

The Keys Of The Kingdom

January 2016 - Vol: 3 Number: 1



Published By: J.F. Miller
Editor: J.F. Miller

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If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com. To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them sign up for their copy today. Use this link to join the mailing list. http://jfmiller.com/keys-of-the-kingdom/?page_id=1316 . May God Bless You. Jim and the StaffChanges

Evangelist Needed

There is a real need for a good man willing to start a new work out in Washington State. This preacher would need to be self supporting to start out. There is a couple already in the town of Ellensburg who would like to see the Lord's church established there that will be sound and follow the scripture. This will be a daunting task as the churches around the area have gone into apostasy. If you believe you are up to such a challenge please use the contact information below for more in site and information.

Thank you
Jim Miller

Contact Information

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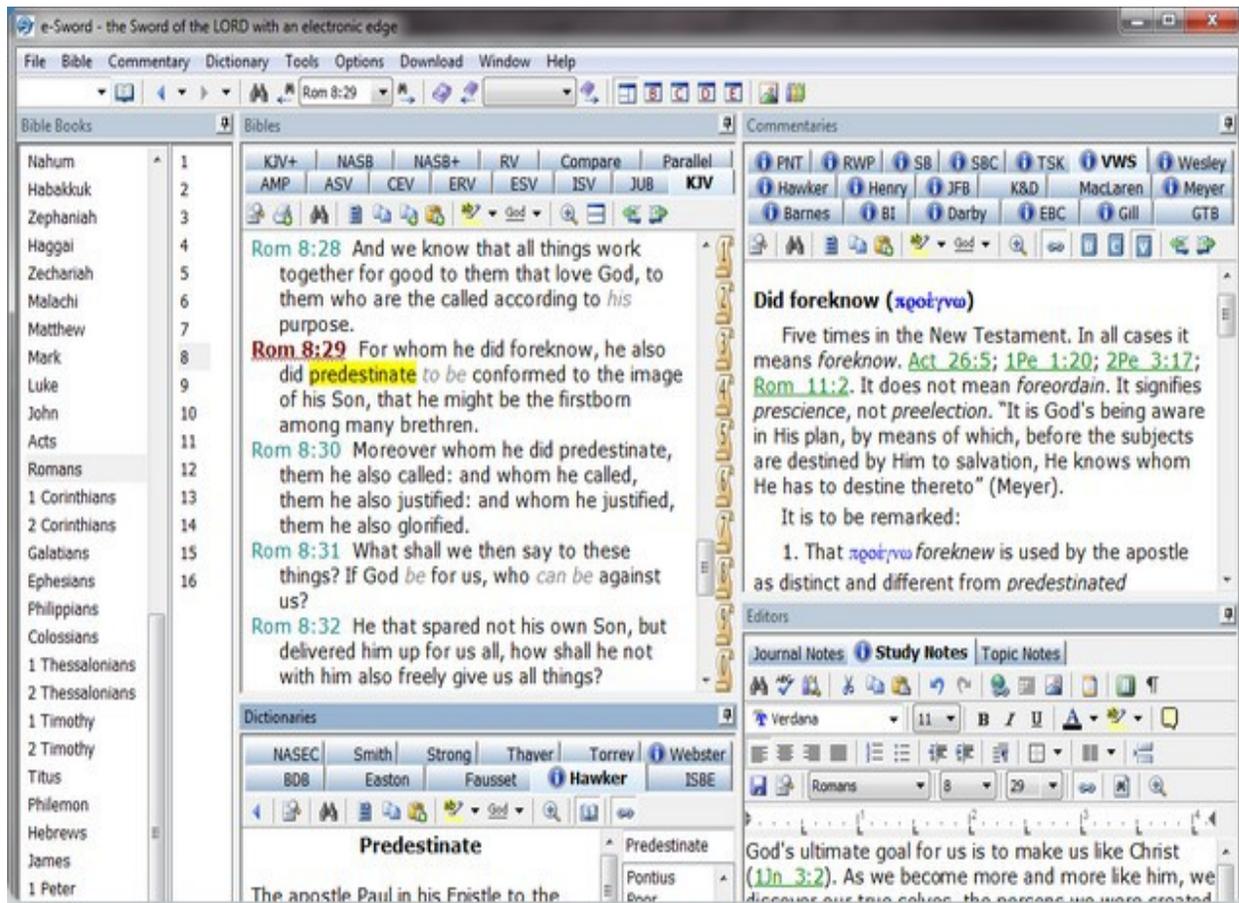
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(Qualities) When Searching For A Preacher

By Jim Miller
Gray, Maine

In one sense we are all called to preach by way of the great commission. However, I believe there are certain characteristics best fitted for the one who feels called to preach formally so to speak. I also believe that these characteristics can be found in Paul's teaching of Timothy.

Foremost the one who desires to take on this role needs to be aware of the awesome responsibility it carries with it. Paul in his letter to Timothy impresses upon this young preacher just how important it is to guard not only his life but the doctrine he shares from reproach (1 Tim. 4:11-16). *These things command and teach. 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. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* Those preaching the gospel today need to heed these words carefully.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 reveal characteristics that any good sound preacher would want to have or for that matter any class teacher or personal worker, etc. We would all do well to consider what is written.

Bold

Opposition and adversity must not silence the preacher of God. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that before arriving in Thessalonica he had been beaten and imprisoned at Philippi (Acts 16). Did persecution produce in Paul a hesitancy to preach or a watered down gospel? By no means: "We were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict." Let us all preach and teach with the same boldness, for "God has not given us a spirit of fear" (2 Tim. 1:7).

Certain Of His Convictions

Paul could be bold in the face of opposition because he was certain that his exhortation did not come from deceit or error. Here was a man certain of what he believed and why he believed it. There is great danger when a man begins to preach without being certain of the source of his convictions. Many a pulpit has been filled by one whose faith was his father's and whose sermon was straight from an outline book. Godly parents are a blessing and outline books can be helpful, but it is imperative that our convictions come from God and not man. That necessitates studying the word for ourselves and thereby developing a faith that is our own (Rom. 10:17).

Without Guile

Paul makes a claim that some gospel preachers could not make he claims that he did not try to use trickery, deceit or guile to make converts. If not careful, we may become so number conscious that we use ploys designed to have people baptized before they realize what is happening. Converts must be taught of God (Jn. 6:44f) and not tricked by a slick salesman.

Not A Crowd-Pleaser, But A God-Pleaser

Paul always behaved himself properly when working with brethren (1 Thess. 2:10); he was willing to forego his rights for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor. 9); he urged the brethren at Rome to be tolerant and seek to please one another (Rom. 14:1-15:7; esp. 15:2); in short, Paul did his best to get along well with others. But even though he sought good relations with others, at the same time, he realized that he must first please God. It is wonderful when we are able to please both God and man, but it cannot always be that way and, like Paul, we must make it a priority to please God first. Preaching the truth on divorce and remarriage, decency of dress and other unpopular subjects will likely please few men, but preaching the whole counsel of God will please the One we should desire to please. "For if I still pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

Avoiding Flattery

While it is true that Paul frequently used sincere praise and commendation in his teaching efforts, he never resorted to empty flattery that appealed to a man's pride. Never forget that the gospel must first humble a man before he can be

exalted. Proper teaching will show a person that the church does not need him, but rather, he desperately needs the Lord.

Not Covetous

When Paul went to Thessalonica, it was not a move motivated by thoughts of monetary gain. Though the Philippians sent him some help (Phil. 4:15f), Paul still had to work with his own hands in order to preach there (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:7-9), for he would not allow or require the Thessalonians to support him lest he be accused of covetousness. In this day when preachers are generally well paid, it can be a real temptation to become flattering men pleasers unwilling to risk losing financial support because of controversial preaching. Some resort to guile or whatever is necessary to gain "converts" so that the offering can be increased. The solution to such a problem is not discontinuing the support of gospel preachers (a scriptural practice - 1 Cor. 9:14), but having both the preacher and the church realize that no matter who signs the check the preacher must be a servant of God and not a hireling of the church. Churches should desire that the one laboring with them preach in such a way as to please God and not those providing his support. And remember: good preaching will not be enough to get a covetous man into heaven (1 Cor. 6:9f).

Balanced

One of the greatest challenges a preacher faces is maintaining a balanced approach in his teaching. This study has focused so far on strength, courage, boldness, etc. and there are some who seem to specialize in these characteristics. On the other hand, there are those who seem to manifest only the gentleness that is seen in the remainder of our study. What we need are men who are able to blend the two. Remember that it was possible for the same apostle to claim boldness and yet admit to the gentleness of a nursing mother.

Gentle

Paul and his companions did not arrive in town making the type of demands an apostle might be expected to make. (Some preachers I know would do well to read 1 Thess. 2:6 before their next gospel meeting.) They did not seek glory from men, but instead were as gentle as a mother nursing her children (NKJV & NASB). Boldness and gentleness are often difficult to combine, but we must make every effort to do so. Boldness does not justify ugliness; gentleness does

not necessitate weakness.

Giving Of Self

Why did the preaching of Paul and his companions have a great impact on so many towns? It may well have been the fact that Paul, Silas and Timothy offered more than the gospel - they offered themselves. If we would make those whom we seek to teach "dear to us" we would probably be more effective in our presentation. Preaching the gospel can never become simply a profession; it must be our very life itself. Our attitude must be: "I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Cor. 12:15).

Blameless In Conduct

Many can offer firsthand testimony regarding the damage done to a church when a preacher (or any other teacher) does not live in a manner consistent with his teaching. Paul, Silas and Timothy may not have met with great success everywhere they preached, but their work was never destroyed by their own wickedness. Right or wrong, people always judge the conduct of preachers more strictly and we need to be careful lest we destroy the effectiveness of our preaching by careless conduct. (Parents should also take a lesson from Paul and realize that they cannot teach their children to do things that they themselves are unwilling to do.)

Behaving Like A Loving Father

Like a father with his children, Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to walk properly before God. A good father teaches his children out of concern for them; he points out that obedience is for their own good. We must not be afraid to reprove and rebuke (2 Tim. 4:2), but it should be the kind of rebuke that a father concerned for the welfare of his children might offer. Let us make certain that when we reprove and correct, it is as one with fatherly love and not a vengeful malice.

The preaching of the gospel is a great work and there is always a need for more men who will follow the example of Paul (who followed Jesus). May God help us to become brave, fearless, truthful and frank, but at the same time, loving and gentle. When a congregation is searching for a preacher they would do well in finding a man with these qualities.

Footnote: Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the KJV Bible.

Church Websites

If you or your church needs a website to further the Lords work in your area contact me I can make it affordable for just about anyone. See some of my work by following these links.

<http://thescripturecache.com>

<http://graychurchofchrist.com>

<http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom>

<http://falsedoctrinesofman.com>

Contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com

Preachers For Pulpits



Cloyd Frock

Cloyd's Facebook Page offers a great resource for preachers seeking churches and churches needing preachers. Use the link below to visit his page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/466657760042906/>

Outline of the Book of Romans Part 7

Eric Farris
Freeport, Florida

The last article covered the important contrast of Romans chapters 7 and 8. We are going to now cover the rest of chapter 8. As we noted in the previous article, the MANNER which the Holy Spirit bears witness to man is thru His inspired teaching (cf. Heb. 10:15, Jer. 31:31ff).

We can KNOW that we are “children of God” if we have done what He has commanded us to do (Acts 2:38, 41,47). Notice WHO are children of God: *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).

Rom. 8:17 begins with “if”—If children, then heirs—this is so because we have been adopted by the Lord thru our obedience to Him (cf. “Abba, Father”- Rom. 8:15). The suffering of v17 can be explained in 2 Tim. 3:12 (to live “by the Spirit” is to “live godly”). This suffering, however, pails in comparison to the wonderful things the faithful look forward to. The next several verses speak on this subject, though there is some difficulty with them. If that thought stays prevalent in the mind of the bible student, the point is seen clearly enough!

The record says: *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body* (Rom. 8:19-23).

It has to be understood that Christians, presently, are the “sons of God” (Gal. 3:26-29); so v19 is not saying that this “relationship” is not attainable until the end. Rather, I believe it is the final, glorified state of the “sons of God” that is under consideration. Regardless of the ambiguity of certain portions of the text above, the last phrase of v23 confirms that our view is correct. There is no

discernable difference between the “creature” (vv. 19,20,21) and the “creation” (v22), for the same greek word is used. This “creation” is the Christian, the one that has been “born again” (Jn. 3:3-5, 1 Pet. 1:23); he has been made a “new creation” through the gospel (2 Cor. 5:17ff). Please remember, this does not come from some “direct operation”, but through learning and complying the pure word of God (Eph. 4:20-24, cf. Jms. 1:18). Since this new creation has already been “delivered” from spiritual corruption by having sins forgiven (initially- Acts 22:16 and continually- 1 Jn. 1:7,9), we understand this deliverance to be from the corruption that will come to man physically. The same thought is used by Paul in at least two places in the New Testament, notice : *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body* (1 Cor. 15:42-44).

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (2 Cor. 5:1-4)

So, we understand these difficult verses to be speaking of the hope (v24) we (Christians) have for the resurrection, which will occur when the Lord returns (1 Thes. 4:13-18). Verses 26-27 are difficult as well, but they can be understood! Most folks understand v26 to speak of the intercession that the Holy Spirit makes for man as he prays. Members of the church of Christ who advocate this do not believe that this teaches something the Holy Spirit does TO the saint apart from His word, but FOR the saint. I personally, do not mind if someone believes that, but I do disagree.

Notice some objections to the view stated:

#1- The text says that it is the Holy Spirit that groans (to make in straits)- Is He in distress?

#2- If this was an occurrence in the first century by the supposed “personal indwelling”, why did God NOT need this to know the mind of man previously?? In fact, God heard the “groanings” (same word used!) of Israel under the

bondage of Egypt (Acts 7:34). Jesus knew the mind of men He encountered (Ps. 94:11, Mt. 9:4, Jn. 21:17); He did not need for them to have an indwelling Spirit to do so!

#3- The view above has the Holy Spirit as the revealer of man to God, but the bible teaches the opposite. The Holy Spirit revealed the mind of God to man (1 Cor. 2:9-16) I believe, as Brother Franklin Camp did, that these verses speak of an inspired prayer that was taught those inspired men in the first century (cf. 1 Cor. 14:14-15, Jude 1:20-21). This view is in harmony with biblical teaching concerning the role the Holy Spirit played in revealing truth to man and teaching them (cf. Jn. 14:26, 16:13). The rest of the chapter could be summed up in one word: HOPE!

The Godhead is working for man, when man responds to the gospel in the obedience of faith (v28). Through humble submission (cf. vv. 9ff) to the gospel of Christ, man conforms himself “in the image” of Jesus. This is HOW we are “predestinated”; God had determined from eternity to save man when man humbled himself and responded to the terms of pardon in trusting, faithful obedience (cf. Eph. 3:11). This is not teaching the fallacy of Calvinism, for “the predestinated” are “the called” (v30); and God calls through His gospel (2 Thes. 2:14). That is HOW man is “called into fellowship” with Jesus (1 Cor. 1:9, cf. Col. 2:11-13). The phrase “all things work together for good” of v28 is equal to the phrase “if God be for us” of v31.

As we have already noted, God works for us when we trust and obey Him! None can lay charge in spiritual matters to those forgiven by God, for those sins have been removed by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 9:14ff, Rev. 1:5). They have been removed, never to be brought up again (Heb. 8:12). God justifies man when man complies with God (Mt. 7:21ff). Those in Corinth were said to be “justified” (1 Cor. 6:11) because they heard the gospel and obeyed it (Acts 18:8, cf. 1 Cor. 12:13). Paul mentioned earlier in the book that man is justified “in Christ” (3:24); The only way a man can get “in Christ” is “by faith” (Rom. 3:28, 5:1). Inspiration says that those in Galatia were “In Christ” when they acted “by faith” by being baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27)!

Man cannot condemn his fellow man when that man’s sins have been forgiven. In fact, nothing on this earth can separate man from God, but the actions (or lack thereof) of man himself! Man can choose to rebel against God, if he does, he removes himself from that glorious fellowship (Gal. 5:4, 1 Tim. 4:1, 1 Jn. 1:6); yet no other force on earth is able to remove the faithful from the blessings of His creator! (All scripture from the KJV unless otherwise noted)

Nero (Part 10)

Tim Bench
Abilene, Texas

The tragedy of Sporus' tortured life and self-inflicted death has been the center of much analysis for decades. Many have offered various rationales for his suicide AFTER the death of his tormenter, Nero...

“As the circumstances surrounding his suicide a year later under Vitellius reveal... he could not assume that he would necessarily fare any better under a successor to Nero, no matter how uncertain or cruel life with Nero seemed.”
from “Nero and Sporus”, David Woods, page 82.

Thus, Nero is one of the handful of rulers throughout history, including the likes of Adolf Hitler or Vlad the Impaler, whose deeds transcend time or culture, and whose names will be forever intertwined with their barbarism and evils.

“In both a historical and modern context, the reign of Nero bears much significance. Nero’s reign reflects the possible answer to some of the most terrifying questions in history, such as, what would happen if a mad-man with severe insecurities and a god-complex were to become the world’s most politically powerful individual?

But most of all, Nero bears significance in comparisons to modern day tyrants. His purges of the senate bearing a ghostly reminiscence of Stalin’s political purges. His lustful and over-indulgent lifestyle reflecting perhaps some of the monarchs of Medieval Britain. In short, Nero could be viewed by historians as a mirror of some of the world’s worse rulers yet to come. Perhaps best said by Mark Twain (the American writer) “The past does not repeat itself, but it rhymes”.

From “What is the Historical Significance of the Roman Emperor Nero?”, page 8, www.activehistory.co.uk.

“The barbarous acts against the Christians were worse than any they had previously endured, especially those committed by Nero. *Only a Satan-inspired imagination could have conceived them.* Before killing the Christians, Nero used them to amuse the people in his gardens. González (2010) writes, –Some were dressed in furs to be killed by dogs while others were crucified (p. 45). Foster observes, –The executions were turned into a cruel sport to amuse the crowds in the Emperor’s gardens. Christians were dressed in animal’s skins and hunted by

the Emperor's hounds (p. 69). Foxe (2001) also describes the horrible and excruciating persecution thus: – shirts stiff with wax were put on others and they were then tied to poles in Nero's garden and set on fire to provide light for his parties (p.12). Traditionally, Nero was believed to be the Caesar in whose reign Paul and Peter suffered martyrdom. Foster (1972) explains, – ...some were nailed to crosses – among them probably St Peter, ...St Paul who was in prison in Rome could not be crucified because he was a Roman citizen and so he was beheaded, this was during Nero's reign (p. 69)." from "Persecution and Martyrdom of Christians in the Roman Empire from AD 54 to 100: A lesson for the 21st century church" by Emeka C. Ekeke Department of Religious and Cultural Studies University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria.

"As Suetonius states, Nero craved immortality and undying fame. During the Middle Ages infamy was his lot. Medieval writers do not recall his achievements, such as rebuilding much of the city of Rome and liberating Greece, which, ironically, classicists now spotlight as they search for factors other than Nero's viciousness to explain the fall of the dynasty. In the Middle Ages, Nero is condemned as an impious emperor who cruelly and tyrannically persecuted Christians and others, and, finally powerless, took his own life in despair."

from "Nero, Emperor and Tyrant, in the Medieval French Tradition" by Glynnis M. Cropp, page 33.

"Nero ranks with Gaius for folly and vice, while his cruelties recall the worst years of Tiberius. Very effeminate in his tastes, particular about the arrangement of his hair and proud of his voice, his greatest fault was inordinate vanity which courted applause for performances on non-Roman lines. He neglected his high office and degraded Roman gravitas by zeal for secondary pursuits. Nero, like his three predecessors, was very susceptible to female charms. He was licentious in the extreme, even to guilt of that nameless vice of antiquity-love of a male favorite. His cruelty, both directly and through his instruments, made the latter part of his reign as detestable as the quinquennium had been golden. He loved the extravagant and luxurious in every exaggerated form. He was a weakling and a coward in his life, and especially in his death."From "Nero" at www.biblehub.com.

The Book of Revelation is in itself another matter of separate study, but a comparison of the social, economic, and political matters of the day, when coupled with Christianity's struggles, lead one to obviously speculate on this final book of the Bible. Revelation was penned by "John" from the Isle of Patmos (we are unsure if this was the Apostle John). Likewise, we are unsure of the date

of the book, most suggesting either the late 60s/early 70s AD or mid 90s AD. “According to the most widely accepted interpretation of the book of Revelation, the Emperor Nero, the Roman Empire, and the imperial cult in Asia Minor loom large in the symbolic foreground of the book, reflective of the conviction that John is addressing the historical situation contemporary to him.”

From “APPRAISING THE MYTH OF *NERO REDIVIVUS* IN THE INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION”, by Sigve Tonstad, Loma Linda University, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2, page 175.

“This mysterious book—whether written between 68 and 69, or under Domitian in 95—was undoubtedly intended for the church of that age as well as for future ages, and must have been sufficiently adapted to the actual condition and surroundings of its first readers to give them substantial aid and comfort in their fiery trials. Owing to the nearness of events alluded to, they must have understood it even better, for practical purposes, than readers of later generations. John looks, indeed, forward to the final consummation, but he sees the end in the beginning. He takes his standpoint on the historic foundation of the old Roman empire in which he lived, as the visions of the prophets of Israel took their departure from the kingdom of David or the age of the Babylonian captivity. He describes the heathen Rome of his day as "the beast that ascended out of the abyss," as "a beast coming out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads" (or kings, emperors), as "the great harlot that sitteth among many waters," as a "woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns," as "Babylon the great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth." The seer must have in view the Neronian persecution, the most cruel that ever occurred, when he calls the woman seated on seven hills, "drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," and prophesied her downfall as a matter of rejoicing for the "saints and apostles and prophets."

Recent commentators discover even a direct allusion to Nero, as expressing in Hebrew letters (*Neron Kesar*) the mysterious number 666, and as being the fifth of the seven heads of the beast which was slaughtered, but would return again from the abyss as Antichrist. But this interpretation is uncertain, and in no case can we attribute to John the belief that Nero would literally rise from the dead as Antichrist. He meant only that Nero, the persecutor of the Christian church, was (like Antiochus Epiphanes) the forerunner of Antichrist, who would be inspired by the same bloody spirit from the infernal world. In a similar sense Rome was a second Babylon, and John the Baptist another Elijah.”

From Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church*, Chapter VI, “The Great Tribulation”, see at www.ccel.org.

Let us speculate for a moment....”John” has fled to Patmos, likely in fear of his life, acutely aware of the fate of any “Christian” within Nero’s reach. Nero has massacred thousands of Christians in the most barbaric ways possible, has orchestrated the killings of both Peter and Paul, has wed a hapless eunuch, and is engaged in nothing less than what could be perceived as an attempted total and complete eradication of Christianity. John would have every possible motive to detest Nero as both a leader and as a human being. Thus, many suggest that John’s frightening writings (specifically of the “beast”) were based on and aimed at Nero, whom he would have every possible justification to view as such.^{8,9} Even if John was aware that Nero had died in 68 AD, we have seen that many were convinced that Nero would return to continue his extermination attempts, and many simply did not believe that Nero was gone. It makes logical sense to consider how John, a first century refugee from these horrors, both could have and possibly did view Nero and offered coded language (i.e. 666) to warn Christians of their environment.

1. “Gematria” is a Hebrew system of assigning letters for numbers.
2. For example, a 1st century spelling of Nero Caesar’s name in Greek would translate to NRVN QSR...
3. Resh= 200
4. Samekh= 60
5. Qoph= 100
6. Nun = 50
7. Vav= 6
8. Thus, Nero’s Greek name would equate to 50+200+6+50+100+60+200...
9. *Equaling 666 (Nero’s Latin title, spelled simply “Nero Caesar” and translated NRV QSR, would equal 616).*

We will continue with part Eleven next month.....

GOOD PEOPLE IN BAD CHURCHES

Dub McClish
Denton, Texas

Introduction

Numerous brethren have asked me what they can/should do about the liberal congregation of which they are members. When God announced the coming destruction of “Babylon,” He warned His people: “*Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues*” (Rev. 18:4). This warning applies to God’s people in the “Babylons” of every age and species, including the many apostate congregations of our time that have rebelled against Heaven. What can/should they do? The answer from Scripture is clear: “***Come forth, my people....***” Many good brethren have obeyed this warning and have left such corrupt bodies in recent years, but I believe thousands of unhappy saints yet remain in them.

“Come forth”—The Fellowship Factor

The Heavenly voice warned God’s faithful people to “come forth” because they must “have no fellowship” with Babylon’s sins. *Fellowship* refers to sharing in common or jointly participating with others. Those who stay in a liberal congregation are in fellowship with its errors. God has **never** approved of His children’s having fellowship with His enemies.

Zero fellowship permitted: “Some” fellowship with sin and error is not an option, when we are aware of the error. The consistent rule of Scripture is “**no** fellowship”: “*Have **no** fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*” (Eph. 5:11; cf. 2 Cor. 6:14–18; emph. DM). In these passages, both the Lord and Paul addressed fellowship with unbelievers, but the teaching is the same concerning apostate brethren:

Receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works (2 John 10–11; cf. 1 Cor. 5:9–11; 2 The. 3:6; emph. DM).

God’s Word knows nothing of the Rubel Shelly scheme of “Big F” and “Little f” “levels of fellowship”—the doctrine of “limited fellowship” (which apes the heretical Ketcherside/Garrett “Gospel/doctrine” dichotomy). Those who remain in a church bent on error violate the Lord’s “no fellowship” prohibition.

Contributing money on the Lord's day is one means of fellowship with a congregation. Contributors in a bad church help support false teaching from its pulpit, liberal missionaries, and all of the erroneous doctrines and practices of that church, even if they object to them. Liberal elders and preachers (and most Christian university administrators) pay little attention to verbal opposition. The one language they understand is **M-O-N-E-Y**. We cannot eradicate the current digression so many congregations now manifest, but it might be significantly slowed if thousands of objecting brethren would "come forth" from them and cease supporting them financially.

Besides their financial **fellowship**, good brethren who remain in a bad church also implicitly **endorse** the congregation's errors. All of the objections one might offer to digressive elders and preachers begin to sound hollow and insincere after awhile when one stays in spite of the doctrinal departures. Merely registering objections is insufficient. Verily, as long as one is a member of an apostate church he is endorsing its apostasy. **For this reason** John forbade extending any indication of encouragement or endorsement to false teachers; to do so is to have fellowship with their evil works (2 John 10–11).

"Come Forth"—The Danger Factor

The Lord stated a second significant reason His people must exit "Babylon": He was going to bring plagues upon her, which those—good and evil alike—who remained in her would also suffer. One dare not assume that God will hold only the **leaders** in today's "Babylons" responsible. While their responsibility is greater, their supporters are likewise culpable, and will suffer the same judgment rendered against their leaders. Even the apostles would have been "*rooted up*" or would "*fall into the pit*" (i.e., be lost) had they followed or supported erroneous leaders (Mat. 15:13–14).

Had Lot, his wife, and his daughters not fled Sodom, God would have destroyed them with that wicked city. The Lord urged their **hasty departure** to escape God's judgment (Gen. 19:12–17; cf. 2 Pet. 2:7). Likewise, the Lord would have His faithful ones to "*come forth*" from corrupt congregations to escape the "plagues" that God will surely visit upon them (Rev. 2:20–23; 22:18–19).

One who remains in an unfaithful congregation also runs the risk of becoming "desensitized" to error. Though at first he might strongly object to the departures he sees, by staying in such a church one may be lulled into

complacency toward them—the “boiled frog” syndrome. He may begin to rationalize the errors and to exalt sincerity over Truth.

Further Motivations to Move

Revelation 18:4 furnishes two reasons, but there are additional sound reasons why saints should flee modern “Babylons.”

- **To Support Truth and Righteousness:** One who remains in a digressive church not only supports error, but he robs God and His faithful people of the fellowship and support due them. Not only should one **not** want to support false doctrine, he should greatly desire **to support** only sound doctrine. As long as one remains in a liberal church, he robs God (and His faithful people) of time, talents, money, and every means of his support and endorsement. This reason alone should be sufficient to cause one to “come forth” from an apostate group.
- **To Save One’s Soul:** One should flee a liberal congregation for the sake of his own soul. Remaining in a “Babylon” church makes one subject to God’s eternal judgment against it. As already noted, although Lot objected to Sodom’s sins, had he remained in it he would have perished with its perverted populace. Similarly, for the sake of spiritual survival, every Christian who objects to the errors in his “home” congregation should leave it. We all need to be in a congregation that constantly urges us to honor God’s Word in everything we do. We need to hear error identified and refuted. These things will help us to serve Christ faithfully and reach Heaven at last. In a liberal church, not only are none of these found, but their opposites abound.
- **To Save One’s Children:** Parents of small children who remain in an apostate congregation are very unwise and short-sighted. They (especially fathers) have the responsibility to nurture their children “*in the chastening and admonition of the Lord*” (Eph. 6:4). Parents who stay in a liberal congregation fail in this duty, even if they teach their children correctly and provide a good example at home. Their influence will likely not be able to counteract the acceptance of “social” drinking, dancing, unscriptural marriages, theistic evolution, instrumental music in worship, fellowship with the denominations, worship innovations, and such like. Also, the “peer pressure” of other children will work against the parents. Lot lost at least two

daughters and their families in Sodom’s destruction. Although he urged, “*Up, get you out of this place,*” they had been so influenced by their surroundings that they refused his plea (Gen. 19:12–14). Lot sacrificed them by foolishly rearing them in Sodom. Some today are as obstinate as Lot—even if it means the loss of their children to error. They, as Lot did, continue to linger when they should have fled (vv. 15–16).

Otherwise good parents in liberal churches may at home point out the errors the children are encountering in “Bible” classes and worship assemblies, but eventually those children will figure out that their parents are being hypocritical to stay in such a church. If parents want their children to grow up with any semblance of strong convictions in the Truth, they dare not linger in a liberal congregation.

Excuses, Excuses

In spite of the numerous compelling reasons why Truth-loving brethren should have nothing to do with an apostate religious body, a large number of them continue to do so, offering various excuses.

1. **We Can Help:** “We don’t agree with what’s going on, but we hope we can correct these things by staying.” Admittedly, some congregations have not reached the “point of no return” in their digression. In such cases, those who are zealous for the Truth should stay and “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). However, when congregational leaders have obviously succumbed to liberalism, it is practically impossible to reclaim them. To them, those who criticize erroneous doctrine or practice are just pesky “trouble makers.” Most of the larger urban congregations are either well on their way to, or have reached, the “point of no return” doctrinally. Their leaders have taken a leftward course. As the consuming flame draws the moth, so the “*broad way*” that ends in destruction has enticed them (Mat. 7:13). They have money, power, and worldly ambition, and they roll over any who get in their way. One is terribly naive who believes that he can redirect them. To stay with them is to contribute to tearing down that which the Lord wants us to build. In doing so one only wastes effort, time, influence, and money on a lost cause—and will lose his soul in the bargain. The Lord’s command concerning hardened apostate religious leaders is: “*Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit*” (15:14).

Family and Friends: “Although I don’t approve of this congregation, I can’t leave my kindred and best friends.” We should all possess “natural affection” (Rom. 1:31). However, **all** other affections must be secondary to one’s affection for the Christ and His Word (Mat. 6:24, 33; 10:34–36; 22:36–37). We correctly appeal to members of denominations to come out of those sinful institutions, even if it means sacrificing family and friends. It is no less appropriate to appeal to brethren whose family ties and friendships bind them to digressive “churches of Christ.”

Too Much Invested: “I have been a member of this congregation for years, and I have invested too much money and time to walk away from it.” It is painful to lose investments, but it is sometimes necessary. Spiritual issues far outweigh mere material ones. That one is so concerned over money or time is a “dead giveaway” that the priceless treasure of Truth and one’s eternal destiny are not one’s priorities (Mat. 6:21). One whose house is in the path of a raging flood is a fool if he tells would-be rescuers he has invested too much time and money in it to leave. In both cases, these folk have **already** lost their “investments” **whether they go or stay**. The member of the liberal church has lost his “investments,” and by remaining in it, he compounds those losses. He had better be concerned with the far greater loss of his soul if he continues to support error and sin (Mat. 5:30; 16:26; 2 John 9–11).

Some cannot bear to leave behind the building their money and/or hands helped to build. A brother once asked me what he should do about the liberalism in the church of which he was a member, which had earned its well-deserved reputation over several years. He told me many sad details about their departures. I knew he had at one time been an elder there, but he told me he had resigned some time earlier because his objections were repeatedly ignored. I had assumed he agreed with the liberalism because he had continued to stay there. When I asked why he stayed he said that he (and some others) did not want to “give up” the building. He failed to comprehend that the liberals long before gained control of the building (as his resignation indicated). In such cases, it is folly to think that one is “saving the building” by staying.

A building is only a building. It can be replaced, but a soul that stays in a digressive church may be lost and never recovered—for the Truth or for eternity. As I would unhesitatingly urge a man to flee his fire-engulfed house

as a lost cause, so do I counsel brethren who remain in liberal-infested churches in their vain attempt to “save the building.”

2. **Fear of Division:** “I don’t approve of the corruptions and innovations I see in this congregation, but I might cause division if I leave.” One should be cautious and concerned about division, but one dare not favor a false “peace” or “unity” above Truth and godliness. Liberals have falsely accused many a devoted saint of “causing division” when all they did was stand for the Truth and object to unauthorized doctrines or deeds.

I confess to encouraging division **when the Truth is at stake**. Our Lord is “*the Prince of Peace*” (Isa. 9:6), but He rules with a “sword” that is often divisive (Mat. 10:34; Luke 12:51–52; Eph. 6:17). When some in a congregation refuse to submit to God’s Word and others are determined to do so, division is inevitable. The Lord anticipated such divisions, and they have His blessing (1 Cor. 11:19). **Those who have abandoned the Truth are the culprits in such cases**, regardless of accusations to the contrary. Brethren should not let the “church divider” charge intimidate them.

3. **Nowhere to Go:** “I don’t agree with the preaching and practices of this congregation, but where can I go?” This problem especially perplexes those who live where the only congregation designated “Church of Christ” has apostatized. In such cases, it is time to begin a new congregation. Brethren in hundreds of places did so a century or more ago when digressives forced the instrument and the missionary society into almost every congregation. Many sacrificed greatly as heartless heretics, operating as religious bullies, forced them to choose between compromising or leaving.

Those faithful spiritual ancestors understood the spiritual application of Solomon’s words: “*Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith*” (Pro. 15:16; 16:8). Some of these godly folk began congregations in their homes with only their own family unit as members, but they were determined to be faithful to God. The time has come again to demonstrate such grit and character for those in unsound churches who would “*worship in spirit and truth*” and maintain a “*good conscience*” (John 4:23–24; Heb. 13:18). While the modern innovations are more varied than those of the past, they represent the same kind of rebellion against New Testament authority. God-fearing brethren who live in areas where sound

congregations exist have **no excuse for remaining in unsound congregations**. They cannot sincerely ask, “Where can I go?”

4. **We Like the Youth Program:** “Many of the things being done in the church here are unscriptural, but it has a large group of children the ages of ours.” As I suggested earlier, having children should be a compelling reason for **leaving**, rather than for **staying in** a liberal church. What parents “gain” in peers and programs for their children they more than lose to the harmful influence, emphasis, and teaching, as already enumerated. It would be far better for one’s children to be reared in a congregation that provides wholesome doctrine and spiritual emphasis with only one or two others (or even none) their ages than in a congregation with a multitude their age where Scriptural teaching and example are absent. Remember Lot’s folly—and losses.

5. **No Perfect Congregation:** “I know this congregation has many problems in doctrine and practice, but so did the church in Corinth, and Paul still called it a ‘church of God.’” Liberals have so often repeated this prattle to justify their apostasies that some otherwise sound brethren now parrot it. Such is a classic illustration of comparing “apples” with “oranges.” True, Paul addressed the defective Corinthian brethren as “*the church of God*” (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), but this is hardly the end of the matter. The **principal aim** of Paul’s letters to them was to **correct those errors and their purveyors**. He believed—correctly—that the church was salvageable. Most of the Corinthians were penitent (2 Cor. 7:5–16), and Paul warned the few who were not that he would deal with them when he arrived (12:20–21; 13:2–10). Had the church refused his reproofs, he could not have continued in fellowship with them and been consistent with his own teaching (Rom. 16:17–18; 1 Cor. 5:11–13; Eph. 5:11; Tit. 3:10; et al.) or with the Lord’s (Mat. 7:15–16; 15:13–14; 16:6, 12; et al.). One who concludes that Paul’s address of the Corinthian church as “the church of God” somehow justifies a congregation’s apostasy is sorely mistaken.

Paul dealt with these errors as soon as he learned of them—before their perpetrators had become entrenched and had gained unbreakable control. Unlike many present-day error-plagued congregations, the Corinthian errors did not represent a long-standing pattern of liberalism and disregard for the Truth. Numerous faithful brethren have again and again exposed and rebuked the errors of modern apostate congregations, only to see them resolutely

march further into radicalism. Unlike the Corinthian church, there is no realistic hope that they will return to the Truth. Anyone who would appeal to the Corinthians as an excuse for apostasy and/or for remaining in an apostate church should be ashamed.

Conclusion

In appealing for good brethren to leave bad churches, I am not encouraging “sheep-stealing.” I am simply encouraging godly men and women to have the courage of their convictions and to make Truth their priority. Although it may require sacrifice, the Lord’s command to them is: “*Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues*” (Rev. 18:4).

Endnote

All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.

[**Note:** This MS originally appeared in a slightly different form as an “Editorial Perspective” in the February 2005 issue of *The Gospel Journal*, of which I was editor at the time.]

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Learning to Give an Answer (9)

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While *learning to give an answer* concerning our membership in the Lord's body (the church), we need to learn to give answers as to what we do in worship and why we do things the way we do. May we always turn to God's word for these answers and never depend on the authority of man to answer these questions.

Singing As Worship. What a joy it is to sing praises to God in worship. Eph. 5:19 instructs us: “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*” Also in Col. 3:16 we read, “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*” Let us remember that when we sing, we are singing **to the Lord**. We are not singing so other people will hear our beautiful voices, nor are we singing so others will be impressed with our ability to hit certain notes, or maintain a certain tempo. True, the scripture says, “*...teaching and admonishing...*” and “*...speaking to yourselves...*” but all the time we are doing so, we are singing praise **to the Lord**.

Many congregations of the Lord's church seem to have forgotten who we are adoring when we sing. When we remember the object of our worship (God), we would not think about the “entertainment value” of worship services. We would not be so quick to introduce into worship to God such things as pianos, organs, guitars, drums or violins. God said to “sing” and that is what we are to do. We have no need of “praise teams,” or professionally trained choirs. Why? Because God did not specify such! God specified each one of us to sing. The writer of the book of Hebrews has this to say, “*Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto thee.*” (Heb. 2:12)

There are some people that would have us to believe that Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 imply that we can use mechanical instruments of music. Really? We know that we are commanded to sing in worship. If the use of mechanical instruments of music is implied by these two verses, then the use of them becomes a command as well. Therefore, every one of us would be required to play an instrument of

music every time we sing to God. My friends, God has not left us without guidance on this. The inspired word from Paul's pen tells us what instrument must be involved in our singing: **the heart!** (More will be discussed on this subject in a later section of this study material.)

This all boils down to a matter of authority. Colossians 3:17 tells us "...whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." To do "all in the name of the Lord" means to do all things by the authority of Christ. We cannot act where Christ has given no authority; to do so would be sin. Since Christ has not authorized the use of instruments of music in worship; neither by direct command, implication, or example, we dare not go against his authority.

Praying As Worship. Have you ever thought about what a privilege it is as Christians to be able to talk to God? To be able to enter into a private place and pour our heart out to Him? (Matt. 6:6) *"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."* Prayer is probably one of the most neglected privileges that we have. There is a song that we sing that contains the words—*"...what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer..."* Do we really realize that? Do you know how to pray? The disciples of the Lord were concerned about this very matter. In Luke chapter 11:1 it is written: *"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."* Who wouldn't want to talk to God? The fact is, the more a person prays, the more comfortable he is with praying. Public prayer is of a different nature, but it is still being addressed to the Almighty God. Any Christian can pray in private, but public prayer is to be led by Christian men. A woman is never to usurp authority over a man. (I Tim. 2:12) *"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."* Therefore, public prayer (i.e. in our assemblies of worship, Bible study, etc.) should always be led by men, when men are present in those assemblies. Public prayer should not be an oration or an eloquent speech to God; rather it should be a praise of thanksgiving and an asking for certain things we are told to ask for in the scripture in the spirit of humility. For what should we ask? We need to pray for the needs of people. (Acts 12:5) *"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."* Paul wrote to Timothy concerning what we need to pray for in I Tim. 2:1-2—*"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; For kings,*

and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness, and honesty.” Another thing to pray for is stated in II Thess. 3:1-2 —*“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.* Again, we need to pray as we are instructed in Ephesians 6:18—*“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.* We need to pray for brethren who are working to see that the seed of the gospel is sown. (I Thess. 5:25) *“Brethren, pray for us.”* We need to pray for forgiveness (James 5:16) *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”* And always, we need to be thankful unto God. (I Thess. 1:2) *“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.”*

Giving as Worship. Perhaps one of the most misunderstood elements of Christian worship is giving. According to the scripture, each Christian man and woman is required to give. In First Corinthians 16:2 Paul gives the mandate for all of us to give of our means. *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come.”* A few things of note about this verse: Giving in worship is to be done on the first day of the week. This is why that we do not take up a collection on any other day than the first day of the week. Giving is to be planned (“lay by him in store”), and not to be done from the leftovers of a man’s pocket. Each of us should have planned to give from our prosperity that God has given us. We do not determine our giving from our “profit” but according “as God hath prospered...” The scripture makes no mention of using fundraisers as a manner to raise money for the Lord. (i.e. car washes, bingo games, bake sales, rummage sales, garage sales, etc.) Why? The collection is to come from Christian sources, and not from heathen. Paul told the Christians to give; not to collect money from non Christians. There is no set amount or percentage to give as there was in the Old Testament. Most of us have heard or read of the old system called “tithing.” Tithing was mandatory in the Old Testament. That meant giving a mandatory 10% of anything that God had prospered you. In the New Testament however, no such percentage is directed. We are to give as we are “prospered;” and it is up to the giver to determine how much he/she is willing to give. Giving must be done also with the proper attitude. Look at Second Corinthians 9:7—*“Every man according as*

he purposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

Preaching and Teaching. It is hard for some people to grasp the concept that “preaching and teaching” are worship unto God. However look at what is said of the actions of the early church in Acts 2:42—“*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers.*” If we are to follow the example of the early church we must also continue in the “apostles doctrine.” In order to learn what that doctrine is, we must be taught that doctrine. This action of being taught (or teaching) sometimes comes in the form of fellowship in a Bible class, or in the form of a homily (more commonly referred to as a “sermon”). Did you happen to notice other elements of worship in that same passage? “Breaking of bread {(Partaking of the Lord’s Supper) which we will discuss later}, and prayer (which we have already discussed), are common elements of worship, of which the people came together (in fellowship) to do.

Peter said, “*Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.*” (II Pet. 1:12) Folks, no matter how much scripture we know, and no matter how long we have known it, we need to be reminded constantly of the “present truth” lest we become apathetic like the Laodiceans, and the Lord should spew us out of his mouth. (Rev. 3) There is no better way to do that than to come together upon the first day of the week, and break bread, and have fellowship one with another.

The Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is a very solemn part of worship, and should be taken very seriously. When we break bread and partake of the fruit of the vine it is designed to be a memorial of the death of Jesus on the cross. First Corinthians 11:24 says, “*...this do in remembrance of me.*” (NOTE: More will be discussed in a separate section later in this study material about the Lord’s Supper, but it is important that we recognize the Lord’s Supper at this juncture as an act of worship that is done every first day of the week.)

Next month, Lord willing, we will discuss some things that we are to do in *service* to God vs. these things that we do in *worship* to God.

All scripture references are from the KJV except where otherwise noted.

“DEAVERISM” (Part 4)

Refuting Mac Deaver’s False Teaching On The Work of the Holy Spirit

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This month we continue to address Mac Deaver’s second proposition:

“The word of God teaches that the Holy Spirit directly helps (in conjunction with the word and never separate and apart from it) the inward man of the faithful child of God.”

Last month we provided thirteen things the Spirit is said do that the word of God also does and in every example we see there would be redundancy in work. However, as we have shown the Holy Spirit influences mankind through the word of God. As is the case, in conviction, conversion, or sanctification, the Holy Spirit indirectly influences mankind, only through the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit, through Luke, records: **“Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen”** (Acts 1:2). This is exactly what Jesus previously promised His apostles: **“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”** (John 16:13). In fact John 14-16 are chapters dealing specifically and immediately with what Jesus was promising to the apostles. These chapters are not promises for US, but for THEM. However, they are for our benefit, because the Holy Spirit guided the apostles in preaching the gospel, which we now have in writing – the Scriptures.

Jesus said: **“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life”** (John 6:63). Again we note parallel between the **“Spirit quickeneth (gives life)”** and **“the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”** Jesus, in one sentence, explains how the Spirit “gives life” – through **“the words I speak unto you.”** This is divine commentary on not only Acts 1:2 and John 16:13 in particular, but in how the Spirit influences in general – through the inspired teaching of Scripture. Associated with Spirit giving life through inspired words, is the Spirit giving understanding, wisdom, knowledge,

enlightenment, and light to the individual. In giving life to an individual, the individual also receives understanding, wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment, and light, and in the very same way – through **“the words that I speak unto you.”** In no other do such things come.

Regarding the concept of the Spirit “guiding” or leading. There are six instances in which such direct guidance is recorded. The first example relates to the preaching of Philip to the Ethiopian nobleman. When he sees the man in his chariot, Scripture tells us: “Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’” (Acts 8:29). We notice that the Spirit’s communication to Philip was clear, concrete, and in the form of a complete sentence. A second example, occurred when Peter saw the vision of the sheet lowered from heaven with animals in it. Scripture records: “While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them’” (Acts 10:19-20). Here we see two complete sentences. One sentence expresses knowledge of things beyond Peter’s senses (i.e. there were three men). The second sentence commands certain behavior. These were not just vague feelings.

Two examples concern the prophet Agabus. The first reveals: “And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar” (Acts 11:27-29). While this account does not reveal the specific words of the Spirit, the nature of the revelation indicates a great level of specificity. We note that the Spirit revealed to him there would be 1) “a famine”; 2) it would be “great”; and 3) it would span “throughout all the world.” The second came when Paul was returning to Jerusalem. The text records:

“And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’” (Acts 21:10-12).

In this revelation there is not only a complete sentence but the command from the Spirit to the prophet to use a prop—Paul’s belt, to illustrate what would happen to him. We see this is much more than a strong motivation within the heart of Agabus. It is clear communication in words.

Two final examples both concern Paul. While in Antioch, we learn about prophets in the church in that city. Of these prophets, Scripture records: “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” (Acts 13:23). Here the Spirit identifies men by name—“Barnabas and Saul.” Here the Holy Spirit commands their appointment for a specific work. These are words which were spoken, recorded, and understandable.

A final example, echoes what would be declared by Agabus. Paul relates: “And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me” (Acts 20:22-23). Here, once again, the Spirit uses clear words declaring that “chains” and “tribulations” await Paul. This was clearly not strong feeling, it was communication which could be recorded, written down, and clearly understood.

There is no question that the apostles were promised that the Holy Spirit would speak through them (Mark 13:11). There is also no question that the apostles were promised that the Holy Spirit would directly guide them (John 6:13). These promises were not to all believers—the means through which the Holy Spirit guides believers in general is through the word of God, the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17). The pattern of Scripture is that when the Holy Spirit did speak directly to believers it was in words, “which the Holy Spirit speaks” (I Cor. 2:13). A Person’s strong inclination of the heart, or feeling within himself, which does not follow this pattern cannot reliably be viewed as the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would “*convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*” (John 16:8). If Jesus promised it, that settles it! The Spirit must be convicting and converting people to Christ today; but how does the Spirit do it?

Many would attest that the Holy Spirit worked on their heart in some inexplicable way to convict and convert them. Often a “better felt than told feeling” or some strange experience is cited as evidence of a “Holy Spirit encounter” and proof of salvation. Does the Spirit work on our hearts in mysterious ways to convict and convert us? Is salvation predicated upon a feeling or a bazaar event that occurs in our lives?

Three thousand people were convicted (by receiving understanding, wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment, light, and life), and were converted (based on the information they had heard from the Spirit through Peter), and saved; then

added to the church on the first Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41,47). How did the Spirit convict and convert them? True, the Holy Spirit "fell" on some that day, but who? (Acts 2:1-4). Surprisingly to some, it was not the 3,000 who were converted but the apostles enabling them to preach the word of God in the languages of the people (Acts 2:7-11).

There are five statements in Acts 2 that show the Holy Spirit "fell" on the apostles, and not on the ones who were converted:

1. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). Grammatically, the antecedent to whom "they" refers is Matthias and the eleven (Acts 1:26) - the apostles. The text does not mention the Spirit falling on the multitude who came to hear the apostles speak.
2. All those upon whom the Spirit "fell" were Galileans (Acts 2:7). This was true of the apostles, but not so regarding the multitude (Acts 2:7-11).
3. "Behold, are not all these ..." (Acts 2:7). The word "these" translates the Greek word "houtoi" meaning "these men." This rules out all other converts since that also included women.
4. When asked, "Whatever could this mean?" Peter stood up with the eleven and spoke (Acts 2:14). Why were Peter and the eleven the only ones to stand and speak? Because the Spirit fell upon only the apostles guiding them in all truth and permitting them to speak in tongues (John 16:13; Acts 2).
5. When "cut to their hearts" by Peter's sermon, the multitude asked Peter and the rest of the apostles what to do (Acts 2:37). Why would the multitude have to ask what to do if the Holy Spirit was acting upon them in some mysterious, direct manner? They asked Peter and the rest of the apostles because the Spirit had fallen upon only the apostles.
6. Only the apostles are mentioned as being empowered to work miracles on this occasion (Acts 2:43). If the Spirit fell on others when it fell upon the apostles, why didn't these others work miracles, too?

If the Holy Spirit fell upon only the apostles on the day of Pentecost, how were the three thousand convicted, converted, and saved? By the WORDS of the apostles! The text says, "Now when they heard this," (Peter's sermon showing Jesus was the Christ,) "they were cut to the heart..." (Acts 2:37). Convicted by the Word, they were told what to do- repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). Those

who did so were saved and added to the church (Acts 2:47). This is the point Jesus makes in John 16 when He says:

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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” (John 16:8-13).

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit who would convict the world of sin righteousness, and judgment. But HOW would the Holy Spirit do that? Jesus had been discussing with His apostles the sending of “another advocate” (John 14:16, 16:7), one like Himself (which is the idea of “another”), who would guide His apostles into all truth (John 16:13), i.e., whenever they taught they would be supernaturally guided and aided by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would supply them the very words to speak and this how the gospel was spread. Jesus promised this supernatural assistance to only His apostles. Through the apostles teaching, the Holy Spirit would convict the hearts of men. Quite simply, the word, which the Spirit gave to the apostles did the convicting.

Paul suggested that every person is convicted through the Word. He stated, "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). He then added, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). One cannot believe, or be convicted, until he hears the Word! He is not saved until he obeys the gospel (Romans 10:16). "So then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

How can it be said that one is convicted by the Holy Spirit if he is convicted when he hears the Word? One is convicted, converted, and saved by the Holy Spirit when he hears, believes and obeys the Word, because the Word originally came through the Spirit. Peter said: “but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (1 Peter 1:21) Paul said, "Every scripture is inspired of God" (2Timothy 3:16). If the Word is inspired, it was given by the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 2:9-13; 2Peter 1:21).

This can be illustrated from a sermon preached by Stephen (Acts 7). Stephen

charged that some were guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit; they resisted the Spirit when they resisted the words of the prophets (Acts 7:51-52). Why? Because the prophets spoke by the Spirit (2Peter 1:21). Paul said in these last days that God speaks to “us” through His son (Heb.1:1-2). The “us” here is the inspired men, and it is the same way Christ spoke to His apostles after His ascension (Acts 1:2) – through the Holy Spirit.

The apostle Paul wrote: “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2 Thess.2:13-15).

Here we note that the Thessalonians were saved by:

1. Sanctification of the Spirit (speaking through the Paul) which is nothing more than being sanctified by the word (John 17:17), which Paul spoke by inspiration of the Spirit.
2. Belief in the truth of the Spirit’s message spoken through Paul, and also confirmed with miracles (1 Thess.1:5; Mark 16:20; Heb.2:3-4).
3. Being called by God through the gospel, which was preached by Paul and the apostles.
4. Standing firm holding to the traditions or teachings taught them, and whether spoken or in writing, it was still the gospel (“the faith”) they were holding to firmly.

If one rejects the Spirit when one rejects the words of the Spirit spoken by a prophet (or today, by a preacher), can it not also be said one is convicted, converted and saved by the Spirit when one believes and obeys the words of the Spirit which, today, are recorded in the Bible and spoken by preachers? We are taught: the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God! (Ephesians 6:17). This is the very point of the Spirit’s present day work. His influence is not something miraculous, mysterious, supernatural, and neither is it done directly to the individual. It is through the Word of God the Spirit provided which is able to save souls (James 1:21). To reject the word is to reject the Spirit, and vice versa. Today, men are convicted, converted, and saved by the Spirit-- not in some mysterious, miraculous way - but by the preaching and teaching of the Word. We do not have to trust our salvation to a feeling. We have the assurance of God through His Word when we obey His Word.

Have you been convicted, converted, and saved by the Holy Spirit? You can answer "yes" only if you have believed and obeyed the commandments of God as found in the Word of God – the Scriptures!

Review of Robert Waters' Teaching on Adultery Part I

Howard Denham

I. In an article titled “Adultery: The Biblical Definition and a Biblical Conclusion,” Robert Waters affirms a quite strange and strained definition for adultery that seeks to remove the sexual aspect from Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, as well as their parallels (<http://www.totalhealth.bz/adultery.htm>).

1. After stressing the need to define terms properly (a sentiment with which we should all certainly agree), he proceeds to violate almost every maxim of definition in setting forth his new view of adultery.

2. He states: “First, we must establish how we are going to arrive at a definition. Are we going to allow men who purport to be scholars to define the word adultery, or should be {sic} look to the scriptures? Not every one agrees that using scripture, rather than scholars, to define a word is a preferable method. Those disagreeing with this approach will, no doubt, go with the ‘believe the scholars’ philosophy when seeking for a definition of the term adultery. However, those who seek the truth soon realize that the influence tradition has had on scholars has tainted the view of some as they attempted to define the term adultery” (p.1).

3. It is an amazing thing that brother Waters in one stroke tries to set aside the monumental amount of evidence from the “scholars” that directly opposes the novel view he proposes for the meaning of adultery! One can be certain that he would not resort to such an attempt at poisoning the wells, if he were fully convinced that the weight of their evidence actually supported his case!

4. I suspect that he frequently uses English and Greek dictionaries, among many other references, to define many terms (e.g. baptidzo, poimaino, psallo, et al.). He would not only use their materials in support of his novel theory on adultery, but would trumpet the conclusiveness of the evidence on that point. But, that’s the rub! The crushing amount of the evidence of those “purported to be scholars” in the fields wherein they are credentialed (linguistics, language, and grammar) is decidedly opposed to his notions, which means that he must find some way to dismiss them. They also are indeed credentialed scholars in their respective fields, despite how he may disparage them.

5. He does not engage them on their level, so he dismisses them “out of hand” by concocting a false dichotomy that arrays their works against the Scriptures, which is reality is his view of the Scriptures. As the latter supports his presuppositions on MDR, then he arrives at the conclusion that the dictionaries, lexicons, word studies, Greek and Hebrew commentaries, et al. must be wrong and rejected on the meaning of the term! The grammarians, lexicographers, and linguists simply do not have the inside track that Waters claims to have through the Scriptures on the defining of the term, as though they have never looked at and considered the very texts upon which he attempts to rest his case!

6. Fascinatingly, he thus would make his own view a tradition that he would array against what he calls the “traditional view” of the authorities! The loaded language seems designed to put his scholarship above theirs and to supplant their diligent studies with his incomplete and self-contradictory “research.”

II. Thus, Robert launches into the fallacy of special pleading by asserting: “The Bible is not a dictionary, thus we should not expect it to define a word in the same manner as would a dictionary. The Bible is the word of God composed of various books and letters. In defining the term adultery, we must study and compare various passages of scripture. This is the only way to ensure an accurate, scriptural definition” (p.1).

1. Really? So we must jettison all of the dictionaries, lexicons, and word studies in which their writers have already considered these very same passages that Waters would find to be so definitive in defining the term?

2. I wonder if brother Waters has ever used Thayer’s Lexicon or BAG to define a term. Does he own a set of Robertson’s Word Pictures? He certainly has tried to use Thayer and Robertson in some of our discussions.

III. Waters next writes: “As is often the case, a word may have more than one definition. Some, for example, would say that adultery is nothing more than, ‘The act of sex a married person has with the spouse of another.’ To believe this one would have to be ignorant of or deliberately ignore a number of scriptures that contradict such a definition. The scriptures reveal that the word adultery is used to describe different actions committed by an individual or group. But the result is always an action contrary and detrimental to the covenant known as marriage. The narrow definition of the word adultery that some espouse is merely effort to defend traditional error” (p.1).

1. Notice, folks, how Waters defines “adultery” in a more constricted way than the dictionaries and lexicons actually do in order to attack it. He says that someone may define the word to mean “the act of sex a married person has with the spouse of another.” Well. Some may define it as such, but this definition is not given in the lexicons and dictionaries. Some might define “adultery” as “a blue sparrow with a green and yellow crest.” But that doesn’t make it right or give authority to alter the denotative meaning of the term to fit a preconceived view of the text.

2. Waters needs to address the real point he is attempting to attack rather than inventing a definition that the dictionaries and lexicons do not give. They define adultery succinctly as “sexual intercourse by a married person with someone other than his or her spouse.” Whether the other party to the adultery is married to someone else has no real bearing on whether or not the activity is adulterous, but Waters, it would seem, would have us to believe that such is the “traditional” view of the meaning of the term by the linguistic and lexicographical authorities!

3. He thus invents a faulty definition that he imputes to the reference works and then proceeds to beat up on his straw-man as “traditional error.” There is nothing “traditional” about it. He invented it himself!

4. Yet, here he goes yet again: “The narrow definition of the word adultery that some espouse is merely effort to defend traditional error.” Yet, where is an example wherein anyone has asserted the definition that he is specifically addressing in this paragraph? It’s quite easy to refute a position that one just makes up!

IV. Waters, to begin advancing his own view, turns to Jeremiah 3:9, which reads: “And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks” (KJV).

1. He then observes: “This passage tells us that ‘she’ (God’s people) committed adultery with stones and stocks. These things were party to the sin. When we understand the sin, we will understand adultery as it relates to the present marriage, divorce, and remarriage controversy” (p. 2).

2. There you have it folks! Adultery is really the practice of idolatry in Matthew 19:9, because that is what Jeremiah is referring to in Jeremiah 3:9! It all adds up! So “whosoever puts away his wife...and marries another commits idolatry, and whoso marries her when she is put away commits idolatry.”

3. But, interestingly, that is not how he's going to twist the text. He writes: "A covenant was made between the nation of Israel and God. Israel agreed to abide by the terms of the covenant and God promised to bless them. The stones and stocks were the objects to which God's wife (Israel) gave its affections. The foreign object that adulterated the relationship served to replace God. God divorced Israel and the relationship He had with them ceased to exist. There was no sex involved yet adultery was committed! Therefore, if anyone tells you that, 'adultery is nothing but a sex act,' you may want to refer him or her to the scripture noted above" (p. 2).

4. Robert writes as though he is totally unaware that there is both a literal and figurative use of the words for "adultery" in the Old and New Testaments.

5. He also seems oblivious to the simple fact that the figurative use draws upon the literal meaning, by virtue of the nature of metaphorical imagery, for its picturesque and vivid force! If he would spend more time reading the reference works rather than off-handedly trashing them, he would be aware of that fact. Instead, he tries in a very convoluted way to get around the problem he has here with figures of speech.

6. Yes, indeed, Israel was married to God spiritually, and Israel committed adultery against God spiritually, and God divorced her spiritually. Now as the imagery corresponds to the MDR issue in the way Robert claims, then it follows that a husband and wife must not really, literally married. It is only a figurative relationship. They only think they are. They are also not really divorced either. They are only spiritually divorced. They naturally then are only figuratively remarried to other spouses as well. Thus, it is only spiritual, figurative adultery that they can be accused of committing. Such is the absurd consequence of Waters' position by definition!

7. The simple fact is that literal marriage mirrors the spiritual relationship that existed between God and Israel just as does the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church (Eph. 5:23-33). Robert is trying to force upon Matthew 19:9 a figurative meaning, which he cannot sustain from the context. Further, if the adultery is to be interpreted figuratively, then so must the marrying, divorcing, and remarrying! Let us recall the axiom, "What proves too much proves nothing!"

8. It is the fact of the literal use of the term, which is its principal meaning, which gives the figurative metaphor its vividness and vitality. Knowledge of basic linguistics would have prevented brother Waters from confounding and

conflating the two. Metaphors, which are abstractions by nature, arise from the concrete use of terms reflecting reality. The words “stones” and “stocks,” btw, refer to the idolatrous worship of the Canaanites. The reference to them shows the metaphorical nature of the text in question.

9. But, also consider, folks, the methodology of Waters, who taking a passage (Jeremiah 3:9) that is remote contextually from Matthew 19:9 seeks to superimpose the meaning of the former upon the latter text! Why not conclude from such an approach that the only scriptural baptisms that can ever be performed are in the Jordan River at flood-time, because that is where Naaman was dipped?! Why not also bind seven dunkings as essential for New Testament baptism as well? In fact, there is more evidence in favor of such conclusions than Robert’s on MDR, as at least literal immersion is involved in each and John the Baptist, as well as without doubt the disciples of the Lord while near that region, baptized in the Jordan River!

V. Robert rambles on, oblivious to the distinctions that exist between literal and figurative meanings for terms. He states: “Some, in an attempt to defend the traditional definition, may argue that adultery in the passage under study is spiritual adultery. But the sin in view here is marital adultery (Jeremiah 3:14), a sin that was an act of unfaithfulness to the marital vows; even though sex was not involved. Today, a person can commit adultery against their spouse in exactly the same way...without sex being involved. Virtually all admit that adultery is committed by ‘putting away’ and remarrying (Matthew 19:9). Even those who are not capable of having sex are able to commit adultery in various ways, namely by simply being unfaithful to their spouse – acting as if the marriage does not exist and taking up with another” (p. 2).

1. It seems he tries to pull a quick one here. Read his statement again: “Some, in an attempt to defend the traditional definition, may argue that adultery in the passage under study is spiritual adultery. But the sin in view is marital adultery (Jeremiah 3:14), a sin that was an of unfaithfulness to the marital vows; even though sex was not involved.” Is Robert to have us to believe that God was literally married to Israel? Yes or No. If no, then his entire contention falls apart!

2. Clearly, the text is figurative in nature. Was the land, for example, literally, physically defiled? Or is Jeremiah speaking in a figurative way to describe the scope of the nation’s sins?

3. Is Waters here applying the phrase “the traditional definition” to the ersatz notion he floated earlier as to adultery involving a married partner having sex with the spouse of someone else? That itself is disingenuous.

4. He also tries to equate adultery with violating one's marriage vows by virtually any means or in any manner, including in nonsexual ways.

5. What about marriages where no such vows are even taken, as in some cultures? Are the people not married, according to Robert, because no specific vows are recited or even intended?

6. Or what of marriage arrangements that have no obligations civilly or socially proscribed for either marriage partner under the customs of the land? Since it is there are no actual vows involved in such arrangements, does it therefore follow that neither party in such could ever be guilty of adultery despite how many times they may divorce and remarry?

7. Notice also how he defines "unfaithfulness" itself – "acting as if the marriage does not exist and taking up with another"! Waters view of this "unfaithfulness" is clearly subjectively based. What is a man who can longer have sex going to "join up with" another woman for – to play tiddly-winks?

8. Yes, you may have folks marry who have lost the ability through injury, illness, or age to have sex, but Jesus' words in Matthew 19 are designed to deal with the situation that He was facing with the Pharisees, who naturally assumed that remarriage meant having sex with one's new spouse. In fact the very terminology used anticipated that idea, and a thorough study of the Greek text would bear that out.

9. Furthermore, the very nature of Jewish marriage entailed the obligation of sexual intercourse and placed the burden for making certain that such was done even to the satisfaction of the wife was upon the husband. The principle of onatah (a word euphemistically referring to the woman's sexual satisfaction) was held as binding for a legitimate marriage relationship. The Jewish ketubah, or marriage contract, thus went so far as to expressly specify how many days each week he was obligated to have relations with his wife based on the nature of his employment.

10. That was an essential part of the Pharisees' motivation in raising the question they did to begin with in Matthew 19:3. John the Baptist had condemned the actions of Herod and Herodias as unlawful, a fact that flew in the face of the view that permitted divorce for any cause as permissible. Now Jesus, who was in the same region wherein John had been beheaded for his stand, is now confronted by the question of Matthew 19:3 on that very point. He

addresses the matter from the perspective of the people of His day, their own practices and ideas and shows the fallacies of their thinking. He simply as a matter of course presumes that when one divorces and remarries he is going to have sex with his new spouse. His point is also just as simple that such, when done not on the proper grounds of fornication, involves one in committing adultery.

11. This also answers the fallacious statement that the act of putting away is the adultery. Jesus does not say that! He says that the one who does these things without having the proper grounds “commits adultery.” Each time he cohabits with the new woman he literally commits adultery. Jesus also shows that the adultery follows from the combination of the two actions – the putting away + the marrying of another. [NOTE: It should also be noted that Waters makes an unjustified distinction between putting away and divorce. He seems unaware that putting away in ancient societies, including Israel, was one means of divorce, and the terms for such action are often translated “divorce” by language scholars, many of whom who “have no dog in the fight.”

12. The act of divorce itself is violation of the universal intention by God that marriage be a lifetime arrangement. Given Robert’s definition of adultery, one does not even have to remarry to commit it, just divorce! That is what his doctrine implies. Yet he added in his last sentence “and taking up with another,” which shows a bit of doctrinal schizophrenia on the matter. Is it the divorce alone or the combination of the two acts? At any rate, he contends that the adultery is but a one time thing, which also runs contrary to the syntax of Matthew 19:9.

13. Also, consider Matthew 5:32a, which states that “whosoever puts away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery.” How can that be, given Robert’s definition of adultery? The man is the one responsible for her being separated from him. She was not being unfaithful to him. He is being unfaithful to her. Now, Robert will quibble that when she marries another man and thus “takes up with him as though” she is no longer married to the first man that is when she will commit adultery, BUT according to his own view of the divorce the first marriage no longer exists at the very point the woman was put away. There is then no way that adultery as “unfaithfulness” to the marriage vows, as Waters has theorized, can be ascribed to her. In fact, even in Matthew 19:9 the remarriage or “taking up with another” as though the marriage no longer exists takes place, according to Robert, after the marriage does in fact no longer exist! For him to equate the remarriage with the latter part of his definition, which is his only recourse, he must admit that the divorce not for fornication did not really sever the original marriage, and thus he is also back to the literal definition of adultery as a sexual sin committed when a married

person has sexual intercourse with someone other than his or her spouse.
Surprise!

14. Notice also the absurdity of the false dichotomy he seeks to present between “sexual adultery” and “marital adultery.” The very word “adultery” relative to marriage evokes the idea of sexuality! In fact, as we have noted, it is the literal, sexual aspect of adultery that gives vividness to the use of the term in its metaphorical sense. That is not to say that the adultery committed by Israel against God was sexual in a literal way, but that the fact of the sexual aspect of adultery in literal marriage gives the text of Jeremiah 3:14 its force and vitality!

15. Israel then is portrayed as a whore or harlot wandering the countryside sharing her sexual favors with the pagan deities, particularly those of the Canaanites as indicated in the reference to “stones” (Baal worship) and “stocks” (the asherah or Astarte or Ashteroth worship). The use of the term “adultery” paints quite a picture of the nation’s infidelity to God. It does not follow from such use of language that “marital adultery” therefore is non-sexual. The very imagery Jeremiah uses hearkens to the fact that it is sexual in its literal force.

VI. Next, Waters attempts to alter the meaning of adultery in Matthew 19:9 by appealing, of all things, to Mark 10:11!

1. He thus quotes the latter text and states: “This Scripture does not agree with the traditional definition of adultery. Jesus says that adultery is committed against the previous spouse and not with the second woman he marries! We are compelled, therefore, to reject the traditional definition in favor of the Biblical definition. This Scripture makes it clear that adultery includes the breaking of a covenant. But do not confuse the word breaking with the word destruction. One may break the terms of a covenant; yet, if there is repentance and forgiveness, the covenant remains intact. A marriage is ended, destroyed, over, when one or both parties have legally declared the marriage to be over. The Jewish Law and the law of our land require a ‘bill of divorcement’ or divorce certificate. When one who is divorced, and therefore ‘unmarried,’ is unable to resist sexual temptations, they may marry another (1 Corinthians 7:8,9)” (p. 2).

2. What Waters is hinting at but not stating is his assumption that a civil divorce, regardless of the cause, implicitly severs a Matthew 19:6 marriage bond. He cannot prove that, but it is essential to his case. He is implying that because the adultery of Mark 10:11 is ascribed to the man as being “against” the first wife and not the second, then it must be the case that adultery is used in another sense than that of the literal, sexual one. [NOTE: Again, remember Robert gave an

earlier definition as a straw-man that he calls the “traditional error,” which itself is inaccurate to begin with back in his fourth paragraph.]

3. His unstated premise in this “argument” from Mark 10:11 is: there is no existing marital relationship between the man and the first woman at the point of the adultery because of the act of divorce. He is implicitly asserting that the first woman is no longer his wife in any meaningful sense at all. Does he seek to prove that? No, not in the least! Yet, it is essential to his case and the attempt to redefine adultery in a non-sexual way.

4. But here’s also where he is hung-up, because at the point of the divorce, given his position, then and there the covenant is destroyed. But, the text does not say that “whosoever puts away his wife commits adultery against her” or “destroys the covenant against her,” as he would have it to mean. It says, “whosoever puts away his wife AND MARRIES ANOTHER commits adultery against her.”

5. If he equates the adultery with the act of putting away plus the act of remarriage as he did earlier, then the adultery must occur AFTER the act of putting away itself or else “and” does not mean “and.” According to his doctrine, the covenant was destroyed by the divorce, which then, as per his perversion of 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (which is addressed actually to those who have never been married and which conveniently overlooks verses 10-11 which was addressed to those who “are married,” btw), and it is the destruction of the covenant that is the adultery! Thus, Robert meets himself coming! So, Robert must now reverse himself and contend that the adultery does not have anything to do with the remarriage, but that is obviously not the case as seen above! The simplest thing to do is to reject his eisegesis, accept the proper literal definition of adultery, and rightly conclude that a civil divorce for any cause does not necessarily sever a Matthew 19:6 marriage bond!

Look for Part 2 next month

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In our world, everyone is searching for something. If you are searching for answers to questions regarding God, Jesus, hope, happiness, faith, life after death, good and evil, the church, the Bible, God's plan for you, or Jesus' love for you, the answers to these can be found in this series of programs.

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