

The Keys Of The Kingdom

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Dub McClish

H. W. (Dub) McClish: Preached first sermon in June 1954 at Boise, Idaho, at age 16. After 35 years of work as local preacher in 5 states (the last 12 years of which were with the Pearl St. Congregation, Denton, TX), began work under oversight of Pearl Street elders in 1992, devoting time to combined works of Gospel meetings, mission trips, and lectureships and to writing and editing sound Biblical materials.



Jerry Brewer

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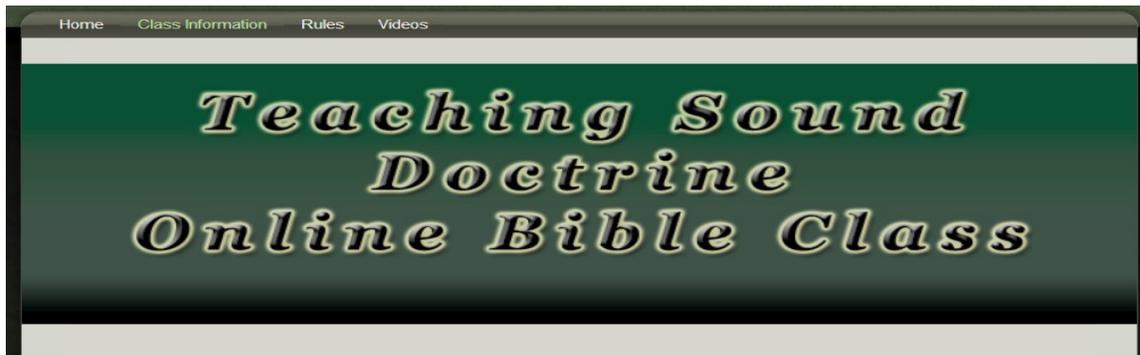
If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at jfmiller61@gmail.com.

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/keysofthekingdom/?page_id=1316 .

May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff

Editor's Notes

We are beginning our 5th year of being back in publication. Over the last 4 years we have made great strides in bringing you sound teachings from the word of God. We hope and pray you have benefited from our efforts.



New live bible classes started Sept. 28th. Each Thursday evening starting at 6pm.
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<http://jfmiller.com/onlineclass>

New Release

Back on November 27th of 2015 I published the book "The Journey" How Larry Became A Christian. I was published first as a Kindle book. On December 21st of 2016 I published it as a paperback. This book was written in story format to teach others how to become a Christian and be added to the Lord's church. My intent and hope was and still is that this book would be passed along as a gift or used as a teaching tool to bring others to Christ. I have just published the companion book "The Journey Continues" The Christian Life (Faithful Unto Death). This book teaches the new Christian what is necessary to do to stay in a saved condition and inherit a home in heaven. On the next page you will find links to both books in Kindle and paperback format. These would make valuable gifts for your loved one's or friends this Xmas or at anytime for that matter. Please feel free to go check them out and may God richly bless you.

The Journey

The Journey, How Larry Became A Christian. Available in both Kindle and Paperback. Get yours today, buy one for a friend, Use this book to teach others the truth about being saved. Easy to understand and packed with truth.

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The Journey Continues

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Sin

Jim Miller
Gray, Maine

Sin is that which separates man from God. We are not going to go all the way back to Adam and Eve; we all know how sin got started. We also know, from the Scriptures, that all have sinned from that time forward. There has only been One to ever live without committing any sin, and that was Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Sin: Missing The Mark.

Some consider sin to be a violation of society's ethics, or a violation of one's personal ethics, or even the violation of the rules of one's parents. Although sin may encompass one or more of those aspects, it is the violation of the word of God. John wrote, "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*" (1 Jn. 3:4).¹ Notice, also, that the violation of one's conscience is sin (Rom. 14:23; *Jas. 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*), because that, also, violates God's word, which demands that we maintain a pure conscience.

A most horrible fate awaits those who do not obey the Gospel of Christ. The only true way to escape an eternity in hell is to learn what is expected of us to be forgiven of the sins that so easily beset us. So we want us to understand sin, so we may properly deal with it, and avoid meeting an everlasting fate of damnation. Jerry I am sure you can add to this....

The Scriptures are full of encouragement. This is meant to help us serve God and live as He would have us to live. We are promised grand and marvelous rewards for remaining faithful to the end. However, just as often in God's word, we are warned of the consequences for disobedience, which is sin. God paints a terrifying picture of what happens to those who are lost in sin. This picture shows suffering and anguish throughout eternity. Just read Luke's account of the rich man and Lazarus, recorded in Luke 16:19:

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that the love of material wealth causes one to sin. He wrote in *First Timothy* of the dangers of riches, saying 6:6-10 *But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*, Note here it is not the money but love of it that causes sin. The world in which we live measures one's success by the material possessions he can attain, and one's prominence by how much effort they give to its accumulation. Such an attitude pressures others to do the same, and they are lured into thinking that obtaining material possessions must come first in their life. This means putting God and his work behind obtaining material possessions. God tells us that if we have food and raiment we should be content (1 Tim. 6:8). How often has the love of obtaining more material possessions caused one to love God less, failing to put Him first (Mt. 6:33), thus

falling into sin.

We sin because we lack love for God. Jesus said in John 14:15, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*" He also said He came to do the will of His Father, so that whatever He commands or reveals to us, we must do. The revealed will of God becomes the law for us to follow and obey. If we truly love someone, we will do all we possibly can to please that individual. If we love the Lord with all our soul, mind and strength, we will obey whatever he says. If he tells us not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to lie, etc., then we will diligently strive to obey God. We will try to keep ourselves out of situations that would tempt us to sin. A lack of love for God in our lives causes us to sin.

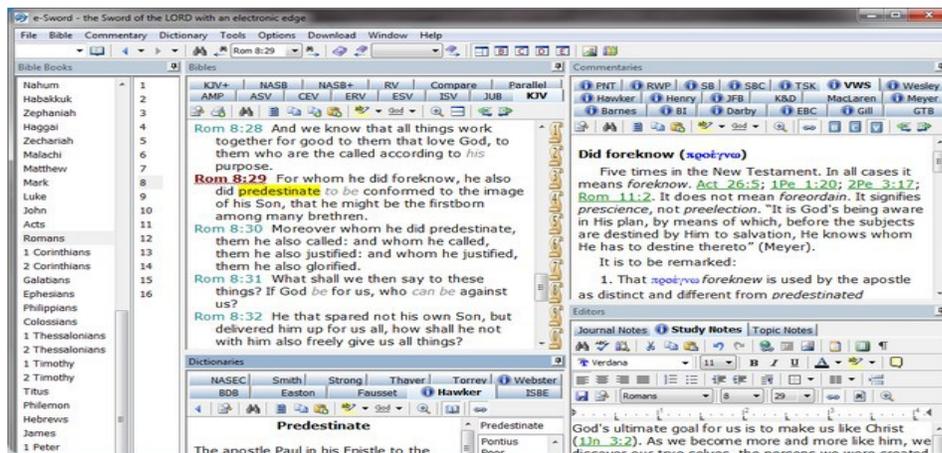
In the third chapter of Romans, beginning with verse ten, several terrible things are quoted from Psalms as happening because, he says, "*There is no fear of God before their eyes*" (v. 18). The word "*fear*," as used in the Bible, usually has one of two meanings. Sometimes it is used in the sense of reverence, while other times it is used to mean the dread of an action that one may possibly suffer. Both cases are true concerning why we sin. Many sin, today, because they have no respect for God and his word, which is the Bible. They lack respect, for they are unwilling to let Him guide their lives. Their lack of respect for his word may be seen in their open disobedience against that which they know God commands. Others fail to fear because of the teaching of humanists, designed to promote atheist philosophy. These have no fear of any "*everlasting punishment*" of God following death, and on the day of judgment. With such fears removed, the flood gate is open for people to live as they please, destroying any barriers that might prevent one from seeking to live according to the flesh – a life of sin.

A child learns early that if he is not immediately punished for an act, he may continue to repeat it. Not until later in life does he learn that not all punishment is immediate. When we get caught up in a life of sin, we often revert to the childish reasoning that, since God didn't punish me immediately, there will be no punishment at all! In Ecclesiastes 8:11-13, we read the warning, "*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked.*" In the New Testament, the Lord tried to correct this type of reasoning through the pen of Peter in First Peter 3:3-18. He says that the longsuffering of God is salvation (v. 18), not slackness (v. 9). God will punish all unforgiven sin in the day of judgment, and that punishment is eternal separation from God in hell. Jim you want to end our class here?

Since God told us why people sin, let us strive to avoid those attitudes and actions that would lead us into a life of sin. Rather, let us strive to obey His commands, so that we may lead to a life of righteousness, and a reward of joy in heaven in the hereafter. "Fear God And keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecc. 12:13-14).

Till next we meet God bless

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Commentary On And Review Of

k.C. Moser's
The Way Of Salvation And The Gist Of Romans
Part 2

Dub McClish
Denton, Texas

Historical Notes Regarding Moser and His Influence

[**Note:** The following section borrows heavily from material I previously wrote on this subject, See *Works Cited* for documentation.]

“The Man or the Plan” Discussion

In the early 1960s I was a young preacher, not long out of Abilene Christian College. I well remember the lively discussion among brethren of “the Man or the plan” controversy. It arose from the accusation some brethren began making at the time that Gospel preachers had been too “negative” and “dogmatic” and had emphasized the plan of salvation too much and the Lord and His redemptive work too little.

Reuel Lemmons, editor of *Firm Foundation* at the time, opined that those who thus argued (whom he styled the “liberal left”), were seeking to foist a dangerous theological shift on churches of Christ. He predicted that, with the easing of the anti-ism controversy in the 1950s, the next battle would be with liberalism, signaled by those who were contending for less emphasis on the Gospel plan and more on Jesus and grace, and he was right. (Ironically, Lemmons over the next twenty years moved so far leftward that he became a standard bearer for that “liberal left” element. He lost his editorial chair with *Firm Foundation* in 1983 when sound brethren purchased it. However, Alton Howard gave Lemmons’ liberalism a new platform when by founding *Image Magazine* for that very purpose.)

The K.C. Moser Factor

The 1960s push among our brethren for the “Man over the plan” (essentially advocating salvation by “grace only”) did not begin in at that time, however. Likewise, the veritable explosion of “grace-only” advocacy among

liberal preachers, authors, and professors among us in the 1980s and 1990s also has much longer and deeper roots than the discussion that erupted in the 1960s. In fact, as subsequent documentation will demonstrate, the latter appearance was merely a reincarnation from four decades earlier.

John Mark Hicks wrote two articles on Moser in 1995, appearing in *Restoration Quarterly* (a magazine published by Abilene Christian University) (see Hicks in *Works Cited*). He has bounced around in various liberal circles over the past several years, and at the time he wrote the articles, he was a staffer at Family of God at Woodmont Hills, Nashville, TN (Rubel Shelly's domain for several years before he moved to Rochester, MI a few years ago). Hicks is among the leaders of the current crop of "grace-only" advocates. To him, Moser is doubtless a spiritual giant and hero. Hicks's articles are interesting, both because of some of the history of the period covered, but also because they reveal the liberals' evaluation of how influential Moser was and is regarding the proliferation of *grace-only* theology in the church presently. The names of some influential men who endorsed and encouraged Moser and his views, as revealed in Hicks' first article, may surprise some readers when I cite them.

The Hicks articles are also interesting in that they confirm what some others and I have been stating for several years—K.C. Moser is the principal source in the church of the *Man-or-the-Plan* (or better, *Demote-the-Plan-of-the-Man*) contention of the 1960s. In other words, K.C. Moser was a liberal long before liberalism was "cool" among our brethren. His influence is no less felt in the ever louder "grace-only" voices of the past thirty years that openly proclaim the doctrine that "salvation is by grace, period" (some have gone so far as to launch a "grace-specific" Website, appropriately named, "Grace-Centered Magazine").

Moser began early in his writing career to attack his perception of "legalistic" preaching relating to grace and the plan of salvation. In forty articles from his pen in this period, almost half of them treated the themes of grace, atonement, faith, and works and their relationships to each other. As far as I can discern, he originated the *Man-or-Plan* phrase and first applied it to his ideas on grace in a *Firm Foundation* article in the early 1930s (which article drew an immediate rebuttal from R.L. Whiteside in *Gospel Advocate*).

By 1932, Moser had all but ceased writing for *Firm Foundation* (likely due to editor G.H.P. Showalter's disagreement and weariness with his hobby) and

began writing for *Gospel Advocate* (ironically, with which journal Whiteside, who became one of Moser's strongest antagonists, had strong connections). That same year The Gospel Advocate Company, owner of the paper, published Moser's first book, *The Way of Salvation*. As earlier indicated, this book incorporated material from his numerous articles on the grace/legalism theme. C. Leonard Allen, an ACU-related liberal, summarized the intent of Moser's book as a correction of a "displacement of the cross and God's grace" (123).
Wallace, Showalter, and Whiteside

It is a strange paradox that The Gospel Advocate Company published Moser's book. Foy E. Wallace, Jr., who had nothing but antipathy for Moser's *grace-only* doctrine, was editor of *Gospel Advocate* when the book was published, but he obviously had no control over book publication. Upon its publication, Wallace referred to Moser's book editorially, but with criticism. The book apparently generated little notice at first, except for Wallace's negative reference. Stranger still, in 1933, Moser was appointed (likely by Leon B. McQuiddy, owner of the Gospel Advocate Company—surely not by Wallace, the paper's editor) to head the "Text and Context" department of the *Advocate*.

A most interesting historical vignette, titled "An Important Transcript," concludes *The Present Truth*, the last book (1977) that came from the pen of Foy E. Wallace, Jr. This brief essay, written forty-five years after the occurrences it describes, relates entirely to K.C. Moser and his influence in the 1930s. Wallace's words demonstrate that he was still much concerned about Moser's book (*The Way of Salvation*), doctrine, and influence as they related to Wallace's editorship of the *Advocate*. The Wallace piece also deals with his brother Cled's writing the introduction to *The Way of Salvation*. Wallace explained that Cled did so merely out of personal friendship with Moser and from "the goodness of his heart," but that he only commended some of Moser's "personal qualities, rather than endorsing Moser's positions" (Wallace 1036).

Wallace further related that Moser's attempts to "inject his peculiar ideas on 'repentance before faith' and the 'conditions' of salvation were so contrary to the gospel" as to provoke opposition from the other staff writers (particularly H. Leo Boles, F.B. Srygley, R.L. Whiteside, and C.R. Nichol). Moser lasted only a few months in charge of his department, his departure from which Wallace succinctly explained: "He was dropped from the staff" (1036). Wallace further relates that soon after Moser's departure for the *Advocate*,

G.H.P. Showalter, editor of the *Firm Foundation*, and R.L. Whiteside,

exposed his “saved by the man, not by the plan” and “salvation by faith” hobby as being contrary to the gospel plan of salvation, and as being no more nor less than denominational doctrine (1036).

Also in 1933, Whiteside began a series of articles in the *Advocate* on Romans, directly responding to and answering material in *The Way of Salvation*. These articles later formed the basis of Whiteside’s *A New Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Saints at Rome* (which I deem to be among the best ever written on Romans; I treasure my copy of the second edition, inscribed with Whiteside’s compliments on March 2, 1949, to James E. Chessor, who in turn, gave it to B.B. James, my father-in-law, who passed it on to me). When I remarked earlier that a refutation of Moser’s doctrinal scheme was already available, and had been for some years, I had Whiteside’s commentary.

In yet another irony, Cled Wallace not only wrote the “Preface” to Moser’s *The Way of Salvation*, but he also, in combination with his brother, Foy, and C.R. Nichol, wrote a most complimentary “Introduction” to Whiteside’s commentary—the main purpose of which, remember, was to answer Moser’s book (Whiteside 3–5). The following quotes are samples of how specifically the erudite Whiteside aimed at Moser’s doctrine in his commentary and how dangerous he considered that doctrine to be:

Moffatt’s rendering of this verse, as quoted by K.C. Moser, in *The Way of Salvation* [45], cannot justly be considered a translation at all: “Then what becomes of our boasting: It is ruled out absolutely. On what principle? On the principle of doing deeds? No, on the principle of faith’ (Whiteside 92)..

To me it seems inexcusable that a person should so misunderstand Paul as to draw the following conclusion: “Indeed, it seems to be difficult even at the present time for many to grasp the idea of righteousness that does not depend on human effort.” Surely the author [*Way* 115] did not properly consider the import of his words. If a Universalist or an Ultra-Calvinist had penned such words, we would not be surprised. Not only am I not able to grasp the ideal of a righteousness that does not depend on human effort, but I do not believe there is such righteousness in any human being. If a human being is made righteous without any human effort, then why are not all righteous? It is certain that the most of them are not making any effort to attain to righteousness (Whiteside 93).

If people would quit arraying the commands of God against the grace of God [a reference to Moser's doctrinal thrust], they would have a clearer vision of the scheme of redemption. God's grace is in every command he gives (Whiteside 97).

It has been erroneously assumed and falsely argued that to impute a thing to a person is to put to his account something he does not have, or somewhat more than he has. The Presbyterian and Baptist Confessions of Faith, and a host of theologians of both schools, teach that the righteousness of Christ is imputed, or credited, to the sinner. I was sorry to see it also taught in *The Way of Salvation* [118]. The doctrine is wholly without Scriptural support (Whiteside 98).

As earlier indicated, another interesting twist in the saga between Whiteside and Moser is that, just as Whiteside's Romans commentary was basically a response to Moser's *The Way of Salvation*, so Moser's *The Gist of Romans* was a response to Whiteside's commentary. Thus Moser quotes Whiteside [96] as follows:

The principle of works is so important in this epistle, and so difficult for many to understand, that a further study seems justifiable. For example, note this statement: "If all works are eliminated, faith itself is eliminated, for faith is a work." Then the words of Jesus in John 6:29 are offered as proof. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (*Gist* 48).

Hicks relates that no sooner had Whiteside begun writing his rebuttals to *The Way of Salvation* in *Gospel Advocate* in 1933, *Firm Foundation* editor, G.H.P. Showalter, wrote in an editorial that he "regarded Moser as a traitor who had sided with the Baptists" (*Historical* 5).

Wallace also noted in his 1977 comments on Moser that the Baptist debater, Ben M. Bogard, whom several brethren debated in the 1930s, endorsed Moser's book and taunted brethren with it when debating them. After referring to Moser's theology as "denominational doctrine," Wallace wrote:

In fact, Ben M. Bogard, the reputed Baptist debater declared his acceptance of the Moser book with endorsement in his Baptist paper, and paraded it in debate against our own debaters who were compelled to publicly repudiate it (1036).

Well did Bogard count Moser's book for his cause, as can be seen when one compares some of Moser's statements with one of Bogard's assertions in his 1938 debate with N.B. Hardeman:

I am going to maintain that there is no act at all that any man in the Old Testament time or the New ever had to perform in order to be saved. Salvation is received by faith, and faith is the only thing you can do without doing anything (*Hardeman-Bogard* 93).

(Is it not strange that Baptist Bogard could recognize Baptist doctrine in Moser's book, but some influential brethren of Moser's day could not and some of our time cannot?) It is no wonder that Wallace, Whiteside, Showalter, and others described *The Way of Salvation* as "contrary to the gospel plan of salvation" and "no more nor less than denominational doctrine" (1036). Wallace, after the passing of almost half a century, still regretted that the Wallace name had in any way lent credibility to Moser:

My deceased brother Cled E. Wallace, expressed regret for having allowed his name to be so connected and mis-used to promote positions to the hurt of the New Testament plan of salvation to which his own writings were always so true. And I personally regret having contributed to its [i.e., *The Way of Salvation*] circulation in its earlier stages by announcements in the *Gospel Advocate* (1036).

It is clear from the foregoing material that Moser's doctrine was not welcomed by some of his most influential contemporary writers and preachers.
Brewer, Thomas, Mattox—and Moser

Unlike Wallace, Whiteside, and others, Hicks documents the fact that G.C. Brewer, prominent preacher and generally considered a stalwart defender of the faith (also an *Advocate* staff writer under Wallace in the early 1930s), wrote an

extremely **favorable** review of the Moser book. The *Advocate* published the review (“Read This Book”) in its May 11, 1933 edition, a year after the book was published. In subsequent editions (as in my copy), Brewer’s article became the “Introduction” at the beginning of the book. He began by calling it “One of the best little books that came from any press in 1932...” (*Way* 8). In keeping with his unqualified and numerous glowing compliments of Moser’s work, Brewer concluded his review as follows:

Every reader of the Gospel Advocate should order a copy of *The Way of Salvation* and read it two or three times. It will enlarge his vision and refresh his soul. I commend this book heartily. If there is a conclusion in it with which I differ, I do not now recall it.

While Wallace rightly judged Moser’s doctrine as borrowed from the denominations, Brewer clearly viewed it as an antidote for a perceived “legalism” among brethren. We can only imagine the tensions in the *Advocate* offices between Wallace, Whiteside, and others, in their opposition to Moserism on the one hand and Brewer in his role as a one-man Moser pep squad on the other.

In 1937, Moser published a booklet, which he titled, *Are We Preaching the Gospel?* in which he accused brethren of preaching an “abstract plan” of human works rather than grace received through faith. Moser published yet another booklet in 1952, titled, *Christ Versus a “Plan.”* Brewer also praised and promoted these tracts.

That same year (1937) Brewer made his own mark on the *grace-versus-works* theme in a speech on “Grace and Salvation” at the Abilene Christian College Lectureship. The late J.D. Thomas, in his first year as director of the lectureship, purposely assigned him this topic because he agreed with Brewer and Moser, according to liberal Hicks (*Historical* 7). Brewer apparently accomplished Thomas’ goal, for he counted Brewer’s lecture a “pivotal turning point” in doctrine for the church. Thomas was definitely a Moser acolyte, as demonstrated in two of his books (see Thomas, Works Cited). If nothing else, Brewer’s sermon lent some credibility to Moser’s unrelenting theme.

Moser published his final book, *The Gist of Romans*, in 1957. Brewer died of cancer in 1956, and thus never saw Moser’s last book. Given his previous support of Moser’s doctrine, had he lived to see it, one can easily imagine his

giving it high marks. When I arrived on the ACC campus in 1957, after three years at Freed-Hardeman College, some unknown benefactor made a copy of this book available to me (as I presume he did to all ACC Bible majors). Obviously, someone wanted to influence young wanna-be preachers with Moser's doctrine (in retrospect, J.D. Thomas, then head of the Bible Department, may well have been the benefactor).

We will pick up here next month with part 3.



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Phariseeism Is Alive And Well

*Jerry C. Brewer
Elk City, OK*

The Pharisees were the mainstream denomination of the first century. There were others, but Phariseeism largely predominated and its devotees were some of the fiercest opponents of Jesus. The term “Phariseeism” has come to mean the height of hypocrisy and is often hurled at Jesus’ followers in our day by those who are, in fact, the real practitioners of Phariseeism—the modern denominational industry.

There is a striking parallel between those of Jesus day and modern denominations. Jesus said of them, *“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not. ...But all of their works they do to be seen of men...”* (Matt. 23:2-3, 5a).

Jesus’ description of the Pharisees in His day perfectly fits modern denominations. They purport to teach the doctrine of Christ, but refuse to observe it. They loudly proclaim, “Jesus is Lord,” but refuse to submit to His Lordship in obedience. His indictment of them is found in Luke 6:46: *“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* Denominational Phariseeism says Jesus died for our sins and shed His blood for us, but refuses to teach the means of contacting that blood in baptism (Rom. 6:3-5). Modern Phariseeism says we should observe the memorial of Jesus’ death in the Lord’s Supper, but refuses to do so on the first day of every week and sometimes observe it on days other than the one authorized (Acts 20:7). Modern Pharisees insist that we sing praises to God in worship, but add the element of mechanical instruments which was never authorized by the One they claim is their “Lord” (Eph. 5:18-19). Modern denominations are “church-oriented,” seeking the “unchurched” to increase their numbers and dollars while absolutely denying that there is only *one church* which Jesus established, over which He is head, and which He saves (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:22). In their insistence that, “one church is as good as another,” they are as elitist as the Pharisees of Jesus’ day and exalt their traditions (creeds) above the teachings of Jesus. In all of this,

they are as condemned by the Lord as those of His day were: *“For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition”* (Mark 7:8-9).

Modern Phariseeism prides itself on an outward display of religion while within it is full of evil. That is clearly demonstrated in the words of one modern Pharisee who “Pastors” the Trinity Fellowship Church at Sayre, Okla. In his weekly free column in a local paper, he wrote, “There are hundreds of things, which are specifically covered by Scripture, and on those things we mustn’t compromise, especially where sin is concerned. But there are hundreds, if not thousands, of other issues which are not specifically covered in the Bible. What do we do about those things? Things such as drinking alcohol, watching ‘R’ rated movies, whether or not to observe Halloween or which political party to vote for, among many others. These are things that believers have strong convictions about. And if our conviction is to abstain from these things then we should do it...provided that our convictions are the result of the Spirit’s activity in our lives. But if Scripture does not specifically cover the issues then we can’t hold them as ‘law’ (emph. his) over someone else” (Andy Taylor, “Issues of Life,” *Daily Elk Citian*, Friday, April 3, 2012, p. 5A).

His skewing of Scripture brands him as a Pharisee of the deepest dye. He and others of his ilk put on good shows with their theatrics, music and bands, wearing clothing outwardly proclaiming their love for Jesus, making “broad their phylacteries,” but they *“are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity”* (Matt. 23:27-28).

The Pharisees of Jesus’ day twisted and perverted Scripture and added their own traditions to it in order to justify their wickedness while appearing to follow the Law of Moses. That is precisely the modus operandi of modern Pharisees in today’s denominational industry. Modern Pharisees are *not* those of us who insist on a “thus saith the Lord” for all we preach and practice. It was not the teaching and keeping of the Law of Moses that Jesus condemned in the Pharisees. It was their hypocrisy. *“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they **say and do not*** (Emph. JB) (Matt. 23:2-

3).

Like the Pharisees of old, iniquitous, hypocritical denominationalists lay aside God's commandments to keep their own traditions, such as "drinking alcohol" or "watching 'R' rated movies." Like those of Jesus' day who laid aside God's commandments to satisfy their own lusts (Mark 7:9-13), today's Pharisees refuse to "deny self" (Matt. 16:24) and pursue a life of hedonism while saying, "Jesus is Lord." Phariseeism is alive and well in our time, and as long as man lives upon the earth it will be a thorn in the side of the cause of Jesus Christ.

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**DEDICATED TO REFUTING THE
FALSE DOCTRINES OF MAN**

If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Medical Ethics

*Michael Hatcher
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INTRODUCTION

Should I try *in vitro* fertilization? Should someone act as a surrogate parent? Should I try to clone myself? How should we view sex change surgery? How should we view various types of medical engineering (i.e. genetic engineering, gene splicing, genetic screening, genetic mapping, et al.)? What should we think about various types of brain control (electrical stimulation, chemical control, psychosurgery, et al.)?

These are just some of the questions people are faced with today. How is it possible for a book that was completed around 2000 years ago to deal with medical questions that we face today? When the Bible was completed there was absolutely no way for the writers to envision the advances of medical technology that would take place today. Just as there is no way for us to look into the future, if God allows this world to stand, and see what advances will come.

Brethren have long said, and correctly so, that the Bible gives us answers for our every need. The Bible answers every moral and religious need and question we might face. Peter writes, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:3-4). God did not simply give man what he needed to be saved or to worship properly. God also gave man what he needed regarding anything and everything that might come along in our life. As such, these medical questions, while not dealt with specifically, are answered for us in the principles God established. There are three principles that if properly applied, I believe, will answer all the questions regarding medical ethics that we presently face or will face in the future.

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

If man simply evolved from lifeless matter or lower life forms. Man is the creation of God. Notice what Moses writes by inspiration of God: "And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the

breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). In speaking to the Athenians, Paul would tell them concerning God: “Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). It is Jehovah God that gives life to all things. Human life is a gift from God. As such, human life needs to be respected. Since life is a gift of God and man is expected by God to respect that life, God has always considered the unjust taking of life to be wrong. When Cain murdered his brother, Abel, God said to him: “What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand” (Gen. 4:10-11). God made Cain realize the great evil he had done, thus Cain responded, “it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me” (4:14). Cain realized the penalty for murder would be death for the murderer (himself). So others would not “slay” him, God “set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him” (4:15).

Later God would instruct man: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (9:6). Under the Mosaic Law, God saw fit to make this one of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt not kill” (Exo. 20:13). Many of the later translations use *murder* instead of kill (NKJV, NAS, ESV, NET), which is probably a better translation.

We would also note that God views human life from the moment of conception. The sweet singer of Israel would write, “For thou hast possessed my reins [formed my inward parts; NKJV]: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well. My substance [frame; NKJV] was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously [skillfully; NKJV] wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect [unformed; NKJV]; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them” (Psa. 139:13-16). David considered himself a human life while he was still in the womb, and God knew him while still being formed in the womb. Jeremiah also stated that God knew him while still in the womb when he wrote: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5).

HONOR OF MAN

Closely associated with the previous is the dignity, honor, or respect of man.

Man did not evolve from the apes and thus simply an animal, as the evolutionist teaches. God created man in His image. Moses recorded, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:26-27). Being made in the image of God, we are the offspring of God. Paul said to the Athenians, “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. 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” (Acts 17:28-29).

In writing about the tongue and its evil, James shows that we should no curse man because man is the offspring of God. He writes, “Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God” (Jam. 3:9). This certainly demands a respect or dignity for mankind.

When God created man and placed him in the Garden, Moses records, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day” (Gen. 1:31). During this time, God would come to man and fellowship him. It was a custom for God to come “walking in the garden in the cool of the day” (3:8). At this time man had not been spoiled by sin. However, since man is made in the image of God, man has the right to choose right from wrong; man was created as a free moral agent. With the ability to choose, when Satan came tempting Eve, she chose to disobey God (3:1-6). Sin came into the world and sin brings a multitude of evils with it. God pronounced certain consequences to Adam and Eve’s disobedience (3:16-19).

Sin continued to abound in the world. This resulted in sorrow on God’s part with man: “And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (6:6). Thus, God said, “My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (6:3). Because of that evil that God saw man doing, He determined to destroy the world, “And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them” (6:7). To destroy man from the face of the earth, God sent a global flood, yet sparing righteous Noah and his family in the ark. The flood destroyed the water vapor canopy

above the earth, resulting in the harmful effects of the sun reaching man (this is why the ages of the patriarchs were in the 900 year range prior to the flood, but after the flood it settles to about 70 to 80 years, Psa. 90:10). Those harmful effects of the sun have brought additional ills, afflictions, and sufferings into our world.

God does authorize us to do what we can to improve our health. Paul speaks of bodily exercise when he writes, “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). While it is of little profit compared with godliness, it is still profitable for the human body. Jesus authorized the principle of going to a doctor to regain one’s health when He said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” (Mat. 9:12), and Luke did not have to stop being a physician when he became a Christian (Col. 4:14). Thus, those things that are necessary to improve one’s health would certainly be authorized by God; i.e., blood transfusions, medications, surgeries, organ transplants, et al. However, because we have the right and opportunity to take advantage of many of the medical procedures available today does not mean that we are like an animal to be experimented on. God made man as He so desired. The sweet singer of Israel, David, would state: “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well” (Psa. 139:14). To alter or try to change God’s design is to go beyond what is right and moral.

We will continue with part 2 next month



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Controversy And The Church

Rodney O. Carter, Sr.
December 24, 2015

Last night, after I had finished my exam, I was listening to a fellow brother in Christ, Jim Miller speak about controversy. As he was speaking I just started writing about the same topic and below is what I came up with:

The church has allowed itself to get into the state it is in because no one wants to hear the controversial issues, i.e. the traditions of men. What this does is allow more of the traditions of men to creep in and eventually take over and totally corrupt the primary mission of the church.

We are warned by Christ and the apostles that being a Christian and worshiping God in such a way that pleases him would not be “fun”. Where in the Scriptures do any of the authors say that worship and being a Christian should be fun? It doesn't say it anywhere. Following Christ is not about having fun as the world sees it; it is about sharing the good news of the sacrifice that Christ made for all mankind. It is also about behaving as Christ behaved, loving each other and edifying our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Many in the Lord's church are afraid to speak on controversial topics because they are worried about rocking the boat, stepping on toes, or being politically correct. It is this fear of standing up for the Bible and the truth that causes one to become a "back row sitter" and lukewarm (Revelation 3:16). When false doctrine is allowed to enter into the church, these very same people make accommodations in order keep the peace.

Mankind, in general, can talk a lot about what they would do in this situation or that situation, but would they really? When they are faced with the situation where they are presented with a controversial issue, a majority of the time they will just cow down and say "I will just let that go as if I didn't hear it," they agree with the person bringing up the idea so as to not lose face, or they will tell someone else about the changes that are going to be made and still nothing will be done to correct the error of the one(s) who presented the idea when it goes against God's commands.

There are times where controversy can be beneficial to the church. Controversy that is dealt with properly can “flush out” the wolves that have

snuck into the Lord's church. What has happened though is that those "wolves" have taken the controversial issues such as instrumental music, baptism, marriage, divorce, and remarriage, and salvation and have used Scriptural doctrine to turn others against the church by claiming "you believe that you are holier than anyone else" and that "you say that you are the only ones going to heaven." Well they may have the last claim correct, but all we do is strive to follow the commands of God and serve him in only the ways that he has commanded.

We do not add commands into our service that God has been silent about. There are commands and examples that infer other commands. For example, in 1 Corinthians 16:2, the apostle Paul gave the command that "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 gatherings when I come." In order for the saints to lay by in store so that when Paul comes the collection will be in one location the saints needed to gather together and, just as the disciples did on the day of Pentecost, the church in Corinth would meet to worship together, partake of the Lord's Supper and give "as God prospered" them. There was never a spoken command to meet on the first day of the week, but since Christ was resurrected on the first day of the week, it was commanded that the disciples meet together on the first day of the week to await the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The example from Acts 2:1 is the inferred command for the remainder of time.

Occasionally we must cut ties with those who continue in error. There was something that my mom told me a long time ago that didn't set well with me and since then she has even expounded upon it. She once said that we will all go to heaven (those who follow Christ) and then years later told me that only 144,000 will be granted access into heaven. I expressed my disagreement about the 144,000 several years ago and from then on she questioned my understanding of the Bible. I finally stopped discussing the Bible with her and eventually she stopped communicating with me all together. I still love her and pray for her daily, but she was following a doctrine that I did not believe the Scriptures teach. She has recently recanted her perspective of Revelation 7 and 14, and we are talking again.

Today's society is going to continue to get worse if we as Christians don't put down our material things that give us temporary satisfaction and "fun", and pick our cross back up and push toward that eternal finish line. Even if doing so means losing "friends" along the way, it will be worth it. We can then say that we have "fought the good fight, we have finished the course, we have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). Personally, I would rather hear God tell me "Well done, good

and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21), than have an uncountable number of friends here on this earth.

So what is keeping you from picking up your cross and following the Lord and Savior of the world? Why don't you act as the children of God are commanded to act? Why won't you carry the gospel to others about Christ and the free gift of salvation that he offers to all mankind? When he walked the earth he already knew what sacrifice he was going to have to make for all of us; isn't that amount of love enough to convince you to follow him? Yes, we will suffer for being Christians, but "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (KJV)