

# *The Keys Of The Kingdom*

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**May God Bless You.**

**Jim and the Staff**

# Editor's Notes

By Jim Miller  
Gray, Maine

Hello, welcome to the May issue of TKOTK. Brother Post is facing some challenging times and is going to be taking a break from writing for a few months.

We hope you are all enjoying and learning from our writing efforts. We also want to remind you that if you have questions or comments just contact us and we will answer you as quickly as we can.

## ***Teaching and Preaching Truth***

The simplicity of God's word for all.

Jim Miller  
Gray, Maine

*Heb\_5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

*Gal 1:6-12 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Oh, that every Preacher, Teacher, Elder and Christian would have this attitude

today. We can clearly see those who have chosen to go off and follow the heresy of men and Satan. Listening to smooth words of false comfort. Paul makes it abundantly clear these people are accursed. He goes on to give warning that these folks are following a false doctrine not of God. Yet still today too many people are drawn away and lost to Satan's hell because they seek their own way rather than God's way. Jesus said He is the way the truth and the life and still men seek an easy way out of sin and misery other than repentance.

Too many Preachers, Teachers etc... seek to please men or seek God's glory for themselves, and this is shameful. We have to ask ourselves as Christians is what we are being taught really from God or is it something man made up, then sought to justify by twisting scripture. One of my favorite passages in the New Testament is to study.... *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* (2Ti\_2:15).

So many are led astray today because they fail to study and therefore do not know if what they are taught is truth or not. It is dangerous to assume that just because some preacher or teacher opens his bible and reads from it that he understands any better than you what it says. But, you say he is the preacher or the teacher he is supposed to know. Blind trust in man will be your downfall.

Ask yourself, if I do not know what the scriptures teach then how am I to teach others? Rest assured that if those of the first century could understand what was taught then you can also. *For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.* (1Co\_14:33).

We like Paul should be willing and able to say.... *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* (Rom\_1:16). Therefore this requires us to read and understand the plain simple truth taught in God's word. You must remember it is man that tells you that you can't understand the word Not God. How loving would God be if He gave us instructions we could not follow or understand?

Paul goes on to say in Galatians six verses one through eight.... *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man*

*prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

Now let me ask you, if you have not studied how will you know how to come to the aid of those caught up in error? If you have not studied what will keep you from getting caught up in that same error? Paul's warning to the Galatians again is clear though we are to bear one another's burdens we must also be able to withstand the error of those whom deceive themselves. Maybe today more than ever has the deception of Satan been so readily accepted and embraced. Yet we will all reap what we sow. That is why Paul also said... *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* (Gal 6:9-10). By heeding the words of Paul as the Galatians did we can be assured that our lives will be pleasing to God.

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

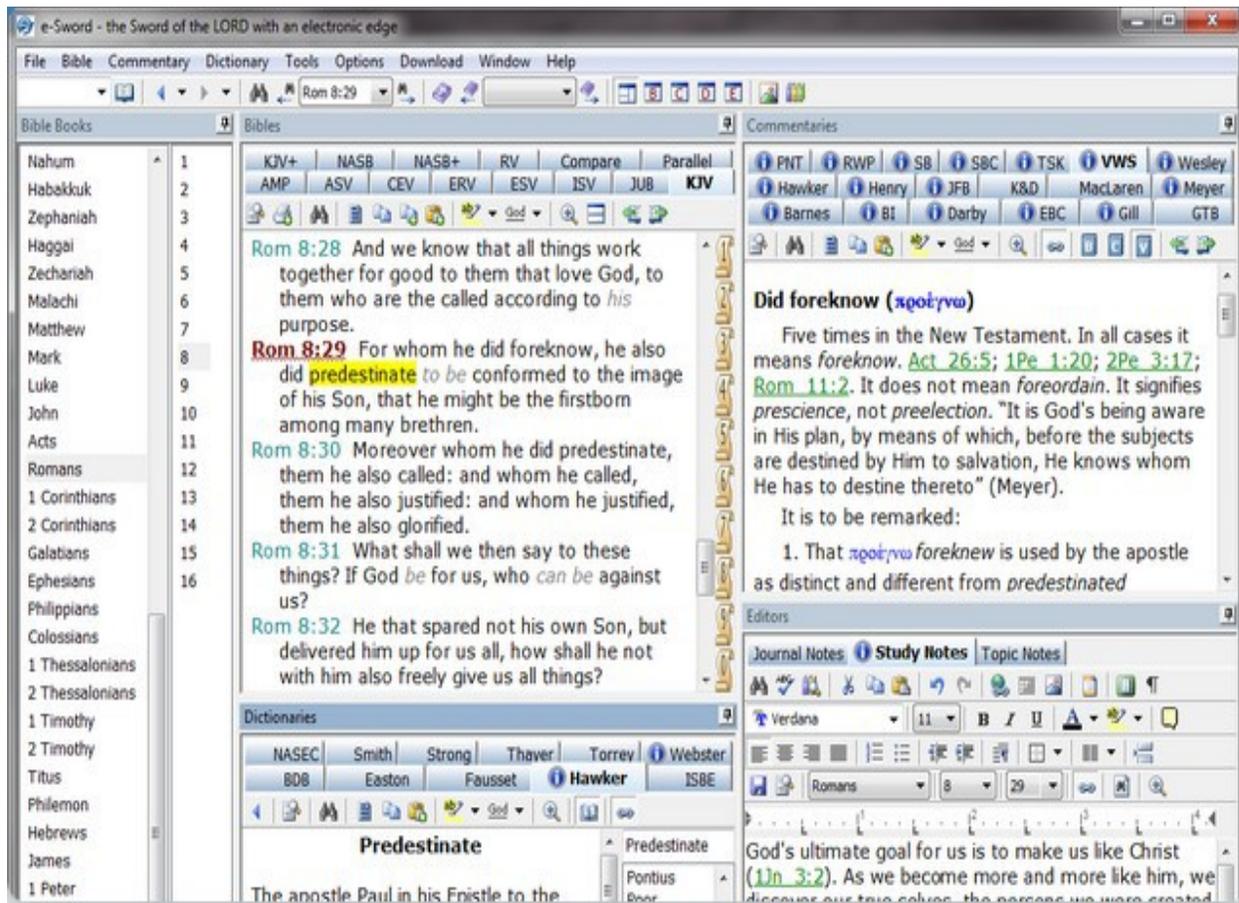
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*Cloyd Frock*

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## Purgatory Pt. 3

Tim Bench  
Abilene, Texas

Tetzel's own words...."Indulgences are the most precious and sublime of God's gifts. This cross (pointing to the emblem) has as much efficacy as the cross of Jesus Christ. Draw, near, and I will give you letters duly sealed by which even the sins which you shall hereafter desire to commit shall all be forgiven.

I would not exchange my privileges for those of St. Peter! I have saved more souls with my indulgences than he has with his servants. There is no sin so great that indulgences cannot remit. And even if one should, which is doubtless impossible, ravish the holy Virgin, Mother of God, let him pay, only let his pay well for an indulgence, and all shall be forgiven him!

Ye priests, ye nobles, ye wives, ye maidens, and you young men, hearken to your departed parents and friends who cry to you from the bottomless depths. 'We are enduring a horrible torment', they scream, 'a small alms from you would deliver us. You can give it now if you will'. Thus they cry to you from purgatory.

The very moment that the money clinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory and flies free to heaven. Now just pay off, o senseless people! Almost like the beasts who do not comprehend the grace so richly offered. This day heaven is on all sides of you. Do you now refuse to enter? When do you intend to come in? This day you may redeem many souls."

from "Indulgences And Other Catholic Heresies" by Frank Puckett, 8-11-1949, Gospel Guardian.

No greater falsehood, lie, or deception has ever been foisted upon supposed followers of Christ than the heresy of "Purgatory". Let us briefly examine two primary reasons why this belief, concocted, developed, and promoted by the Catholic Church, is and has been apostasy and abominable heresy.

1) The word "Purgatory" is not found in the Bible.....ever. The "concept" of Purgatory is not found in the Bible. Even Catholic sources will grudgingly admit this unavoidable and indisputable fact....

“L. R. Wilson, (Roman Catholicism Facts or Fabrications (Nashville, TN: The Freedom Press, 1965), p. 44.) quotes The New Catholic Dictionary as saying, “Although Holy Scripture does not expressly mention Purgatory, it presupposes it.” 3.

The Bible is abundantly clear on the options for eternal destinations for all of mankind.....we will either receive a glorious eternal reward (Matthew 25:31-34) or we will be eternally damned into torment for our disobedience (Revelation 21:8, Matthew 25:46, Matthew 13:50, Mark 9:43, Jude 1:7, etc.). The Apostle Paul never mentioned or hinted at “Purgatory”.....Peter likewise never once mentioned such a concept, and neither did any other New Testament figure; most importantly Jesus Christ never made ANY reference to “Purgatory”. None. There is no Biblical statement, example, or inference of a “mid-point” between heaven and hell, and there is likewise absolutely no indicator of an after-death location wherein a person is “cleansed” via pain and suffering and “prepared” for eventual entrance into heaven. There is also NO Biblical support for the differentiation of sin into different “levels”, as Catholicism does with “venial” sins vs. “mortal” (or unforgivable) sins. ALL sin is an affront to God, and ALL sin is a violation of God's purity and perfection.

2) The Apocrypha is generally regarded as non-inspired, and thus is summarily rejected from inclusion in most all Protestant translations of the modern Bible.....Catholics, as stated earlier, cling to Maccabees 12:39-45 from the Apocrypha as de facto support/proof for the existence of Purgatory, yet even this verse does NOT use the term “Purgatory”, nor does it specify pained tortured inflicted upon its inhabitants.....

“Nowhere in this passage is there any mention of fire in which souls are tormented. All that is mentioned is prayers for the dead, from which the Roman Catholic theologians infer, first, that such prayers are proper, and secondly, that such prayers can be effective for the salvation of the dead. Furthermore, from the Roman Catholic viewpoint, these verses prove too much, for they teach the possible salvation of soldiers who had died in mortal sin, that of idolatry. And that contradicts Roman Catholic doctrine, which is that those dying in mortal sin go straight to hell and are permanently lost....Surely one who had never heard of purgatory would not learn about it from this passage.”

from “Roman Catholicism” by Loraine Boettner, 1970, page 228.

“The only passage from the Old Testament that is cited in an attempt to prove the doctrine of Purgatory is from 2 Maccabees 12:43-46. This is one of the Apocryphal books, meaning of doubtful origin. These books were not accepted as

inspired by the Jews and belonging in the Old Testament; they were not accepted by the early Christians; and they are not included in the Canon of the Bible accepted today by all non-Catholics. If the doctrine of Purgatory is clearly taught in the Old Testament as the Catholics claim, isn't it strange that it is limited to a book which lacks canonical authority and was not accepted by the Jews as being inspired? That passage says,

"And making a gathering, He sent 12,000 drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."

The "he" that is spoken of here is Judas Maccabees. In the story of the book of Maccabees, those people who had died and were being prayed for here were guilty of the sin of idolatry, a mortal sin according to Catholicism, one that condemns people to hell. Catholics contend that Purgatory is for those who have committed venial sins. Therefore, their Old Testament proof depends upon a book that does not belong in the Old Testament to begin with, and the very passage that is quoted contradicts their own teaching about mortal sin when it is used to defend Purgatory. Furthermore, try as I might to find it, 2 Maccabees 12:43-46 does not mention Purgatory."

from "A Look At Roman Catholicism (2): Purgatory: Does It Exist?", by Greg Litmer, Truth Magazine, 8-14-1980.

"Neither Jesus nor his divinely inspired apostles quoted from them or gave their approval to them in any way. They were not in the "book" from which the Lord read (Luke 4:16); neither were they included in the "sacred scriptures" from which Timothy had received instruction since childhood. (2 Timothy 3:15.) They were not in the "law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms" from which Christ taught the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. (Luke 24.) But they are in the Catholic Bible. Thus the "best argument" to be made for purgatory is based on a passage which is from an apocryphal book; and has to do with a superstitious practice of the Jews of the period of time between the Testaments."

from "Purgatory", 10-14-1954 issue of Gospel Guardian.

In summary, "Purgatory" is in direct opposition to the Holy Bible, and is in direct opposition to what the New Testament teaches about heaven and hell.

This vile, insipid, and man-made lie is a deception which has been foisted upon and believed by untold millions of victims throughout history, a lie created by and promoted by the Roman Catholic Church, which financially benefited beyond comprehension by the very promotion of Purgatory as doctrine.

"The doctrine of purgatory is the doctrine that man at death goes to an intermediate state between heaven and hell for temporary punishment. The Bible does not speak of it. In Luke 16:19-31 we read of two men who died. One was saved. The other was lost. Neither went to purgatory. If neither the saved nor the lost go to purgatory, then who will? No one, for there is no such place! According to secular history this doctrine can be traced back to 593 A.D.— History of the Christian Church, Philip Schaff. 'The first decree on this subject is found in connection with the councils of Florence, 1439. The 25th session of the Council of Trent declares that there is a purgatory and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful' --- Nelson's Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, p. 114"

(Leroy Brownlow, "Brownlow's Sermon in The Methodist Church," 1952, Additional Material).

“Purgatory not only is a false doctrine of itself but is the root of many other ills in Roman Catholic theology, especially the practice of indulgences, the manipulation of parishioners for financial gain, et al. It, as much as anything, contributed due to these evil influences to the Protestant Reformation. Instead of jettisoning the error, the Catholic Church clings to it like an alcoholic to his booze bottle because of the wealth extorted from multiplied millions, if not billions, over the centuries.”

quote from Howard Daniel Denham, Truth Bible Institute, via personal correspondence, 2-21-2016.

The danger of “Purgatory” as a belief is serious and eternal. Each and every one of us is, quite literally, one heartbeat or one breath away from our rendezvous with our creator. Each and every one of us, without exception, will stand and give an account for our lives (2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:12), and our deeds, and our misdeeds.....on that “dreadful day”, our eternities will be decided. There will be no appeals, and there will be no “second chances”, and there will be no proverbial “weigh station”, where we will be offered yet another posthumous opportunity to be “cleansed” or “purified” from our sins and shortcomings upon this earth. Those who venture through this life convinced that they are guilty of only “venial” sins, and can have said sins removed from serving an indeterminate period in Purgatory after their demise are placing their eternal souls in deadly peril, as is always the case with those who ignore clear-cut and

direct Bible teaching, replacing truth with the imagined and false doctrines of mankind.

1- "Purgatory," Merriam Webster dictionary.

2- "The Role of Indulgences in the Building of New Saint Peter's Basilica" (2011) by Ginny Justice.

3- "*Catholic Doctrine of Purgatory*" by Michael Hatcher, page 2.

## SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

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# PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON PRAYER

Dub McClish  
Denton, Texas

## Introduction

We will always need periodically to review the Scriptural elements of acceptable prayer (i.e., to the Father, through the Son, in faith, according to God's will, etc.). However, it is not these matters that I wish to discuss at present; I rather wish to offer some observations relating to the prayers that are led in our worship assemblies. My aim is not to find fault, but to call attention to (1) some of the practical aspects of these prayers that we may sometimes overlook and (2) some Scriptural principles that may apply to them. I am not offering my comments as "law," but rather as brotherly suggestions, which I hope will be helpful.

### Warning About Using "Vain Repetitions" (Mat. 6:7)

Jesus said that the motive of some was to be "heard for their much speaking." They apparently piled up the same words and phrases time after time, thinking "the longer the better," to impress the hearers. He labeled such mindless repetition as worthless.

I believe I have heard some prayers over the years that might qualify for this description. This might be occurring when the same brother prays the same prayer invariably each time he is the prayer leader. It is hard not to conclude that such a memorized prayer could be prayed with one's mind far away. It might be happening also when a brother repeats a single phrase several times in the same prayer (e.g., "We just pray...").

Constant repetition in prayer may evince a lack of preparation, contemplation, concentration, or even to extreme nervousness. The obvious cure for this problem is for the prayer leader to invest some sincere thought in advance of his time to lead, if possible. Among other things, such forethought will give him confidence and help dispel any nervousness he may have.

Mere repetition in itself is not vain. Our Lord prayed the same prayer three times in a very short time span in Gethsemane (Mat. 26:39-44), none of which was in any wise vain.

### Warning about "long prayers" for pretense (Mark 12:40)

*Long* is admittedly a relative term, but most recognize a “long” prayer, as compared with one of “ordinary” length. I have heard some prayers that were of such extended length (and of such verbiage) that they appeared to be addressed more to men than to God. One brother where I preached several years ago would ramble on and on, inventing some words each time he led a prayer (an affected British accent, specially reserved for his prayers, made the sincerity of his prayer further suspect). Some members of that congregation thought his prayers were grand, so perhaps he achieved his goal.

All who lead public prayers need to remember as we pray that it is God, not men, we are wanting to impress and Whose attention we seek. Prayers, like sermons (as I have been told more than once!) need not be eternal to be immortal. However, a prayer is not rendered unacceptable merely because it is long. Jesus prayed at least one “long” prayer (John 17). The most important issue is not the length, but the **motivation** of the prayer. Short prayers can also be prayed from the wrong motivation and thus be a mere pretence.

### **Confusion of Private and Public Prayers**

The leader of a public prayer should remember that he is not merely bringing his personal petitions before God. He is **leading the entire congregation** in its combined petitions. Obviously, the prayer leader has failed to bear this in mind when he uses the first person pronoun, *I*, instead of the second person pronoun, *we*, in his prayer. Each pronoun of a public prayer that refers to the petitioners should be the second person (i.e., “We [not I] thank thee...,” “We [not I] ask thee...,” “Please bless us [not me]...,” et al.).

Ironically, preachers are often the worst offenders on this point. I have heard preachers lead long prayers in their own behalf before beginning their sermons. Never mind that some brother may have led a prayer only three minutes earlier that included the preacher. If I were that prayer leader, I would infer from the preacher’s compulsion to pray that he must have thought my prayer was insipid. The preacher would do well to do his personal praying in private.

Without wishing to judge motives, this practice smacks of pseudo-piety and of a superior air that seeks to call attention to oneself. When I am invited to preach, whether at home or elsewhere, I assume the brethren want me to preach. If they want me to lead a prayer or a song or serve at the Lord’s table, I will wait for them to ask me to do so.

### **Failure To Remember Who Is Being Addressed**

This reminder applies particularly to those who lead prayers at the Lord's table. It is common to hear a prayer similar to the following: "Father, we thank Thee for this bread/fruit of the vine, which represents **Thy** body/blood." Of course, it was not the Father's body or blood (He never had either), but that of His Son, Who "became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). We should say: "Father, we thank Thee for this bread/fruit of the vine, which memorializes the body/blood **of Thy Son.**"

Another instance of this failure is one's expression of thanks to other human beings in his prayer to God. Several times before potluck meals, I have heard the prayer leader, after thanking God for the food, then say: "We thank these ladies who prepared and served this food." I am sure that what he meant to do was to thank **God** for those hard-working ladies, but he thanked the ladies instead. One can/should certainly thank them directly, but in a prayer to God is not the place to do it.

### **Avoid the *Just* Syndrome**

As I travel and visit congregations in various places, I frequently hear prayer leaders using the word *just* repeatedly, some before almost every request (e.g., "We just pray that Thou wilt bless...", "We just thank Thee for...", "We just beg Thy forgiveness...", et al.). Webster gives two synonyms for this usage of *just*: "only" and "merely." If *just* is used in such phrases in the sense of *only*, as in "I have just (only) a nickel in my pocket." I fail to see the appropriateness or even the sense of such usage. To thank or ask God for "just" one thing and then in the same prayer thank Him for "just" one or more additional things is actually contradictory nonsense.

It makes no more sense to use *just* in the sense of *merely*, for Webster defines it as "apart from anything else"—identical to the sense of *only* as illustrated above. However, *merely* has also taken on the connotation of *no more than*, or something small or insignificant (e.g., "I merely asked you to give me a nickel"). Surely, the prayer leader does not mean this when he prays, "We just [merely] ask for the forgiveness of our sins." Is our forgiveness, which cost the blood of God's sinless Son, of no more significance than *just* implies in this context?

My guess is that brethren who use this term in their prayers have not considered its implications. I am not aware of any prayer in all the Bible in which this or a similar term is employed. I have noticed over the years, as I have attended funerals in which denominational preachers (especially Baptists) led prayers, that they frequently use this terminology. Only in very recent years have some of

our brethren begun using it. I suggest that those who have picked up *just* in their prayers “just” take it back to where it came from—denominational jargon—and leave it there.

### **Avoid the *Especially* Syndrome**

*Especially* is an adverb pointing out the main, principal, primary, or exclusive matter for emphasis above others. We need to remember this fact when we pray. I have heard brethren pray “especially” in regard to no fewer than five persons or concerns in the same prayer. When one prays **especially** that brother Jones will recover, then prays **especially** for brother Kwan whom the church is supporting in Singapore, and then **especially** asks the Lord to give Jack and June brown a safe journey, which of these is actually to be regarded as primary, principal, the main or exclusive one?

A similar erroneous use of a word involves, as discussed above, the word *only*, which means exclusively, solely, excluding all else. A billboard I once saw in front of a church building read: “Faith Only, Grace Only, Scripture Only.” It was both ungrammatical and unscriptural. You cannot have even two “onlys” of the same class, much less three. Repetition of *especially* in prayer renders the term meaningless.

### **Discard the *Ready Recollection Verbiage***

It is common to hear prayer leaders ask God to give the preacher a “ready recollection” of what he has studied. It is one of those several memorized, habitually used phrases that have crept into our “prayer language” over the years. I have long had difficulty with this wording for two reasons: (1) what the prayer leader means by it is ambiguous at best, and (2) it could easily be misinterpreted in favor of a serious false concept.

In no case of which I am aware did the brother thus praying believe that the Lord was going to give the preacher special powers of memory or preparation, above whatever preparation he had made for the occasion. The Lord gave the apostles this very power: “Be not anxious beforehand [premeditate, KJV] what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit” (Mark 13:11b). This promise is unalterably tied to the miraculous age when the Holy Spirit directly and immediately provided this and other wonderful powers—an age long-since passed with the completion of God’s revelation.

On many occasions I have wished for (and needed) such memory help, but I

knew that it would be futile to pray for it. In a day when some are claiming such direct help and strength from the Spirit, the “ready recollection” terminology could easily be inferred as agreement therewith.

### **Endnotes**

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

I wrote this MS in slightly different form, and it was originally written for and published as an “Editor’s Clippings” column in the April 2003 edition of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*, of which I was Editor at the time.

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# Is Worship Worship?

John P. Mabrey  
Hilham, Tennessee

*“But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshiper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”* (John 4:23-24)

According to the scriptures, there are several types of worship. There is that true and genuine worship that the above passage reflects. Then there is “will worship” as mentioned in Colossians 2:23 – “Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.” Then there is “vain worship” spoken of much by Jesus. *“But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”* (Matt. 15:9) There is even “ignorant worship” of which Paul spoke of in Athens on Mars Hill. (Acts 17:22-25)

I said all that so I can ask this: “Is our worship worship? And, in answering it really depends upon three things. It depends on: 1) Purpose, 2) Preparation, and 3) Performance.

**What is the purpose of worship?** The purpose is to glorify, adore, and praise God. (I Pet. 2:5) *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”* Another purpose of worship is to proclaim Christ as stated in First Corinthians chapter 11, verses 26-30. Worship is also for the purpose of strengthening man, for man has problems, troubles, and sorrows. This is done by drawing near to and communing with the ONE true, and living God. (Matt. 18:20) Is this your purpose for coming to worship? Or do you assemble to catch up on the latest gossip? Or to see if the preacher has his tie on straight? Or to talk about the weather, or various other subjects that have nothing to do with worshipping God.?

**Preparation for worship.** We must get our hearts right with God. (I Tim. 2:8) *“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”* (Prov. 28:9) *“He that turneth away his ear from*

*hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” (John 9:31) “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.” (James 1:27) “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (Mark 16:16) “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.” (II Tim. 4:8) “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”*

We must not only have our hearts right with God when we come to worship, but we must also have our hearts right with our fellow-man. (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-17) Two men (women, or combination of the two) cannot hate each other if both of them love God.

We must have the right atmosphere: the atmosphere of QUIET. (Ps. 46:10) *“Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted in the earth.”* And our worship must be planned. (I Cor. 14:40) *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”* When we come together, we must assume that all have come together to worship God and hold him in reverence above all. That leads us to...

**Our performance of worship.** Worship must be directed to God only! (Matt. 4:10) *“Get thee behind me Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”* It is not to be directed to idols. (Acts 17:29) *“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”* It is not directed to things of the world. (Col. 3:5) *“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”* And it is not directed to men. The Bible condemns worshiping of man in any respect. So, if you are one of the ones who kneel down to “the Pope” and kiss his ring: STOP IT!!!

Worship to God must be done “in spirit”; that is to say in sincerity, and must come from the heart; from the inner man.” (Ps. 50:10-16) It involves meditation (I Cor. 11:30) *“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”* We must have humility, openness before God, and reverence to God. (Heb. 12:28) *“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and*

*godly fear.*” (Ex. 3:5) *“And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”* And in short; contrary to a cold lifeless formality. The spirit of man is the highest part of man. (Rom. 1:9) *“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers:”* We are created in the likeness of God. That likeness is not a physical image, because God is not a physical God. God gave us a spirit; that is how we are created in his image. He sits on his throne on high. We need to bow before his throne in loyalty, gratitude, love and awe.

Worship is also to be done in truth. When we sing with must not only sing in the spirit, but we must also understand what we are singing. (I Cor. 14:15) We must pray in accordance with God's will. We must preach the gospel to edify the congregation and communicate the gospel to the unsaved as well. We are to commune in fellowship one with another of like precious faith. We are to contribute of our prosperity every Lord's day. (I Cor. 16:2) We must make certain that the doctrine we teach is grounded in the truth. (Acts 2:42) *“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”* And the only way we can make sure our doctrine is grounded in the truth, is to take our doctrine directly from the scriptures, and not from the opinions or commandments of men. In truth we must partake of the Lord's Supper. The Bible not only tells us to partake of it, it tells us when to partake of it. (Acts 20:7) *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”* Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 instruct that we are to *“sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord.”* SINGING IS WORSHIP! We do not sing to please one another's ears. We sing in worship to God. Singing is NOT a mere introduction to the worship service; rather singing IS worship. On the third Sunday of every month where I preach, we offer a worship service in song to God. We don't do this in order to give the preacher a break from the pulpit; nor do we do this in order to give the congregation a break from the preacher. Singing is worship; and our minds should be on the words that we are singing and to whom they are being sung. Just as we preach and teach and make sure that the doctrine we practice is truth; we must make sure our songs that we sing are truth as well. We need to examine the lyrics of the songs that we sing to make sure they are in harmony with God's word. And when we are singing in worship it is just as solemn as when we partake of the Lord's Supper. None of us would think about whispering or having a conversation with the person next to

us during the Lord's Supper (at least I hope we wouldn't); so why then would you talk to the person next to you when the singing is being conducted? Or when a prayer is being delivered? When we come together on the Lord's Day, every act we go through in our worship service is supposed to be worship. Are we doing that?

Even though we come together to worship God as a congregation, each individual must worship. Leaders of the worship service do not worship for us. Each individual must have in his heart the purpose of worshiping God; each must be prepared to worship God, and each must perform the worship of God in their hearts. Sadly, some individuals are heard to say: "I didn't get anything out of worship today!" It is only when we put something into the worship service that we will get something out of it.

**Conclusion:** Psalm 122:1 says: "*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.*" Are you glad to worship God? Do you look forward to the day in which we come together as members of like precious faith, to offer to God our worship; to glorify his name? Or do you say, "I'll be glad when the preacher shuts up, and we partake of the Lord's Supper, and I can go home?" True worship strengthens and renews our faith which in turn improves our lives. If you get nothing out of worshiping God, then you may want to consider (or ask yourself) "What did I bring to offer God?" Did you bring a full and thankful heart; or did you bring an empty and resentful heart? When we come to the house of the Lord to worship, let us center our minds on things above. Let us strive to improve our worship so that henceforth our worship will really be worship in the true sense of the word; and make sure we are not just "playing church." Are you prepared to worship God?

*\*All scripture references are taken from the KJV unless otherwise noted.*

# *Review of Robert Waters' Teaching on Adultery*

## *Part V*

Howard Denham  
Fla.

I. Robert next asserts: "If you have been faithful to your spouse but he/she divorces you, for what ever reason, what sin would you have committed? None! Any conclusion that has God punishing innocent people for the sins of another cannot be scriptural. God has never established a decree that calls for the innocent to be punished" (p. 4). He then rails against punishing the innocent (p. 4).

1. Robert seeks to arouse sentiment for his position with emotive and inflammatory language void of any real exegetical substance to support it. That the innocent party unjustly put away is indeed suffering due to the evil actions of his/her spouse is granted to be involved in the text by those against whom Robert seeks to raise the ire of his readers. But such is caused neither by God nor those who abide by His moral standard.

2. The unfortunate reality of a world involving cause and effect relations is that the innocent frequently suffer as a result of the evil choices of the guilty. The same line of reasoning could be urged against applying the death penalty to a man who has committed a heinous murder on the grounds that he has an innocent family who would also suffer or be "punished" by his execution. In fact, this appeal is made quite often by opponents of the death penalty!

3. The word "punished" is also neither appropriate nor accurate in describing the case of the innocent party unjustly put away. Simply because someone is caused to suffer by the actions of another it does not follow that they are being punished in a real and meaningful sense. The wife who contracts HIV from a philandering husband surely suffers and as part of a system that is certainly governed by the physical laws that God put in place involving cause and effect. Is God then guilty of punishing the innocent wife with HIV? An atheist might make that charge, but would brother Waters?

4. The restriction on remarriage for the innocent spouse has to do with the ability and opportunity to restore the original relationship, which is God's ultimate purpose in the legislation on Matthew 19:9 (as seen especially in Paul's inspired application of the text in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, especially in the shift

from the use of a present imperative – “remain unmarried” – to the more empathic aorist imperative – “be reconciled” – in his commands to the woman). If the husband repents of his evil and reconciles by remarrying the woman whom he has wronged in putting her away, then the relationship is restored and a family is able to continue as God intends for it to do (cf. Matthew 19:4-6). The fact that the original marriage bond remains intact and inviolate despite the civil divorce on grounds other than fornication makes the reconciliation possible, which would ideally then keep the family intact.

5. In turn, if the spouse who did the wrongful putting away does marry another woman, he becomes guilty of adultery at that point and thus the text of Matthew 19:9 affords to the innocent party, i.e. one who did not contribute to the unjust action of putting away, the ground of fornication and the right of remarriage to a scripturally marriageable partner. Thus, the effect of suffering is ameliorated by the further sin of the guilty partner, if he persists in his evil in order to contract an unscriptural marriage, or by his repentance which time and providence may have brought him to respecting his rightful spouse.

6. One final point is also here to be observed and that is that Robert appears to be arguing for the right to divorce and remarry at will and without limitation of cause here on the basis of the suffering of the innocent spouse. Yet, in our debate he denied that he held that position!

7. Also, how does the suffering of the innocent spouse somehow also free the guilty to divorce and remarry at will? The most that this quibble by brother Waters would establish, if it were true (which it is not), is that the innocent party could proceed to marry another without committing any sin. But he seeks to free both, including the man who put her away unjustly. Thus, he benefits by his evil deed, which Robert even admits is evil!

II. Robert next states: “When there is desertion, separation, or a ‘putting away’, and at least one person marries another without first getting a legal divorce (composed of three parts according to Deut. 24:1-4), adultery has been committed by at least one of the parties in the original marriage. Innocent individuals who are divorced by their spouse do not sin by marrying, provided they are legally divorced when they marry (1 Corinthians 7:8-9; 36; Romans 7:1-4)” (p. 4).

1. Here Robert seeks to bind today the process of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, and a failure to do so is that which makes the remarriages adulterous, he opines. If there is a legal divorce decree, then the remarriages are thus sanctioned by God.

He simply asserts the case and makes no real argument on its behalf, a typical failing in Robert's entire theology of marriage and divorce.

2. But Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not entail a judicial court divorce decree like that used in Western law today. In fact, there was no court involved in the Jewish process at all where a man sought to put away his wife, except when a dispute arose over the return of her dowry. Furthermore, under the specifics of the text, it is the husband who gives the bill of divorcement to the wife. There is no provision at all specifically here for the wife to do so.

3. Also, Robert is clearly confounding the bill of divorcement with the act of divorce itself, which was actually the act of sending or putting away of the wife.

4. A further problem with Robert's new stipulation is that most cultures, including those of ancient Greece and Rome have had multiple forms of marriage, often dependent upon the social classes of their respective peoples. As we have abundantly documented, marriage by cohabitation was common in the ancient world. Clearly, in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 there is underlying the text the practice of divorce by separation. Such was LEGAL under the civil law of the Greeks and Romans! Certificates of divorce, though sometimes used, were neither required nor universally common, despite Robert's view of things. Even the use of the Jewish ketubah did not arise until the Inter-testament period.

5. A bigger problem is the fact that no society today – not even modern Judaism – expressly abides by the strictures of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Robert picks and chooses what he binds as necessary to avoid the stigma of adultery.

6. Furthermore, Robert's assumed position on Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is directly refuted by Malachi 2:14-16 and the Lord's own words in Matthew 19:4-6, 8-9; Mark 10:11-12. The Hebrew men who put away their lawful spouses in Malachi 2:14-16 are rebuked for their actions and not authorized to remarry. According to Robert, their failure had to be simply the lack of having issued to their spouses the bill of divorcement to make their treachery legal! What sanctifying power such a bill must have that it can turn adultery into sacred matrimony, even while the heart is filled with treachery! Amazingly, Robert argues the same basic case as that made by the scribes and Pharisees! In fact, he goes a step beyond them. While Robert, like them, would sanction every remarriage on the grounds of the giving of a civilly legal bill of divorcement to the put away party, he actually sanctions all remarriages that do not meet even this basic requirement for justification if the putting away party will but simply say "I'm sorry" and promise not to do it again. As long as there is some measure of

“heartfelt” sorrow over the breaking of the covenant through divorce and remarriage, which according to Robert is the act of “adultery,” the parties are permitted to remain together as husband and wife with God’s sanction. So even the failure to issue the bill of divorcement is not really fatal to one’s ability to remarry under Robert’s doctrine! It is then a formality that they ought to observe, but can nonetheless be skirted by some sort of sorrow after the fact. And, if the offending party does it again to his second spouse, he can but once more avail himself of a brief drink from Robert’s new doctrinal elixir and contract yet another marriage. This process could go on repeatedly, even ad infinitum. But Robert misapprehends, from the beginning, the role of the bill of divorcement, as he does the entire Deuteronomy 24:1-4 text upon which it was based.

7. The bill of divorcement did not exist to justify remarriage of both parties, as is often wrongly assumed and as Malachi 2:14-16 and Matthew 19:4-9 clearly show to be false, but was designed to regulate how the offended party was to deal with a guilty fornicator (hence the reference idiomatically to “something of nakedness”). Under Jewish law through the practice of the issuing of a bill of divorcement public recognition was made of the innocence of the one doing the putting away and of his right to contract a new marriage with a scripturally marriageable partner. The text then assumes the remarriage of the put away fornicator without necessarily sanctioning it. The text simply treats it as something that may occur. And if it does so, then the remainder of the text regulates how the innocent party is to behave concerning his former spouse if her second husband should die or send her away himself. In fact, as we have noted in our MDR notes, the construction forms a hypothetical conditional with a lengthy antecedent or protasis comprising the first three verses followed by the consequent or apodosis in the fourth verse. This is more easily seen in the LXX text. Walter Kaiser, a Hebrew scholar par excellent, notes also the form in his comments on the text (*More Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, pp. 109). He thus writes: “Deuteronomy 24:1-4, however, deals only with the situation in which a former partner wishes to return to a previous marriage partner after one or the other has been married to a different person in the meantime and divorced” (pp. 110-111).

III. Robert concludes his diatribe: “We have no scriptural support for breaking up legal marriages between men and women or for the idea that certain people have no right to marry? {sic} It is against justice that innocent persons must be punished for the sins of another. It is against reason to conclude that someone is still married and obligated to a person who has legally divorced and married another. It is against scripture to argue that one is not eligible to marry in cases

where he obviously is not married (1 Cor. 7:2; 8,9). It is against a direct command of God to forbid marriage (1 Tim. 4:1-3) for those who are ‘unmarried’ or have no marriage, because the apostle Paul said, ‘Let them marry.’ It is against proper hermeneutics to construe what Jesus taught to mean something that is against what is elsewhere taught in various ways and in numerous passages throughout the Bible” (p. 4).

1. Here he ratchets up the rhetoric to try to do with bombast what he did not even try to do with argumentation – establish his case!

2. He levels six charges in his conclusion against the position he is assaulting, which position he mis-defined even from the start, as we have noted.

3. His first charge is that of breaking up “legal marriages” as though anything and everything civilly legal must therefore also be scripturally acceptable. I wonder if he would accept that same premise in discussion of abortion, gambling, polygamy, human sacrifice, head-hunting, cannibalism, and genocidal mass extermination! Does he really believe that if something is civilly legal that make sit morally right and Divinely authorized? The murder of 6 million Jews was civilly legal under Nazi law, but definitely not morally right or Divinely authorized.

4. He next asserts that “it is against justice that innocent persons must be punished for the sins of another,” a charge which has already been answered. Here we note that he reasons from the plight of the innocent party unjustly put away to some form of strange justification for the one who actually does the dirty deed in order to remarry! Irony of ironies! Or is it more hypocrisy? Why feign such concern over the plight and suffering of the innocent party unjustly put away while pleading for the rights of the monster who did the evil to begin with in order to marry another at will simply because he took the time to give the aggrieved and suffering woman a bill of divorcement? What kind of justice is it, Robert, which rewards the guilty for his calculated treachery?

5. He charges further that “it is against reason to conclude that someone is still married and obligated to a person who has legally divorced and married another,” yet he has offers no real proof that such a someone is separated in the sight of God from his/her original spouse on the grounds of a civil divorce alone. Nor can he really do so. If assertions were horses for brother Waters, we would all take a ride! Such is the real essence of his “reason.”

6. He charges also that “it is against scripture that one is not eligible to marry in

cases where he obviously is not married” and cites 1 Corinthians 7:2, 8-9 to that effect. However, he offers not one proof to show that this conclusion actually follows from these verses, while he ignores their immediate context dealing with parties who have never married or who are widowed. He also ignores verses 10-11 which deal expressly with the subject of divorce and the only two options that Paul presents on the occasion. Why?

7. He then submits the charge that to teach that some are not eligible to marry is a specific violation of “a direct command” and he cites 1 Timothy 4:1-3 in support of God’s command, “Let them marry.” However, he does not show what specific verse gives this command to “let them marry.” We presume from the context that he again is appealing to 1 Corinthians 7:2, 8-9, but the same problems mentioned above still attend his assertions here, if such is the case. He needs to prove that there is a universal command permitting everyone to marry who is considered by civil law or custom unmarried regardless of why they are in said state. It will be observed that Robert has contended that adultery does not obtain wherein one has not given a bill of divorcement to his spouse in putting her away. Yet, the texts he cites from 1 Corinthians 7 deal with a culture that required no such bill of divorcement in the least, which means that under the laws of the Romans and the Greeks a woman who deserted her husband was considered divorced and eligible for legal marriage to another man. Yet Paul specifically commands that such a woman is to “remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband” (1 Cor. 7:10-11)! As Roman law made no provision for such, and as no other Gentile culture of the period entailed such, then Robert’s view implies that no one was ever divorced in any real sense at all in these cultures. Furthermore, there is now considerable historical evidence that Jewish practice, especially away from Syro-Palestine, often followed Gentile law, which is exactly the case with Herodias’ divorce of her husband Herod Philip.

8. As to Robert’s misuse of 1 Timothy 4:1-3 it should be noted that Jesus, who forbids by implication certain to marry in Matthew 19:3-9, most assuredly did not sin in doing so. Neither did Paul violate his own stricture in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 when he penned 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 and commanded the woman to “remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.” In fact, the teaching of 1 Timothy 4:1-3 must be taken in light of both the Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7 texts. Thus, his ipse dixit proclamation is contrived at best and disingenuous at the very least.

9. Robert’s appeal to the text of 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 in connection with 1 Timothy 4:1-3 also indicates that he recognizes that to be the case, even if he fails to do so properly. Thus, the text in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 is not condemning the forbidding of

just any marriage but of divinely authorized marriage. Robert needs to prove that the scenario he has in mind is such a case.

10. Finally, Robert charges that “it is against proper hermeneutics to construe what Jesus taught to mean something that is against what is elsewhere taught in various ways and in numerous passages throughout the Bible.” And where does Robert present these “various ways” and “numerous passages” that are “throughout the Bible” in making his case? It definitely is not in his article on the “Biblical Definition of Adultery”! In fact, are we but left to conclude from Robert’s actual presentation on the subject that blind, unsupported assertions, flagrant self-contradictions, willful ignoring of specific contexts, commission of multiple logical fallacies, jumping to absurd conclusions, violation of the basic canons of reason, reliance on ridiculous rhetoric, licensing of licentious behavior, promotion of a most profound hypocrisy, and such like are the real epitome, exactitude, and essence of “proper hermeneutics”?

11. Robert Waters devised a system designed that implicitly justifies unscriptural marriages, even if that was not his intent, and allows people to remain in literal adultery, and yet he has the unmitigated gall to attack those who respect Bible authority on MDR as binding where he asserts God has not bound. Surely, it is as evil as anything to teach a system that encourages people to remain in sin!

12. Robert’s new doctrine negates the necessity of genuine repentance and offers in its place the sorrow of the world as sufficient grounds for people to abide in their sinful states of civil marriage. It is a most profound truth that a people’s moral compass will have a bearing on their spiritual dedication to God, for when the former is lost then the road to complete apostasy lies straight ahead. If a people are not intellectually honest, they cannot be morally good, and if they are not morally good, they will not be inclined to hold on to the things of God who demands of them more than they are willing to bear, even though His “yoke is easy, and {His} burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30; John 14:15, 23; 15:14; 1 John 5:3).

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Thank you  
Jim Miller

### ***Contact Information***

**Chuck Verkist, 906 East 2nd ave. Ellensburg, Wa. 98926  
(509) 925-2593 or [cverkist@kvalley.com](mailto:cverkist@kvalley.com)**

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