.
 4. This is an effort to lift from the text what he wants to lift from it and reject what he wants to reject.
- E. Others take the approach that we ought to be handling snakes even today.
1. In 1909, in Grasshopper Valley, TN, George Hensley was reading this passage and he thought he should take up snakes. So he ascended White Mountain, about 35 miles N of Chattanooga and there in a crevice in a rock he found a Timber Rattler. He immediately fell on his knees and asked God for strength to confront the serpent and he did and for some strange reason the snake did not bite him.
 2. So, he commenced to preach that doctrine
 3. However, a few years down the road, July 24, 1955, George Hensley was attending a prayer meeting at Lester's shed in Florida and he handled a Diamondback Rattle snake and was bitten and died (Class notes, Nashville Bible School, 1984).
 - a. The founder of this cult died by the fangs of a rattle snake.
 - b. His friends became quite angry when the County officials listed the cause of his death as suicide.
- F. "If they drink deadly poison it shall not hurt them," is not a command to do it.
1. There is a biblical case of snake handling in Acts 28.
 2. Paul was on the Isle of Malitia, a viper comes out of the fire and fastened his hand on him.

3. This is quite a contrast to modern snake handling.
 4. Paul did not say, "Well, I'm going to grab a hold of this snake to prove my faith."
 5. To the contrary, when Paul was accidently bitten by the snake, he was protected by the power of God.
- IV. The cessation of miracles. These signs shall follow until that which is perfect is come (I Cor. 13:10).
- A. Some would say, if miracles were performed today that would do more to convince them.
 1. I understand their sincerity, but the word of God is more powerful than miracles.
 2. I Cor. 14:37, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.
 3. When an eagle bears her young, she builds a nest high on the mountains. There she hatches and nourishes her babies. When the time comes for the eagles to fly, she destroys the nest. The temporary place of nourishment and care is dismantled, and the young birds are forced to fly.
 4. Today, God wants us to soar on the wings of fait (Rom. 10:17).
 - B. God can manipulate certain circumstances that if those who desire the Truth and seek it will be provided the opportunity to find it.
 1. God is omnipotent, He is everywhere, He doesn't have to take a plane to get across the country.
 2. God can work through the lives of people to get his purpose accomplished.
 3. "Ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you (Matt. 7:7).
 4. Ask, seek, know, you have got to ask.
 5. God somehow works, though we can't explain it.
 - a. The church is under obligation to take the gospel to people, but people in the world, made in the image of God are under the obligation to seek the truth.
 - b. Acts 17, Paul said, God is not far from any of us.
 - c. II Tim. 2:4, God would have all men to come to a knowledge of the truth.
 6. Acts 10, Cornelius had the opportunity before him.
 1. Is God going to send an angel like he did with Cornelius? No.
 2. But we need to stress the point in the churches of Christ that there is equal obligation here on the man to uphold the truth and on the man who is supposed to be looking for it.
 3. What if you have a person looking for the truth and the church is not upholding it--That's not right.
 4. However, if you have the church upholding truth and man is not looking for it, not right either,
 5. But when we uphold truth and people are seeking truth--there is

tremendous opportunity to do good.

B. How does God work all of that, I don't know.

1. I don't know how God works all the hurt in our lives for good, but he can do it.
2. A thing can be supernatural and not miraculous, there is supernatural intervention to the non discerning eye.
3. God can get the gospel to a man who wants the truth.

Conclusion:

1. Miracles had their purpose in time past, but we now have something greater than miracles--the Word of God which is able to save man's soul.
2. This is a broad subject, however, this is at least a portion of The Truth About Miracles.

FELLOWSHIP

Introduction:

1. The word fellowship brings many ideas to mind.
2. Brethren have written books on the subject, lectureships have been held.
3. Some have said the theme of God's inspired word can be summed up in the word fellowship.
4. Fellowship with God should be the single most important thing to any person living on His creation.
5. Fellowship is essential to one's salvation, and will determine the eternal resting place of the soul.
6. There is no subject misunderstood any more than the subject of this hour. Fellowship!!
7. The denominational world, and in many places the Lord's church, the very place where fellowship is obtained, teaches false doctrines concerning this biblical subject!
8. We will in the light of the Gospel this afternoon, define fellowship, what is it? We will in like manner discuss how fellowship is obtained, and maintained. We will answer the question can the ties of fellowship be broken? And we will discuss fellowship as far the brotherhood is concerned.

I. What is Fellowship?

- A. The word fellowship is first recorded in our English Bibles in Acts 2:42.
 1. I find it interesting that the word fellowship appears in the center of the Bible. Not physically, but in the hub of the bible.
 2. Everything prior to Acts 2, simply, points to it, and everything after points back to the events of the chapter, or is a result of the events of acts chapter two.
- B. Fellowship and the Gospel go hand in hand.
 1. From Acts one and two are the events of the apostles on the day of Pentecost.
 2. They were there in Jerusalem just as they had been told, awaiting the comforter, John 14- 17, Awaiting that power from on high, Luke 24.
 3. Having received the power from on high, Acts 2:1 and following, the first Gospel sermon was preached.
- C. As a result God's eternal plan was fulfilled in the church being established. Christ's promise of Mat 16 had come true.
 1. The institution which would unite Jew and soon Gentile together as one was now established. Eph. 2:14-16, Eph. 4: one body, and we know that one body is the church. Eph 1:22, 23.
 2. And its here that the word fellowship is first used in our English bibles.
 3. In reference to those who had just obeyed the Gospel and added to the Church.
 4. Acts 2:39 reads, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.
 5. 2 Thes. 2:14 reads "Whereunto he called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 6. Those who obeyed were those who were called, now lets put with this 1 Cor. 1:9 "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord."
 7. Thus only the called obtain fellowship, and so any one whose will is to obey the Gospel will obtain the fellowship God offers.
- D. It is as this point we will define the word fellowship. But will do so by looking to the words of the new testament, as God defines for us the fellowship we are to enjoy.
 1. Fellowship is defined as: communion, (and is translated as that in I Cor 10:16), a joint participation, a sharing of something in common. The word carries the idea of partnership.
 2. This is seen from some of the adjectives used to describe Christians.

- a. First of all *Fellow Citizens*. Eph. 2:19 "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"
- (1) As we are citizens of the United states and were born in to that state.
 - (2) Likewise when born into the kingdom of God John 3:3-5
 - (3) I then am a citizen of God's kingdom, made up of the churches of Christ throughout the world.
 - (4) So whether here in Nesbitt, Coldwater, Oak Grove, in other states, countries, nations,.....Gal. 3:38 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."
 - (5) All who obey the Gospel in baptism are added to the church, by God himself (Acts 2:47) and are citizens of the kingdom.
- b. As citizens of a kingdom, there are responsibilities for those citizens. Secondly Christians are *Fellow Helpers*. 2 Cor 8:23 "Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you: or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ."
- (1) How great a position, to be a helper of the Apostle Paul.
 - (2) To work with and travel with preaching the Gospel.
 - (3) Much more work can be done when u have those willing to help. In matters concerning church work. Evangelism, teaching, preaching, serving in the worship services.
 - (4)
- c. Third Christians are *Fellow Servants*. Col. 1:7 "As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;" It was said of this man by Paul that they were fellow prisoners. It may just be sometime in the future, we may refer to ourselves as fellow prisoners.
- (1) As children of God there is a debt we owe. Paul said he was debtor. Rom 1:16
 - (2) It was certainly not anything the Greeks or barbarians had done for Paul, but by the blood of Christ his sin had been cleansed, and was not obligated to serve all of his life in trying to carry that same Gospel to all men.
 - (3) Phil 1:21 reads "For to me to live is Christ but to die is gain" Paul was in life or in death a servant of Christ.
 - (4) Listen to Rom 12:1 " I beseech you therefore, Brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
 - (5) Brethren the very least I can do because of the free gift given, salvation in Christ, is to serve him all my life.
 - (6) Note, Philippians 1:1 Paul was a servant, and we too should be servants.
 - (7) We are bound by the God, to use the ability with which he has blessed us, in his service.
- d. Fourth Christians are called *Fellow Laborers*.
- (1) I am reminded of the days of Nehemiah, and the rebuilding of the

walls.

- (2) Its interesting to read the third chapter of the book. It would do members of the church everywhere good to read this chapter from time to time.
- (3) The words “and next unto them”, and “after him” or “after them” appear in the chapter some thirty times.
- (4) Notice with me the word of chapter 4:6 “So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work!!!
- (5) We sing songs like I want to be a worker for the Lord. But what are we doing? You know I should not sing that song if I do not intend on working.

e. Fifth Christians are called *Fellow Soldiers*

- (1) Phil 2:25 “Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.”
- (2) As citizens of the kingdom of God, we are in his army. And certainly must as soldiers stand ready to fight.
- (3) Many places in the word of God are Christians called soldiers. Paul’s words to Timothy “Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
- (4) And certainly soldiers are to wear, adorn themselves with the proper attire. Eph 6:10-18 read.
- (5) Certainly we want to be prepared for the enemy Note Eph 6:12, who the enemy is, and how to fight against him.
- (6) Only with the armor God provides.
- (7) And finally, soldiers must not war against one another. Given this, that the truth of the Gospel is not the reason for the fight. A faithful soldier must always fight against error and stop the mouths of those who would teach it.

II. Among many other things we learn from the early church concerning fellowship, we learn that the precious bond a Christian has with God and others of like precious faith can be broken.

Fellowship is conditional, and I know that from one little two letter word. IF

- A. As sure as one can fall from the grace given by God, (Gal. 5:4) one can break the ties of fellowship in ceasing to walk in the light of the Gospel.
1. Fellowship is directly related to faithfulness, faithfulness to God and his word. Well faithfulness to God is faithfulness to his word.
 2. Read with me I John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”
 3. The contrast is between walking in the light and walking in darkness. Christ described a straight way(the light) and a broad way (darkness)
 4. Notice with me that fellowship and truth are inseparable. I John 1:6 “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth!!!!”
 5. What do you suppose the truth there is?? John 17:17 “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” Also Ps 119:105 “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” verse 130 as well, “The entrance of the words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”

6. As long as one continues in the word of Christ, in the light of God, that person has fellowship with God and with all others who do the same.
7. Stray outside the truth, the word, the precious fellowship is broken. Those are the limitations that God has set forth.

B. What does then the Bible teach concerning those who stray, concerning those who cease to walk in the light.

1. It is indeed a serious offense to turn your back on the very one who offers salvation of the soul. One who ceases to follow the light of the Gospel does just that.
2. The bible refers to that person as a sinner, and we are obligated to go to that person and try to bring him back to the truth.
 - a. 1 Thes. 5:14 reads "Now we exhort your brethren, warm them that are unruly". We must warn them of their position and exhort them to come back to the truth.
 - b. We are to give them ample time to do so. How much time??
 - c. There is no certain scripture to which we can turn at this time, but common sense has to be used. After every effort to regain a brother, then he must be withdrawn from.
 - d. It is not something that can be done too quickly, but too much time should not be taken either. We must exercise common sense.
3. Jam.5:19, 20 "Brethren if any of you do err from the Truth (there is that word again.), and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.
4. Here is the reason for withdrawing 2 Thes. 3:6,14 "Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."
 - a. The purpose is not to be mean spirited, or harsh, but rather to make one ashamed of the sin in his life and repent of the wickedness.
 - b. Notice also with me another example. 1 Tim. 1:19, 20 read.
 - c. The reason is to make the person in the sin learn from their mistake, so as that sin not be committed again.
 - d. As well notice 1 Cor. 5:5 "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." Verse 13 reads, "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."
5. You see, we withdraw from the fallen brother, and in doing so demonstrate our Love for him.
6. Our efforts are certainly to regain that which was lost. And rejoice when that day comes.

C. This includes a congregation that walks in error. A congregation walking in error can be marked and withdrawn from

1. Many churches go into apostasy, error, the way of darkness.
 - a. They do so by teaching false doctrine
 - b. Extending fellowship beyond the borders that God has prescribed.
 - c. Inviting false teachers.

- d. Many and various other ways.
- 2. Just as an individual, a congregation that is contrary to the doctrine of Christ it to be marked.
 - a. We think of the churches of Asia. Rev. 2-3
 - b. They were given a warning. Repent or
 - c. And were told of the consequences.

III. Having learned very briefly, of fellowship. As members of the church I am not telling you anything new when I say there are many problems in the brotherhood with the subject.

- A. First of all the withdrawing of fellowship is not practiced as it should be.
 - 1. I am quite sure it will not take you in the audience very long to think of situations.
 - 2. Members of the church, who have not been in months, years, and no action ever taken. Then the purpose of withdrawing is lost.
 - 3. God will hold us accountable
 - 4. I would like to see the day, once again, that in bulletins we list those who have been baptized into Christ and also those who have been withdrawn from.
 - 5. God commands us to withdraw ourselves from those that walk disorderly It is that simple.

- B. In many places congregations fellowship denominations, tearing down that for which Christ died.
 - 1. We must understand some things about the church in order to view fellowship correctly.
 - 2. We must also understand that as a child of God I cannot have fellowship with anything that God does not fellowship.
 - a. Note again 1 John 1:6,7 read. Fellowship is conditional to truth.
 - b. The truth is there is but one church, as Christ said he would build.
 - c. And there is but one means of entrance, obedience to the Gospel.
 - d. Whereby God will add us to that church, and thus we obtain fellowship with God.
 - 3. So many seek for unity in diversity. It is impossible. The very words contradict one another.
 - 4. God will not allow for us to compromise his truth, in any way.
 - 5. Denominations are man made, their origin is with man and not with God.
 - 6. We have seen the origin on fellowship on the day of Pentecost, for those who God adds to the church. There is no other place where fellowship can be found.
 - 7. Again fellowship is hinged upon truth and abiding in it. 2 John 9-11
 - a. When we abide in the doctrine of Christ we have both the father and the son, and vice versa.
 - b. Likewise anyone who brings other doctrines, we are not to receive, nor bid god speed, lest we become partakers of their evil deeds.
 - c. Brethren denominationalism is evil. Because it is not founded upon truth!! And there can be no fellowship with evil, darkness.
 - d. Eph 5:11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."
 - e. 2 Cor. 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?
 - f. Christians are the light of the world, as long as they walk in the glorious light of the Gospel. Anyone outside of the church established on Pentecost

- in yet in darkness.
- g. It is absolutely absurd to think that we can withdraw from those within a particular congregation, and just let the churches that are in error wear the name of Christ and go on there merry way. If we do such we are not a good soldier of the cross. We are not defending and standing for the truth as we should.

Conclusion:

1. There are certainly many more things which we could discuss.
2. I wish I had the time to discuss each of them in more detail.
3. I would encourage everyone here today, every one as a member of the Lord's church to study this very crucial subject.
4. The sweetness of Biblical fellowship can only be enjoyed by God's children. We have discussed in a small degree the church, and what fellowship it to the Christian.
5. I hope we can as members of the Lord's church continue to enjoy this great blessing.
6. And when it comes to sin whether a member or non, a congregation that is in sin, or a denomination let us remember there are over 60 passages that deal with the subject of discipline.
7. Words such as mark, refuse, turn away, receive not, note, purge out, deliver, no fellowship, not to eat, put away.
8. And in light of these words remember Paul's words Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us
9. For those outside the body of Christ, and many times from within, let us remember the words
 - a. Wrest the scriptures 2 Pet 3:6
 - b. Handle them deceitfully 2 Cor 4:2
 - c. Corrupt the word 2 Cor 2:17
 - d. Make it void by our own tradition Mark 7:13
 - e. Pervert the Gospel Gal 1:6-9
 - f. Add to the word Deut. 4:2
 - g. Take away from the word Rev 22:18-19
 - h. Transgress the doctrine 2 John 9-11
10. These are just a few among many more we could notice. The fact is fellowship is hand in hand with truth, take away truth, and destroy the fellowship.
11. May we all as members of the Lord's church strive to continue in the truth, and thus in fellowship with God our Father.

THE NEED FOR STRONG WOMEN IN THE CURRENT STRUGGLE

Irene C. Taylor

INTRODUCTION

In many instances, women have had to lead the way upward in moral issues. Keep in mind, however, that she can lead downward as well!

Some acquiesce because "I am only one." But one woman is all that it takes to make that first step toward the just and right.

BIBLE WOMEN WHO WERE STRONG

I. VASHTI--A LEADER IN PURITY (Esther 1:1ff).

- A. She was queen to King Ahasuerus of Persia.
- B. While her husband hosted a drunken feast for men, she entertained the women. No mention is made of drinking at her feast.
- C. The king requested that she appear before the men to display her beauty, a request for an immodest display.
- D. Vashti refused treasuring her dignity and modesty more than the prestige of being queen.

QUESTION: What would she think of the display of nudity and near nudity so prevalent today--without even a king's command!

If sons and daughters do not understand the danger of immodesty and mother is more interested in popularity than purity, where is Dad?! Honest dads tell the truth!

LESSON LEARNED: There is never justification for compromising our purity!

II. ESTHER--A STUDY IN COURAGE AND SACRIFICE (Esther 2-10).

- A. She became queen after Vashti when the conduct of women was closely watched.

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B. She needed patience and wisdom to countermand the evil influence of Haman.

C. She needed the confidence and respect of the king.

D. She was willing to sacrifice her own life, if need be, to save her people, the Jews.

QUESTION: What are we willing to sacrifice in the battle against the evils of our day?

LESSON LEARNED: We must be ready and willing to act when the situation demands it.

III. DEBORAH--A PORTRAIT OF STRENGTH (Judges 4 & 5).

A. Deborah judged Israel during a period of captivity.

B. When Barak refused to go into battle without her, she went to the battle with no apparent reservation.

C. Hers was the attitude of "the buck stops here."

QUESTION: When the "battle" needs to be fought today do we step forward or look around for someone else to go?

LESSON LEARNED: Courage is not the absence of fear. "Courage is fear that has said its prayers."

IV. LYDIA--AN EXAMPLE OF DEDICATION TO GOD (Acts 16:14-15).

A. She was a successful business woman.

B. Though on a business trip, she made time for worship to the Lord as she understood it.

C. She had an open, honest mind and listened to the truths preached by Paul.

D. When she realized her worship was deficient, she obeyed the gospel.

E. Her action influenced her household to obey as well.

QUESTION: What kind of influence are we wielding on those about us?

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LESSON LEARNED: It matters greatly how we live and what we do!

We never find time to do right. We make or reserve the time.

V. ELECT LADY--AN EXAMPLE OF STEDFAST LOVE OF TRUTH (2 John).

A. She has the honor of a book addressed to her, a tribute to her dedication.

B. She receives the warning to uphold truth and refuse error.

QUESTION: Can one give either verbal and/or financial encouragement to the promoter of error--even if that person or persons is a family member or a friend?

LESSON LEARNED: We, too, have the warning not to uphold error.

What will we do with it? To encourage, even in the smallest of ways, the propagation of error makes one as guilty as the promoter!

It is a serious matter to fail to expose and oppose error.

This was addressed to a lady. LADIES: Take heed. Do not be charmed into upholding the wrong.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT NEED FOR STRONG WOMEN?

In the home, church and society in general, we face serious problems.

The breakdown of the home has shaken the strength of the church and the very foundation of society. God expects Christians to accept their responsibility to use our talent and influence to right the wrong. We need to leave the world a better place for our children and grandchildren. Some areas of need are:

I. PURITY

A. Purity defined is: "Cleanness or clearness; freedom from evil or sin; innocence; chastity; freedom from corrupting elements."

B. In the sexual realm we see our "anything goes" society accept and glamorize same-sex relationships, pedophilia, perversions of the marital union and pornography.

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C. Impurity of speech fills the airwaves and printed page. Many cannot complete a full sentence without using it!

D. A lack of respect for human life at both the beginning and ending is a travesty. Animal and bird life receive more protection than human life thanks to the influence of the Feminists and Roe v. Wade.

LESSON: We must get out the vote to place in office a president who will appoint those who oppose abortion to the 4-5 vacancies soon to occur in the Supreme Court.

II. COURAGE

A. Courage is the "attitude of willingness to deal with danger, things difficult or painful instead of withdrawing from it."

B. We need to imitate the courage of Esther and make whatever stand is needed to uphold truth and right.

1. Failure to do so can cost us precious freedoms now enjoyed.

C. Know what is taught your children in school.

1. Beware of the influence of evolution and Humanism.

LESSON: All that is necessary for evil to prevail is for good people to do nothing!

III. STRENGTH

A. This means we are "willing to do what needs to be done."

B. We need to be willing to take that first step of leadership like Deborah.

LESSON: Instead of asking "Why me?" ask "Why not me?" "Someone" has ME in the middle!

IV. DEDICATION TO GOD

A. This simply means "wholehearted devotion."

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- B. Our dedication to God must be unquestioned.
- C. God must occupy first place in our lives; our priorities must be kept in proper order.

LESSON: Without dedication to God our efforts cannot be fully successful.

THE SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEM

- A. We MUST have an unwavering love for truth. Compromise will not upgrade conditions or eliminate evil. It must go!
- B. We must be determined to serve God in His way. "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23).
- C. KNOW why the current issues are so critical!
 - 1. Do you KNOW why instrumental music in worship is wrong?
 - 2. Do you KNOW why baptism must be for remission of sins and must be immersion?
 - 3. Do you KNOW why it is wrong to join hands in fellowship with denominations, exchanging pulpits with them, having joint worship?
 - 4. Do you KNOW why it is wrong to have solos and choruses in worship?
 - 5. Do you KNOW why children's church, house churches, etc. are wrong?
 - 6. Do you KNOW what is a reliable Bible and why the loose versions are dangerous?
 - 7. Do you KNOW why women preachers, teachers of mixed classes are wrong?
 - 8. Do you KNOW why women cannot be elders and church leaders?
 - 9. Do you KNOW what is wrong with the concept that everything we do is worship?
 - 10. Do you KNOW what is dangerous with the idea of a direct guidance by the Holy Spirit?

We MUST be strong in opposing error. We MUST make a difference!

If Christians do not meet the challenge, who will?

DENOMINATIONALISM

DEUT. 12:1-14

Deuteronomy 12:1 These [are] the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. Deuteronomy 12:2 Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: Deuteronomy 12:3 And ye shall w their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and des... the names of them out of that place. Deuteronomy 12:4 Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God. Deuteronomy 12:5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, [even] unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: Deuteronomy 12:6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: Deuteronomy 12:7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. Deuteronomy 12:8 Ye shall not do after all [the things] that we do here his day, every man whatsoever [is] right in his own eyes. Deuteronomy 12:9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you. Deuteronomy 12:10 But [when] ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and [when] he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; Deuteronomy 12:11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD: Deuteronomy 12:12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that [is] within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. Deuteronomy 12:13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: Deuteronomy 12:14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

INTRO:

1. The subject of denominationalism is one that touches practically all families in our nation. It is a subject about which we should be familiar. One of the Major problems of our day is the matter of denominationalism. What is a denomination? *A denomination properly defined means a religious organization larger than the local church, but smaller than the whole church. It takes many local churches to constitute a denomination. So a denomination is larger than the local church, but it is smaller than the whole church; because no denomination claims to have all the saved in it, they will tell us there are Christians in all denominations. So no denomination has all the saved. It is therefore smaller than the whole church, but it is larger than the local church, because it takes many local churches to compose it. So a denomination is not the church in the whole sense, because it is too small. And, it is not the church in the local sense because it is too large. Our only conclusion then can be that a denomination is not the church in any sense; in no scriptural sense at all, because the word church is never used in the New Testament, in any denominational connotation; that is outside the use of the word church in the New Testament. (For E. Wallac, Jr.) DENOMINATION: 1. IT IS A RELIGIOUS BODY WITH A DINSTINCT NAME AND DOCTRINE WHICH SEPARATES IT FROM OTHER RELIGIOUS BODIES. 2. IT DOES NOT CLAIM TO BE THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE BUT ONLY A PART OF IT, A SECT, OR SECTION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.* The very foundation of denominationalism is opinions and divisions!
 - a. Each one has family members, friends, working mates, etc. caught up in it! It is nearly impossible to get people to think about religion without thinking of it in the framework of denominationalism.
 - b. We need to know the Truth about denominations.
 - c. It is becoming more and more acceptable to not make a difference in the church and denominations. It is also unfortunate that even some in the church of our Lord have given over to denominational theology and now saying that the church is "just another denomination."
 - 1) Since the early 1980's, many preachers have been espousing that there are "sincere, devout, knowledgeable, Christians in all denominations!
 - 2) They do not mean that Christians have strayed from the path of God and turned to denominationalism!
 - 3) They teach that one can become a Christian through the teachings of any denomination!
2. Let's begin our study in Deut. 12:1-14 by looking at the way God expected Israel to worship Him! Particularly we want to notice that **He Authorized Only One Way of Acceptable Worship!**
3. What the purpose of such a study as this?
 - a. To make a comparative study of truth and error, since so many people are unable to reconize the difference.
 - b. To obtain a clear concept of the difference between denominational error and New Testament Truth! We need to know the Truth so we can teach others, **NOT JUST TO WIN ARGUMENTS!**

DENOMINATIONAL DOCTRINES

MARK 7:7-9; MATT. 15:1-9

ROMANS 10:1-4

1. MANY BODIES OR CHURCHES
2. FOUNDED BY MEN
3. HUMAN HEADS
4. HUMAN CREEDS
5. WEAR HUMAN NAMES
6. FOLLOW MEN
7. MEMBERSHIP NON-ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION
8. PREACH MANY GOSPELS
9. REWRITE CREEDS OFTEN
10. MANY FAITHS
11. MANY BAPTISMS
12. JOIN CHURCHES OF CHOICE
13. WALK BY DIFFERENT RULES
14. RECOGNIZE MANY CHURCHES
15. DOCTRINE IS NOT IMPORTANT

-vs-

TRUTH

JOHN 8:32; 12:48

COL. 3:17

1. ONE BODY (EPH 4:4)
2. FOUNDER CHRIST (MATT 16:18)
3. CHRIST - HEAD (EPH 1:22-23)
4. BIBLE - CREED (2 TIM 3:16-17)
5. NAME - CHRISTIAN (1 PET 4:16)
6. FOLLOWING MEN CONDEMNED (1 COR 1:10-13)
7. MEMBERSHIP ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION (EPH 5:23)
8. PREACH ONE GOSPEL (GAL 1:8,9)
9. BIBLE REMAINS (MAT 24:35)
10. ONE FAITH (EPH 4:5)
11. ONE BAPTISM (EPH 4:5)
12. GOD ADDS SAVED (ACTS 2:47)
13. WALK BY SAME RULE (PHI 3:16)
14. JESUS PRAYED FOR ONE (JOHN 17:20-21)
15. TAKE HEED UNTO... (1 TIM 4:16)

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

DEFINED { TRUTH - That which is correct, right, true -

John 8:32 - *Ye shall know the truth.....*

John 17:17 - *.....thy word is truth.*

2 Peter 1:3 - *His divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.*

{OPERATION - Work, Function, Activity.

{HOLY SPIRIT - Diety, One of Godhead, Personality (He)

Gen. 1:1-2 - Holy Spirit is person of Godhead - plural

Gen, 1:26 - *...Let us make man.....*

Matt. 28:19 - *Teach all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.*

1 John 5:3-7 - *...three that bear record in heaven, the Father Son, and the Holy Spirit....*

Heb. 9:14 - *The Holy Spirit is Eternal.*

OPERATED IN CREATION - Gen 1: 1-2 - *...God created heaven and earth and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

Job 26:13 - *..By his spirit, he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.*

Job 33:4 - *The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*

OPERATED IN REVELATION - 2 Tim. 3:16 & 17- *...All scripture inspired of God...*

1 Peter 1:10-12 - *The prophets prophesied....by spirit of Christ in them...unto whom it was revealed...preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.*

2 Peter 1;20-21 - *..no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 1:16 - Peter says--*This scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas.....*

2 Sam. 23:2 - David says---*The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was in my tongue.*

1 Cor. 2:10-13 - *God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit... which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual words.*

Eph. 3:3-5 - *By revelation He (God).....hath revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.....*

OPERATED BY INSPIRED PROCLAMATION-Mark 16:15-20..*preaching..*
 WITH INSPIRED CONFIRMATION-Heb 2:3-4..*God bearing them witness both*
with signs, wonders, miracles, gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Matt3:11, Mark 1:8, John 1:33 (Christ)*He Shall baptize with the Holy Spirit.*

John 14:26 - *The comforter, the Holy Ghost, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John15:26-*When the Comforter is come...the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me*

John 16:7-8 -*the Comforter..I will send him unto you. He will reprove (convict) the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.*

John 16:13 - *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth is come he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak and he will shew you things to come.*

Luke 24:46-49 - *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

Acts 1:4-5..*wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

Acts 1:8 - *Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witness unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth.*

Holy Ghost
baptism

Acts 2:1-4 - *...they (the apostles) were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 2:14 - *Peter lifted up his voice and said.....*

16 - *This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel..*

22 - *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus....*

23- ...Ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up....

36...God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ.

37 - When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart... what shall we do?

38 - Peter said, repent and be baptized,.....

41- They that gladly received his word were baptized.

43many wonders and signs were done by the apostles

Acts 10:44-46 - Household of Cornelius - while Peter spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word.

Acts 6:5-8 - Stephen, full of faith and the Holy Ghost...and Philip whom they set before the Apostles; and when they had prayed and laid hands of them.

8 - Stephen full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

10 - And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

Acts 7:51 - ...ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did.

52 - ...they have slain them (the prophets) which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, whom ye have been now the betrayers and murders.

54 ...they were cut to the heart.....

Acts 8:5-7 - Phillip went down to the City of Samaria and preached Christ...the people gave heed unto those things which Phillip spake hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

Acts 8:13-18 - Simon believed was baptized

17 - Peter and John laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.

Acts 19:6 - Paul laid hands on them and the Holy Ghost came on them and they spake with tongues and prophesied

THE DURATION - 1 Cor. 12:27-30 Miraculous gifts.

PURPOSE 13:8-10 - ..until that which is perfect is come.

James 1:25 - ...perfect law of liberty...

Eph. 4:11-16- ...for perfecting of the saints for the work and edifying of the body of Christ.

- NOW
- 1 Peter 4:11 - *If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God.*
- 2 Tim. 4:2 - *Preach the Word...*
-
- 2 Peter 1:3 - *...His divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.*
- Heb. 4:12 - *the word of God is quick, powerful, sharper than any two edge sword.*
- HOW?
- Eph. 6:17 - *the sword of the spirit which is the word of God*
- Jude 3 - *....the faith which was once delivered.....*
- 2 Tim 2:15.....*study to shew thyself approved unto God..*
- 2 Tim 3:16-17 - *...all scripture is inspired of God and is profitable*
- Col 3:16 - *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.....*
- Eph. 3:16-17 - *..be strengthened by his Spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.....*
- Eph. 3:19-*And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*
- WHY?
- 1 Tim 4:1-3 - *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy....*
- 1 John 4:1 - *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God....*
- 1 Thes. 5:21 - *Prove all things hold fast that which is good...*
- 2 Cor. 11:13-15 - *For such are false Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ..*
- Rev. 2:2 - *...thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and has found them liars.*
- Acts 17:11 - *The Bereans were more noble than those of Thesalonica in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily to see if the things being taught were so.*
- John 8:32 - *...know the truth and the truth will set you free..*
- John 17:17 - *Thy Word is truth*

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE ROLE OF WOMEN

INTRO:

- 1 When we speak about the role of women we are speaking about the truth about the role God has designed, decreed and which He demands for women as pertaining to the leadership in the church. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." -- Col 3:17

- 2 We would say in the outset that women are within the priesthood of believers, citizens of the kingdom, and enjoy all of the privileges and blessings therein.
 - a Gal. 3:26-29; 1 Pet. 3:7. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." -- Gal 3:26-29....."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
 - b Women enjoy many responsibilities common to men; e.g., in building a happy home, in rearing up faithful children, in evangelizing the world, etc.

- 3 In today's society there is growing pressure to have women in leadership roles in the churches.
 - a Much of this has come from the change of roles of men and women in our society.
 - b To faithful Christians, God's word is the final authority on the acceptable roles for both men and women.

I THE PROBLEM WHICH SURROUNDS US

- A The feminist movement has created a crisis in the Lord's church. The pressure which society exercises on men and women to conform, is now pressing upon the church. Elderships are under fire to "elevate women to the place of men." Of course, the denominational world created a place for the expanded role of the woman first, and now we have weak, liberal brethren, who are willing to compromise the Word of God. It seems many of these liberals can do nothing unless they have seen a denomination do it first! The feminists desire to have females serve as elders, deacons and preachers. They are not concerned with the costs of their error, only with the results they desire.
 1. There are many examples we could notice to show the crisis which the church faces. Brother Dave Miller points out several of these in his work, Piloting The Strait.
 - a On July 31, 1988, the leaders of the Bering Drive church of Christ in Houston, Texas, announced their intention to encourage "the expression of women's gifts" in congregational worship services. In only two years women were leading prayers, reading Scriptures and waiting on the Lord's table. In fact, the elders passed out a form to the congregation and allowed them to vote on whether they accepted the expanded role of women. They agreed to allow the majority to rule!!
 - b He points out that women were allowed to teach mixed classes at the 1989 Nashville Jubilee.

- c. 1990 found the elders of the Cahaba Valley church of Christ in Birmingham, Alabama, announcing they were gradually going to include women in leadership roles. Female deacons have been appointed and women lead prayers, serve communion, and read Scriptures during the Sunday morning worship services.
2. Brother Music reveals some remarkable statements made by brethren relative to the feminist movement within the ranks of the Lord's church:
- a. "I believe that God intended woman to be a creature of dignity and worth in full partnership with man and given equally the task of carrying on his purpose in the world - whether it be in the marriage relationship, in the family, in society or in the church. (This she stated was her thesis toward which all I have to say will be aimed).
 - b. Surely, no one would seriously deny that women have been, at best, second class citizens in the church and, at worst, completely suppressed...Our worship services might be much warmer and more spiritual if women were allowed some part in planning and participation.
 - c. The 21st Annual Youth Minister's Seminar...October 16-19, 1989...Each October, Lubbock Christian hosts...The keynote speakers are...and Randy Mayeux. You want to talk about the issue in the 90's. There are Bible majors at Abilene Christian and Lubbock Christian who are female...In one youth group...there is a woman, a teenager...that wants to be able to preach in some fashion to men and women when she gets older. You want to kick her out?...The bottom line is that in the 1900's diversity is the only game in town,...Can a woman lead prayer in a mixed group? It's a good question. And the answer, of course, is yes she can. I mean because it is happening."¹
3. In October, 1990, Freed-Hardeman University held its annual forum and that year's subject was The Role of the Woman in the Work and Worship of the Church. There were two men who took the position of the feminist movement alleging that women had Biblical authority to be leaders in the public worship. Two men represented the truth against that error.
- a. One of those advocating the expanded role for the woman was Robert Randolph who preached for the church in Brookline, Massachusetts. In his opening speech he related events which showed a progression toward this erroneous position.
 - 1) He told how that over a period of years those who came to the Boston area to do graduate work began to change from men to men and women. They found more and more females in their Bible study groups.
 - 2) More and more single women also came to the studies and as they studied they began to see that women needed to have a more expanded role.
 - 3) Now we note a quote from Randolph: "*Eventually women, as we studied these issues, came to take part in all portions of our worship service. Now they lead worship, pray in public, and preach if they have a word to offer the church and the gifts to be effective in offering that word.*"² Here we have the crisis revealed right before our astonished eyes.

- b. His partner on the 1990 forum was Lynn Mitchell, an elder for the Bering Drive church of Christ, in Houston, Texas. We mentioned this congregation earlier as one which has allowed women to have an expanded role in leading public worship. During the events of the 1990 forum,
 - c. Randolph was asked if he would oppose a woman serving as an elder. His answer causes us to be able to see the crisis even clearer: *"I have no problem with women serving as elders today. I think that effectively that is what the older women were doing referencing Titus...The eldership has become in our congregations, in most of our tradition, basically the board of overseers that deal with the business of the church, or effectively the corporation's board, taking the model of the American business community and not necessarily the Biblical model...I think the reality is that those older women teaching the younger women were serving in that particular role."*³
4. The argument or defense of such a position as women having the right by God's authority to publicly lead in worship (lead singing, pray, preach, serve as elders, deacons, etc.) stems from a gross misuse and abuse of Biblical principles. We will defeat this a little later.
- a. They misinterpret Romans 16:1 where Paul said: **"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: (Rom. 16:1). They erroneously maintain that Phebe was a "deaconess," having a title or in some sense a role of authority. We will explain where they err in just a minute.**

In Romans 16:1 the term translated "servant" in the KJV is the Greek word "diakonos", a term meaning "one who serves or ministers." It is of common gender (may refer to men or women) and occurs 30 times in 28 verses --- Notice the following verses:"But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;" -- Mat 20:26....."Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." -- Mat 22:13....."But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." -- Mat 23:11"And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all." -- Mark 9:35

Also the term is used in the New Testament in two senses - technical and nontechnical sense. Technical sense -- term for a formal office to which one may be appointed by meeting certain qualifications (1 Ti 3:8-11) -- and -- nontechnical - term for the informal activity of serving or attending to.

In Rom 13:4 the civil government is said to be God's deacon - "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil." -- Rom 13:4. Christ is said to be deacon of the Jews - "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:" -- Rom 15:8. Paul is said to be a deacon of the New Covenant - "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." -- 2 Cor 3:6.....But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses," -- 2 Cor 6:4. Apollos is listed with Paul as a deacon in 1 Cor 3:5 - "Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" -- 1 Cor 3:5.

These are all nontechnical uses of the term referring to the service or assistance being rendered.

We can relate this maybe a little easier if we consider the use of the word "apostle" in the New Testament.

Jesus selected 12 apostles and sent them into all the world. They had to meet certain requirements as described in Acts 1 - "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." — Acts 1:21-22.

However, the Bible calls Barnabas an apostle also - "*Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,*" — Acts 14:14. In what sense was Barnabas an apostle? The word means "one sent." Jesus sent the twelve into all the world. Barnabas had been "sent" by the church in Antioch on the first missionary journey - "*And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.*" — Acts 13:3.

Thus, we have a technical term for apostle and a nontechnical term.

- b. They also take the passages where the apostle Paul reveals that a woman is not to "teach over" or "have authority over a man" and explain them away as matters of culture. Their position professes those passages do not apply to us today because we live in a different culture than did those to whom Paul wrote in the first century.
 - c. In his first speech at the 1990 forum, Randolph made some stinging accusations toward those who would preach and practice what Paul wrote concerning the role of women: "*We argue that the Bible supports a position that grows out of the teaching of the apostles, but it is a position that runs counter to the life and spirit of Jesus Christ...Again, I hope that with time we will have the courage to face up to the shameful waste of the kingdom's resources that has been occasioned by our failure to use the gift of our mothers, our sisters, and our daughters. The end result is that a male power structure conditioned by a world with a non-biblical view of women does not see in the life of the message of the gospel as lived in the life of the church, a call to the mutual submission that transcends time and culture...Let me try to recapture the radical nature of Jesus' ministry...I think that we have lost the sense of the radical nature of his ministry...In our tradition, we pay less attention to Jesus than we do to Paul...I understand that in the first century, the lines between men and women were more stark than they are today and, therefore, some of Paul's concerns reflect the concerns of culture...Were he here today...He would know that the sound of a woman's voice in the assembly is not indecent.*"⁴
5. They basically argue that Jesus taught in a way as to liberate women from male dominance.
- a. However, the apostle Paul came along and wrote, being influenced by the culture of the day and somewhat departed from the radical teaching of Jesus due to the environment into which he wrote.
 - b. The culture, therefore, dictates what one can teach and preach in a given situation. They compare the wearing of veils to a woman teaching in a mixed assembly.⁵ (Lynn Mitchell) Therefore, today unless we are willing to bind the wearing of veils as doctrine, then we cannot bind the absence of a woman from leadership roles in the church.

II. THE PATTERN WHICH SUSTAINS US

A. EXEGESIS OF THE PATTERN TEXTS

1. We have a pattern today to which we can turn for the guidance we need.
 - a. The Bible reveals it is sufficient for all men to be saved. Paul wrote: "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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. 3:16-17). The Lord supplied us with the Word which He breathed out in order that we might be perfect or complete unto every good work. This is true now and will be true until the Lord returns to judge the world.
 - b. Also Peter recorded: "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" (II Pet. 1:3-4). Would this be true if the culture of the day dictated what God would have us do?
 - c. We also read what Jude recorded: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).
 - d. God has revealed the pattern to us and in doing so, those who recorded that Pattern did not contradict the teachings of the Lord Himself. In fact Paul wrote: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (I Cor. 14:37).
 - e. The Lord had promised to give His Word to the apostles (John 16:13-15) and when that happened they wrote exactly what God told them to write: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet 1:20-21).
 - f. Therefore, what Paul wrote is to be taken as authoritative as what Jesus said. These are of the same stripe of those who would advocate the "core gospel" heresy.
 - 1) They say we need to concentrate on the sayings and teachings of Jesus more than that of Paul and Peter because what Jesus said is more important and of a better spirit than that of Paul.
 - 2) However, Paul said the things he wrote came from God, not from himself -- "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." -- Gal 1:10-12
 - 3) He also said we ought to follow him as he followed Christ (I Cor. 11:1). Does this sound like a man who is taking people FROM the teachings of Jesus? Rather, it sounds like a man who is taking people TO Jesus by teaching the same things Jesus taught.

2. The passages which serve as a pattern for us relative to women's roles and the authorization of such are found in I Corinthians 11, 14 and in I Timothy chapter two. These passages were written in a time when women were liberated much like they are today.

Don McWhorter makes a good comment to this end: *"Are these Scriptures that we are going to be studying from 1 Timothy 2, 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Corinthians 14, merely cultural? No, they are not, because in the culture of the first century, the woman was a very liberated woman. It was against that culture that these scriptures were given by the Holy Spirit. W. H. Ramsey who wrote The church in Roman the Empire said in Asia Minor women had equality with men. During this period (and he is referring to the days of Aquila and Priscilla and Paul), roman women were elevated to full and equal status without any distinction between the sexes."*⁶ - God's Woman-Feminine or Feminist?

3. Let us list these now and then we will show the pattern they form:

- a. **"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." - 1 Cor 11:3... "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (I Cor 11:7-9)..**
- b. **."For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (I Cor 14:33-34)..**
- c. **"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Tim 2:11-14).**
- d. Notice that in all these instances where the Lord revealed the pattern through the pen of inspiration, He appealed to the law of creation for His foundation. It was from the rib of man that woman was made: **"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:21-24).**
- e. God's order at creation is His basis for order in worship assemblies. In the culture of Paul's day women wore veils as a sign of submission. Their wearing the veils was a cultural act, but one which illustrated an eternal principle. In the beginning, God created man first, then woman. Thus, God desired and demanded that the woman be in subjection to the man. In the garden, Adam did not exercise the spiritual leadership in his home as he ought, so the punishment for the sin was applied to both he and Eve. Eve usurped his authority and Adam failed to fulfill his God-given role. In Corinth it was the custom of the day for a woman to wear a veil in public as a sign of submission to the man. To refuse to wear the veil was to rebel against this submission and subjection.

- f. Dave Miller made some good comments on this situation: *“Chapters eleven and fourteen of First Corinthians constitute a context dealing with disorders in the worship assembly. Paul articulates the transcultural principle for all people throughout history in 11:3. “Head” clearly refers not to “source” but to “authority.” Therefore, God intends for women to be subordinate to men in worship. Corinthian women were obviously removing their veils and stepping forward in the assembly to lead with their spirit-imparted, miraculous capabilities, i.e., prophecy (12:10; 14:31) and prayer (14:14-15). Such activity was a direct violation of the subordination principle, although Paul does not so state until chapter fourteen. He instead confines his directives concerning female leadership in worship in chapter eleven to the propriety of the female removing the cultural symbol of submission.”*”
- g. This custom was not doctrine which had to be maintained throughout the years of history which followed. It was a custom peculiar to that given circumstance. However, the principle of submission is eternal in nature and covers whatever cultural application it encounters. The foundation for restricting the cultural practice was the law from creation. God made man first, then woman. God intended for the man to have the leadership role, not woman. Paul proved this by returning to the Garden of Eden and we must also in our culture.
4. Chapter fourteen of First Corinthians deals with a public assembly in which miraculous gifts were being used.
- a. Paul regulates their use, but with divine, eternal principles which transcend any culture.
- b. The wives of the prophets are under consideration when they are told to learn in silence, “complete and absolute silence.” Why was this the case? Paul referred to “the law.” We ask, “Which law?” The answer is the law given in creation. Paul clearly refers to this law.
- c. Some erroneously try and say this is the Law of Moses and then they will run to examples like Deborah and try to say that if the culture dictates, then it is permitted for women to have leadership roles in the church. Paul would not have made arguments on this side of the cross based on the authority of the Law of Moses because that Law had been nailed to the cross (Matt. 5:17; Eph. 2:13-16; Col. 2:14).
- d. Jesus had freed them and us from the restraints of that Law and had become the Mediator of the New Testament (Heb. 9:15-17). Paul went back to a higher law and an older law. The correct interpretation is that the law is the law of creation -- man’s being formed first and then Eve.
- e. **WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT CULTURE IS CHANGED BY SCRIPTURE, NOT SCRIPTURE BY CULTURE.**
5. The third passage which serves as a pattern text is found in First Timothy chapter two, verses eleven through fourteen.
- a. The broad context of the whole book of First Timothy shows that it is written by the apostle Paul to his young friend Timothy, whom he has left at Ephesus.
- b. The book contains instructions on how the church is to be militant in exposing error and the false teachers of that error (1:3, 18-20; 4:1-6).
- c. Chapters two and three deal primarily with the worship and work of the church.
- d. Chapter four warns the evangelist to be faithful to his charge.

- e. Chapters five and six contain warnings and instructions relative to elders, servants, families and financial matters. Basically the entire tone of the book could be contained in this verse: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15).
- 6. When we narrow the scope of our examination to chapter two we see Paul concerned with the subject of prayer and for whom prayers ought to be made (2:1-2). He writes that they might be concerned with all men.
 - a. The Greek word for "men" in verse one is *anthropos* and means "human being." It could be man or woman.⁸
 - b. In verses three through seven we see that God Himself was concerned about all of mankind in that he sent His Son to die for them and to be their Mediator.
 - c. When we get to verse eight, Paul will speak to situations where men and women are present and those prayers made. Limiting the one in the leadership role to the man.
 - 1) Here he uses the word *aner* (the male of the species) also the use of the definite article (i.e. "the males") further emphasizes the contrast between the roles of men and women.
 - 2) Men were to pray everywhere men and women were present (2:8). This was to be the practice "in every place."
 - d. The word for place, *topo*, referred in the first century usage to a "meeting place." Therefore, Paul's instruction applies to any place where worship is conducted.⁹
 - e. They were to "lift up holy hands." That is, they were to be godly in their lives and conduct if they were to lead these prayers. "Lifting up holy hands" is a figure of speech, metonymy, in which the posture of prayer is put in place of the praying itself (cf., Isa. 1:15; Lam. 3:41; Psm. 143:6).
 - f. The point is that worship is to be accompanied by a genuinely spiritual, holy life and manner.

B EXAMPLES OF TIMES WHEN WOMEN ARE TO TEACH

- 1 She is commanded to teach other women. Titus 2:3-4
- 2 She is to teach her children as shown in the example of Lois and Eunice. 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15
- 3 She can teach small children
- 4 She is to teach in congregational singing. Col. 3:16
- 5 Women taught in the private situations. Acts 18:26
- 6 In all of these situations, the woman is not to teach in such a way as to disregard her subjection to man.
 - a All arrangements in which she takes the lead over men, or exercises a position over men, are forbidden.
 - b Modern man is not authorized to "give" her such positions.

CONCLUSION:

- 1 God created man for His own pleasure (Rev. 4:11). God desired worship of him (John 4:23-24) and still desires it today.
 - a Acceptable worship has always been according to God's will, not man's.
 - b God has always decreed the terms of that worship and not the given circumstances surrounding mankind.
 - c Culture is not a standard of authority to determine what is right or wrong in matters where God has decreed.
 - d The times or culture might help us decide how a law will be expedited, but the law itself is not changed by culture.

- 2 This is true relative to the role of women in the work and worship of the church.
 - a God for ever set forth His law on this in the creation and that cannot be altered by man.
 - b It is a shame that so many men and women have been taken captive by Satan through the avenue of women and their role before God.
 - c No matter how much talent a woman may have or how many "gifts" she may have, she is still to exercise her talent in service to God through the approved avenues He has decreed.
 - d Women are so valuable to the work and can do so much good if they will but stay within the framework of Scripture as they go about this work.
 - e May God raise up many godly women who will labor and help the work be carried forth till His Son returns.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

TEXT: JOH 4:23-24.

THESIS: TO SHOW, FROM THE SCRIPTURES, HOW MAN CAN AND MUST OFFER ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP TO GOD.

INTRODUCTION:

- I. SOME ARE SAYING OUR WORSHIP MUST CHANGE.
 - A. SOME CHANGES ARE GOOD.
 1. FROM BRUSH ARBOR TO COMFORTABLE MEETING HOUSE.
 2. FROM COMING TO WORSHIP IN A WAGON TO COMING BY CAR.
 - B. WILL "ACCEPTABLE" WORSHIP CHANGE?
 1. 20 YEARS FROM NOW?
 2. 200 YEARS FROM NOW?
- II. WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?
 - A. SOMEONE SAID, "THE PAST IS HISTORY, AND THE FUTURE IS A MYSTERY."
 - B. MANY THING WE DO NOT KNOW (HEB. 9:27; MAT. 24:36).
 - C. SOME THINGS WE DO KNOW.
 1. TIME IS SHORT (JAM. 4:14).
 2. BEYOND TIME IS ETERNITY (MAT. 25:46).
 3. NOW IS THE TIME TO GET READY!
- III. ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP DEMANDS.
 - A. APPROVAL FROM GOD.
 - B. ACTIONS WHICH ARE AUTHORIZED.
 - C. AN ATTITUDE WHICH IS RIGHT.

DISCUSSION:

- I. ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP DEMANDS APPROVAL FROM GOD.
 - A. GOD DOES NOT APPROVE WHAT HE DOES NOT AUTHORIZE (MAT. 15:9; JOHN 4:23-24).
 1. ADAM AND EVE (GEN. 2-3).
 2. NOAH (GEN. 6; HEB. 11:7).
 3. NADAB AND ABIHU (LEV. 10:1-2).
 4. ELEMENTS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (MAT. 26:26-28).
 - B. HOW DOES GOD AUTHORIZE--TODAY?
 1. JESUS CHRIST HAS BEEN GIVEN ALL AUTHORITY (MAT. 28:18).
 2. ALL MEN ARE TO HEAR HIM (MAT. 17:5; HEB. 1:1-3).
 3. HE SAYS... (JOHN 4:24; 8:31-32; 17:17).
 - C. CAN WE UNDERSTAND WHAT THE LORD WOULD HAVE US TO DO?
 1. YES (1 COR. 2:9-13).
 2. YES (EPH. 3:3-4; 5:17).
 3. YES (2 TIM. 3:16-17; JOHN 12:48).
- II. ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP DEMANDS ACTIONS WHICH ARE AUTHORIZED (JOHN 4:24).
 - A. WHAT SHALL WE DO IN WORSHIP?
 1. WHAT IS AUTHORIZED? APPROVED?
 2. NOTE EXODUS 32 AND JEREMIAH 41-44.
 3. TO PLEASE GOD, WE MUST DO ONLY WHAT HE AUTHORIZES.
 - B. WHY DO CHRISTIANS...
 1. SING? (EPH. 5:19).

2. PRAY? (ACTS 2:42).
3. OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER? (ACTS 2:42).
4. GIVE? (1 COR. 16:1-2).
5. TEACH/STUDY THE BIBLE? (ACTS 2:42).
6. BECAUSE THESE ARE ALL AUTHORIZED BY GOD FOR CHRISTIAN WORSHIP TODAY.

C. WHY NOT...

1. BURN INCENSE?
2. OFFER ANIMAL SACRIFICE?
3. BURN MONEY TO AN IDOL?
4. HAVE A SOLO, CHOIR, OR A MECHANICAL INSTRUMENT?
5. COMBINE AUTHORIZED ACTIONS?
6. DANCE, SHOUT, CLAP, SWAY, "CELEBRATE?"
7. HAVE A PRAISE TEAM, DRAMA TROOP, "MIKED" SINGERS?
8. BECAUSE NONE OF THESE ARE AUTHORIZED BY GOD FOR CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

III. ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP DEMANDS AN ATTITUDE WHICH IS RIGHT.

- A. THIS RIGHT ATTITUDE CAN BE SEEN IN ANTICIPATION.
 1. GLAD (PSA. 122:1)?
 2. READY?
- B. ...APPRECIATION.
 1. NOT SAY, "I DON'T GET ANYTHING OUT OF WORSHIP."
 2. NOT SAY, "I AM BORED WITH THIS WORSHIP" (MAL. 1:13).
- C. ...APPROACH.
 1. NOT TO BE ENTERTAINED.
 2. NOT TO OBSERVE--BUT TO OFFER.
- D. ...ASSEMBLING.
 1. FORSAKE (HEB. 10:25)?
 2. THE FAITHFUL WILL BE FAITHFUL IN ASSEMBLING.
- E. ...ATTIRE.
 1. PRIESTS WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING (1 PET. 2:5, 9).
 2. WASHED, CLEAN SPIRITUALLY ALSO.
- F. ...ATTENTION.
 1. FOCUSED ON WORSHIP!
 2. MIND ON THESE THINGS.

CONCLUSION:

- I. NEED TO CHANGE WORSHIP?
 - A. CHANGE ACTIONS?
 - B. CHANGE ATTITUDE?
- II. WORSHIP WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE IS...
 - A. THE SAME AS (ALMOST) TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO.
 - B. THE SAME EVERYWHERE.
 - C. NOT CHANGED TO BE LIKE THE WORLD.
- III. WE MUST WORSHIP GOD ACCEPTABLY--AND WE CAN (MAT. 4:10; JOHN 4:24).
 - A. HE WILL NOT ACCEPT WORSHIP FROM ONE WHO WILL NOT HEAR HIS WORD, BELIEVE IT, AND OBEY IT (HEB. 5:9; LUKE 6:46; REV. 22:14; 2 THE. 1:7-9).
 - B. HE WILL NOT ACCEPT WORSHIP FROM ONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE HIM (JOHN 14:15; 1 JOHN 5:3), AND KNOW HIM (1 JOHN 2:3-4).
 - C. WILL YOU BY FAITH, REPENT OF SIN, AND BE BAPTIZED--AND BEGIN TO WORSHIP ACCEPTABLY?

THE TRUTH ABOUT ERROR

Introduction:

1. Satan's arsenal seems to be fuller today than ever.
 - a. In secular education Satan can attack through humanism and/or evolution.
 - b. In our government Satan can attack through abortion, homosexuality and the "separation of church and state."
 - c. In our schools Satan can attack through alcohol, drugs and sexual impurity.
 - d. In denominationalism Satan can attack through man-made doctrines and a lack of concern for religious authority.
 - e. In the church Satan can attack through antism, liberalism and apathy among church members.
2. Although these avenues of Satan are very different, they have one common theme: their foundation and survival is dependant upon error.
 - a. Without error their would be nothing on which these ideas and movements could feed--error (being taught, believed and obeyed) is the source Satan's attack.
 - b. Thus we must conclude, if truth were preached, believed and obeyed on a world-wide platform, Satan would have no arsenal.
3. Therefore, Satan has done much to ensure that error remains in power secularly, governmentally, socially and religiously.
 - a. Simply put, Satan has lied--He has lied about truth and about error.
 - b. Go back to the garden for just a moment--when all of the extras are taken away and we review the attack of Satan; is that not what he did?
 - c. **"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:" -- Gen 3:4**
4. Friends and fellow soldiers, we are here this afternoon to reveal the truth about error (hopefully in doing so, we will also reveals some truths about truth).
 - a. Satan will despise our efforts here today.
 - b. He realizes that if these things were taught and believed the world over, his arsenal would be emptied and his attacks would be useless.
5. Key point: Error can only revealed by truth.
 - a. **"For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."**
-- John 1:17
 - b. **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."** -- John 17:17
 - c. Christ and His Word will be the standard by which we reveal the truth about error.

Discussion: (THE TRUTH ABOUT ERROR IS THAT...)

I. ERROR PROVOKES AND PRESERVES DIVISION.

- A. The unity of God's people has always been important to their survival.
 1. **"Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *There is an* accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you."** -- Josh 7:13

2. For this reason the Israelites were told to avoid association and especially marital relationships with other nations.
 3. The psalmist would write: **"Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!"** — Psa 133:1
- B. Christ was concerned and devoted to the unity of His followers.
1. Just hours before His death, He prayed specifically for the unity of those who would follow after Him.
 2. **"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."** — John 17:21
- C. Despite the Savior's plea for a unified following, many who claim to follow Christ stand divided even this very day!
1. Friend, the fault of such a situation does not and never will lie at the feet of Truth—the fault of division lies in error.
 2. We are insured, by inspiration, that if we would speak the same things (1 Cor. 1:10) and those things be the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11), Biblical unity will result.
 3. Take for example the Jews concerning Christ's teaching.
 - a. **"There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings."** — John 10:19
 - b. There was division because some of them chose not to believe the truth—in essence they chose to believe the error.
 4. Soldiers of the cross and defenders of the truth are not the reason for division—despite the cry from the liberal camp.
- D. Not only does error provokes division, but it preserves division as well.
1. To "preserve" means "to keep alive, intact or free from decay."
 2. In other words, error is the life support of division.
 3. Just look at the movement among many "churches of Christ."
 - a. Joining hands with the denominational world through joint services and special holiday programs.
 - b. The watering down of sound doctrine until it seems that denominational doctrines are being endorsed from what used to be sound pulpits.
 - c. The acceptance of denominational members into the local church without God ever adding them to His church.
 4. When you put all of these things together, you have an effective effort to maintain division among those who at least profess to follow Christ.
 - a. Friends just placing a Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and member of the church in the same building does not make them united.
 - b. To do such or endorse such is an attempt to negate the prayer of Christ and the commands of the Spirit.
- E. Yes, the truth about error is that it causes and sustains division.

II. ERROR DOES NOT RESPECT THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.

- A. Christ boldly proclaimed: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." -- Mat 28:18
1. That authority was left to the apostles: "Verily I say unto you, **Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**"
 2. It was left to them through the Spirit: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." -- John 16:13
 3. That authority was written down by the inspiration of the Spirit and now stands as the only religious authority acceptable to God: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." -- Col 3:17
 4. Because it is the authority of Christ, I must respect it: "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." 119:6
- B. Error does not have such respect.
1. Error feeds off of an ignorance of the Word.
 2. Error feeds off of an disregard for the Word.
 3. Error does not mind changes to the Word.
 4. In short, error has no respect for the Word.
- C. In turn, those who teach/endorse error have no respect of the Christ's authority.
1. Although, many of their "efforts" are done under the self-assumed title of "Christ's Work" the change agents among us care nothing at all for the authority of the Scriptures.
 2. Their "efforts" are done more to draw in the crowds and save face with the denominational world!
 3. Consider these applications.
 - a. When Christ said one church (Matt. 16:18), false teachers claimed that one church is as good as another.
 - b. When Christ said baptism was necessary (Mark 16:16), false teachers claimed it was only proof of your salvation.
 - c. When the Spirit indicated that the saved are only added to the one true church (Acts 2:47), false teachers claimed that you can find Christians (saved people) in all denominations.
- D. Simply, error and those propagate it have no respect for the Christ's authority.

III. ERROR OFTEN RESEMBLES TRUTH.

- A. Satan has realized that many will not adhere to blatant error.
1. For this reason, Satan will package error in what appears to be truth and hope to cause man to believe and obey it.
 2. Haven't we all been fooled by an object that resembles another--in my case ice tea and apple juice.
 3. Often times being fooled by resemblance can be quite dangerous.

- B. Error can appear as truth for a number of reasons.
1. By adding just a little bit to or taking just a little bit from truth and then presenting it.
 - a. Even the removal or addition of even one word to truth makes it damnable doctrine.
 - b. Just ask Eve.
 2. Concentrating so hard on one particular truth that all other Biblical truths are overlook and forgotten.
 - a. In time this man will often distort and pervert that one truth that He so diligently set out to study--it will then become his hobby.
 - b. Many of our greatest brotherhood problems begin.
 - c. For years we may have neglected a particular Bible subject such as grace or the Holy Spirit.
 3. By preaching part of the truth.
 - a. This man does not add error, he simply does not tell all of the truth.
 - b. As one has suggested, "a half-truth is a whole lie."
 - c. He may speak of God's command to have faith but never tell the lost about God's command of baptism...this does the same damage as any other false doctrine.
 4. When it is presented by some well-know, well-respected man.
- C. On the same token many false teachers will pose as truth seekers and peacemakers: They are the deadly wolves dressed like the sheep.
- D. For this reason we there is a need to know the difference between truth and error.
1. **"And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;" -- Lev 10:10**
 2. Preachers, elders and concerned members need to be able to just this!
 3. As slick talking and smooth tongued as the false teachers of our day have become, I still have the ability to "put the difference between the unclean and the clean."
 4. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
- E. Yes, the truth about error is that error often resembles truth.

IV. ERROR DESERVES TO BE REVEALED AND REBUKED.

- A. Many Biblical passages support such a statement.
1. **"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." -- Eph 5:11**
 2. **"This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;" -- Titus 1:13**
 3. **"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." -- Rom 16:17**
 4. **"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." -- 2 Tim 4:2**

- B. The rebuking of error must begin with the eldership, be heard from the pulpit and endorsed by the members.
 - 1. I am thankful for those in this area who are fighting the battles; thankful for the leadership in this most recent battle.
 - 2. But be assured the war is not over!

- C. However, error needs to be revealed before it can be rebuked.
 - 1. May we never attack based on assumption or hearsay.
 - 2. This does not mean that we must call and talk with a brother before we expose his dangerous doctrines.
 - 3. It does mean, however, that we need to be sure about what we are doing before we do it—the reputation of the church is on the line!

- D. Once revealed, the only thing left for concerned soldiers of the cross to do with error is rebuke it with love and fervency.

- E. Yes, the truth about error is that error deserves to be revealed and rebuked.

V. ERROR BREEDS IMMORALITY.

- A. Even since the time of Jeremiah, the Scriptures have closely connected false teaching with the sin of immorality.
 - 1. "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace." -- Jer 6:14
 - 2. "But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it." -- Jer 32:34

- B. Just look at the history of scandals involving the Roman Catholic church.
 - 1. They have far exceeded many others in perverting the true Gospel and preaching error to countless numbers.
 - 2. And on more than one occasion their priests have been accused of many immoral actions (sexual impurity; alcoholism, etc.)
 - 3. Friends, it is not a coincidence.

- C. Follow the logic for a moment...
 - 1. Error has no regard for the authority of the Scriptures and...
 - 2. Through the Scriptures God has legislated morality...
 - 3. Thus, error has no regard for God's legislated morality.
 - 4. In turn, those promoting and endorsing error have little or no regard for the morality that God demands of his children.

- D. How can we instill in our young people a sense of moral virtue?
 - 1. We can begin to rebuke error and earnestly contend for the truth of God.
 - 2. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." -- 1 Tim 4:12

- E. The truth about error is that it often breeds immorality!

VI. ERROR PREVENTS OBEDIENCE AND FAITHFULNESS TO GOD.

- A. My obedience to the law of God is dependent upon my knowing the will of God.
1. Since faith is my motivation for work: **"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."** — Gal 5:6
 2. And faith comes from understanding of the Word: **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."** — Rom 10:17
 3. Then my fulfilling God's law is dependent upon my knowing the Word.
- B. Erroneous teaching and false doctrines never reveal God's true will for mankind.
1. Thus, error prevents me from obeying God's will.
 2. A man who says to be baptized because you are saved rather than in order to be saved is false teacher...such false teaching will prevent the hearer from claiming Christ in baptism.
 3. A man who tells a denominational member that his salvation is a matter between that man and God rather than telling Him of Christ's church and the way into it is a false teacher...such false teaching will prevent the hearer from knowing and becoming a part of God's church.
- C. Still even after I have been saved there is the possibility of becoming unfaithful because of error.
1. A man who contends that anything other than the D, B and R of Christ is subject to man's opinion (such as worship, organization and modesty) is a false teacher....such error may cause a man to take these other things lightly and sin so as to be lost.
 2. Friends, the truth about error is that it will prevent us from doing God's!

Conclusion:

1. The truth about error is that it...Provokes and preserves religious division--Lacks respect for the authority of Christ--Often resembles the truth--Deserves to be both--revealed and rebuked--Breeds immorality--Prevents me from obeying God and living faithful to Him.
2. On final thought about error will serve to conclude our lesson: It is avoidable.
 - a. The way to avoid error is very simple and we even have an example in the Biblical record: **"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."** — Acts 17:11
 - b. Truth (a knowledge and understanding of it) is the only way to avoid error!
3. Has the error of denominationalism or incorrect thinking prevented you from becoming a Christian? You can overcome that today...you can become a Christian.
 - a. The truth is that God wants you to believe, repent, confess and be baptized.
 - b. We do not ask that you leave one denomination for another; nor do we ask that you leave one system of human opinion for another.
 - c. We simply ask that you will leave sin and let God add you to His church.
4. **"Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day."** — Psa 25:5