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BIBLE CONFERENCE

Grace Baptist Church of Germanton, N. Carolina will be having their annual Labor Day Bible Conference beginning Friday evening at 7:00 pm Sept. 2nd thru the Lord's Day on Sept. 4th. The Conference will be held at the Church building this year.

Hotel accommodations are made for the speakers. Visitors who come to our conference will be charged the same group rate we were charged for the speakers.

The theme of our Conference is, *Prevailing Over persecution.*

If you desire to attend please contact:

Pastor Andy Proctor at 743-207-1743

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The Landmark Baptist

"MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD."—John 1:23

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"The first link between my soul and Christ is, not my goodness, but my *badness*; not my merit, but my misery; not my standing, but my falling; not my riches, but my need. He comes to visit His people, yet not to admire their beauties, but to remove their deformities; not to reward their virtues, but to forgive their sins"



— C. H. Spurgeon

(Charles Spurgeon Page)

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE CHURCH

A. N. MORRIS

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, *even unto the end of the world* (age)”—Matt. 28:18-20.

The Duke of Wellington called this the marching orders of the ministry; but it would be more correct to call it the marching orders of the churches, for this commission was not given to ministers, but to churches.

Some Patent Points

I. *The author of this commission is Jesus Christ, the only Lord and lawgiver of His churches.*

Men may establish their own churches, and give to them man-made laws; *but they have no right to make laws for the blood bought churches of Christ.* “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” said Christ.

II. *The commission was given to an organized body of believers, known as His church, which He had already constituted.*

The following points are not only self-evident, but preeminently Scriptural:

1. The commission was not given to the apostles as such, for in that case the commission would have ceased at the death of the last apostle; the apostles having no successors.

2. The commission was not given to preachers as such, for that would keep it out of the churches [and would make preachers the pillar and ground of the truth instead of the church. See 1 Tim. 3:15—Ed.]

3. The commission was not given to individual disciples, for in that case the churches would not be the custodians of the gospel, and would have no authority to execute any part of the commission. This would leave the churches without a mission in the world.

4. The commission was not given to Christ's enemies, for they would not carry out His will among men.

5. The commission was not given to those who profess to love Christ, but are fundamentally wrong in doctrine, for this would send down through the centuries the very opposite of what Christ wanted.

6. The commission was not given to a false church, for such an institution would divert, invert, and pervert the whole system of salvation and service. Then to whom was the commission given? It was

given to the church Christ had already constituted.

III. *Jesus Christ constituted His own church during His personal ministry on earth, and, as an institution, He called it "my church," saying: "Upon this rock I will build my church."*

Let the following be well considered

I. *What does the word "church" mean?* Some would have us believe it means a religious denomination, as the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Christian Church, the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church, the Catholic Church, etc. Others teach that it is all the saved considered together, including the saints of the past and present upon the earth and those in heaven. Still there are others who think it means a kind of "trunk," out of which all religious sects grow as branches. Yet others would have us believe that it is invisible, and is known only to the eye of God. Finally, some think it is a state church, such as the Church of France, the Church of England, etc. But such designations are foreign to the Scriptures, as we shall see.

Light is thrown upon the meaning of the word "church" from two sources:

(1) *The meaning of the word in the original language.* How did the Greeks use the word *ekklesia*, which is translated church in our Bibles? How did Jesus and the apostles use it? From what source did the term enter the New Testament? Were different writers in the first century uniform in their use of the word? If we could approach

these matters without denominational bias, it would not be difficult for us to get a satisfactory answer; but most of us have formed our opinions from the customs about us until the desire for individual and independent research has about left us. Will the reader come to this question as if it were entirely new to him and impartially weigh the arguments advanced herein? Note the testimony of scholars:

Prof. Royal, one time professor in Wake Forest College, said he knew of no place where unassembled or unassembling people were called an *ekklesia* or church. Hence, people who do not assemble cannot be scripturally called a church.

Dr. W. A. Jarrell wrote the professors of Greek in the leading universities and seminaries in many countries, and asked them the following question: "***What Greek lexicons are standard for classics and New Testament Greek?***" The almost unanimous answer was: "Liddell and Scott (late edition) for Greek, in general, and Thayer for New Testament Greek." Therefore, here we may expect to get the best and only worthwhile definition of the Greek word *ekklesia*. Liddell and Scott define the word thus: "***An assembly of people called together.***" This is its general use. Thayer gives the word as meaning ***a congregation, or an assembly.*** Robinson gives the same rendering in his lexicon. Bishop Trench says: "***Ekklesia, as all know, was the lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all persons possessed of the rights of citizenship for the***

transaction of public affairs." Baptists accept the primary meaning of this word, and therefore, believe that *"a church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and, fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His law, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word"* (N. H. confession). That which cannot assemble in some particular place is not an assembly, and that which, cannot congregate is not a congregation; hence all Christians do not constitute the church.

(2) The meaning of the word in the New Testament. The first church was constituted by Jesus Christ while He was here, in the flesh. Before this church was founded a man was sent, as a forerunner to prepare the material for it. As David prepared the material out of which Solomon built the temple (1 Chron. 29:19), so John the Baptist prepared the material out of which Christ formed His church. See Mark 1:2, 3; Luke 1:7; 6:12, 13. This church was not formed on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, as some claim, but before Christ died. Savage, in his "Time and Place Harmony," shows that Jesus constituted His church "on the Pentecostal morning, Saturday, June 4, 32 A. D.," and cites Luke 6:12, 13 as proof. Jesus called out the twelve, assembled them and ordained them that they might be with Him as a kind of traveling church. Paul says: **"God set some in the church, first apostles"** (1 Cor.

12:28). The apostles were the charter members of the church, and were **"set in"** by the Lord Himself. These men had been previously baptized by John the Baptist. How do we know this? We know that some of them were John's disciples (John 1:35-37). We also know that none became identified with him, except through repentance, faith, and baptism (Matt. 3; Acts 19:4). In selecting a successor of Judas, it was necessary that one be chosen who had been identified with John in his baptism (Acts 1:21, 22). (That first church was careful in the selection of officers.) John said: **"I baptize you with water, he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit"** (Matt. 3:11). So the apostles, who were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, had already been baptized in water by John. John says so. He baptized them in water, and Christ baptized them in the Holy Spirit. John won them, baptized them, and had them ready for Christ when He came. He was glad to say to his disciples: **"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29).

That the church was constituted while Christ was here in the flesh is clear from the fact that while He was in the world His church was formed and had within its membership **"apostles," "prophets," and "teachers"** (1 Cor. 12:28). Also it had the gospel committed to it, with an ordained ministry to proclaim it (Luke 6:12, 13; Mark 1:1; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 10:7). This church baptized, had the Lord's Supper, and was in

possession of a law of church discipline before Christ died (John 4:2; Matt. 26:26-30; Matt. 18:15-17). Besides this, this church had a treasurer to handle its finances, and possessed the keys of the kingdom before Jesus died (John 13:29; Matt. 16:19). Before the first Pentecost after the death of Jesus, the church had enrolled one hundred and twenty members; and had the commission to evangelize, baptize, and teach in all the world (Matt. 28:18-20). It also had a method of voting, and elected an officer by a majority vote (Acts 1:15-18). To this church were added three thousand members at Pentecost. And, inasmuch as something cannot be added to nothing, the church had to be in existence to receive these new members.

That the church was constituted on Pentecost is not only unscriptural, but is also anti-scriptural. There is no scriptural foundation for such a theory. If, as the Campbellites claim, John's baptism was not Christian, and it takes Christian baptism to save, and the apostles were put in as the charter members of the church on Pentecost, then it follows that Christ constituted His church of children of the devil; for the apostles had none other than the baptism administered by John.

To show that New Testament churches were congregations or assemblies I quote from "**Memoirs of J. N. Hall,**" page 102 : "**Acts 15:41, Comforting the churches. Acts 16:5, Churches established. Acts 19:37, neither robbers of**

churches. Rom. 16:4, Churches give thanks; vs. 16, Churches of Christ salute you. 1 Cor. 7:17, In all the churches. 1 Cor. 11:16, No such custom, neither the churches of God. 1 Cor. 14:22, As in all the churches; vs. 34, Keep silence in the churches. 1 Cor. 16:1, Given to all the churches; vs. 19, The churches of Asia. 2 Cor. 8:1, The churches of Macedonia; vs. 19, chosen of the churches; vs. 23, Messengers of the churches. 2 Cor. 11:8, I robbed other churches; vs. 28, Care of all the churches. Gal. 1:22, Unknown by face unto the churches. 2 Cor. 12:13, Inferior to other churches. 1 Thess. 2:14, Churches of God. 2 Thess. 1:4, The churches. Rev. 1:4, The seven churches; vs. 20, Angels of the churches, candlesticks are the churches. Rev. 2:7, What the Spirit saith to the churches." In all these passages *no* mention is made of "**the Christian church,**" or "**the church universal,**" or "**the church invisible,**" or "**the church militant,**" or "**the church triumphant,**" but in every case it is "churches" in the plural. It is clear to all who wish to see, that New Testament churches were congregations, or as an Episcopal writer puts it, "**little democracies.**" The universal church idea is foreign to the teaching of the New Testament except those passages that refer to all the churches when gathered into one great assembly in heaven.

2. The kind of a church Jesus constituted. The church Jesus built was a Baptist church. Those

who emphasize a name to the exclusion of principles insist that nowhere is the first New Testament church called a Baptist church. I reply that this leaves us an equal chance with others, for we do not read in the Scriptures of the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Christian Church, the Episcopal Church, the Catholic Church, or the General Baptist Church, etc.

But Baptists have something better than this to offer. The name "**Baptist**" was divinely given. [And it is the only denominational name that was divinely given.—Ed.] John was called "the Baptist" before he baptized anyone, and hence he did not receive his name because he baptized. See Matt. 3:1. Carefully consider the following:

(1) John was sent from God on a mission; hence he was a **missionary** (John 1:6).

(2) John was called "**the Baptist**;" hence he was a **Missionary Baptist** (Matt. 3:1).

(3) John preached (Matt. 3:1); hence he was a preacher, and, therefore, a **Missionary Baptist preacher**.

(4) Jesus Christ was sent on a mission (John 17:18); hence he was a **Missionary**.

(5) Jesus Christ was baptized by John, a **Missionary Baptist preacher** (Matt. 3:13-17); hence he was a Missionary Baptist.

(6) Jesus Christ preached the gospel; hence he was a preacher, and, therefore, a **Missionary Baptist preacher**.

(7) The first Baptist preacher won men by preaching Baptist doctrine. He preached blood atone-

ment (John 1:29), repentance before baptism (Matt. 3:1), saving faith before baptism (Acts 19:4), that men should give evidence of the new life in Christ before baptism (Matt. 3:7, 8), and that men do not enter the kingdom through flesh and blood qualifications (Matt. 3:9 with 1 Cor. 2:14).

(8) Therefore, the material prepared by this first Missionary Baptist preacher was Missionary Baptist material. Christ took this material and built His first organization and called it "**my church**" (Matt. 16:18). Hence, this church that was built of Missionary Baptist material, which had been prepared by a Missionary Baptist preacher, was a Missionary Baptist church. Christ built no other kind of church, and left no orders for others to build any other kind; therefore, this is the only kind of church Jesus Christ has in the world today. Hence all other churches are man-made and false.

(9) The work of evangelism was given to this church. Christ said, "**Make disciples**." This places the whole work of evangelism in the hands of the churches. These churches are to win men by preaching the gospel (Mark 16:15); by personal effort (John 1:35-42; 3:1-13); and by godly living (1 Cor. 9:22). Hence, revival meetings, to be orderly and scriptural, must be under the direction of New Testament churches. This forbids so-called union meetings.

(10) The administration of baptism is the work of a New Testament church, and should never be administered outside of one. [This is bound to be true because

scriptural baptism puts believers into churches. See 1 Cor. 12:13.— [Ed.]. The church must decide who shall be baptized, using the New Testament requirements as a guide. This forbids alien immersion.

(11) The functions of teaching and training belong to New Testament churches. The church is to teach all things commanded by Christ. Many things nowadays are tacked on to the commission that does not belong there. Many things are put into Christian schools that Christ has not commanded, and these things are paid for out of funds contributed for Christian education. Baptists should hold strictly to the commission. This forbids union schools.

Every part of this commission having been given to the churches, it is clear that these churches, or persons representing these churches, have no authority to fraternize or flirt with organizations or individuals not authorized to execute the commission. A church of Christ has no more right to be untrue to Him than a wife has to be untrue to her husband.

3. Christ's promise to the church He constituted. Christ promised perpetuity to His church. This is also in the commission, for when He said : "**Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,**" He did not promise to be with a non-entity, or something that would not be in existence "**all the days.**" The Emphatic Diaglott renders this part of the commission thus : "**Behold, I am with you all the days, till the consummation of the age.**" "**All the days**" means every day, with not a day missing.

How could this promise be applied to organizations that have come into existence far this side of the days of the Son of Man in the flesh? Begin with any religious denomination, except Baptists, and you can trace it to its origin hundreds of years this side of the time when Christ constituted His church. Hence, this promise was not to any of the modern churches, except Baptist churches.

Jesus said: "**Upon this rock I will build my church (ekklesia), and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it**" (Matt. 16:18). This was the first time Jesus used the word "ekklesia." His next use of it is recorded in Matt. 18:15-17, where He tells how to deal with an offending brother. After a prescribed course has been followed in private, the matter is to come before the church. He uses "**ekklesia**" again, with evidently no change in the meaning. It would be impossible to carry a case before a church that covers the world and several centuries; and it would be still more difficult to bring it before an invisible church. Jesus meant that such a case was to be carried before an orderly congregation, and this is the kind of a church that is promised perpetuity. "**The gates of hades**" have never prevailed against Christ's ekklesia or church, and, therefore, there have been true churches in the world "**all the days**" since the first one was constituted.

If at any time the "**gates of hades**" had prevailed against His church as an institution, it would have been due to one of two things; viz., either Christ wanted to

preserve it, but the devil overcame Him and destroyed it, or He did not wish to preserve it. The first could not be true, for He prefaced the commission by saying: "**All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth.**" The latter is equally untenable, for He asserts that it shall not be destroyed. The Apostle Paul says: "**Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end**" (Eph. 3:21). The Emphatic Diaglott renders this verse: "**To him be the glory in the congregation by Jesus Christ, to all the generations of the age of the ages.**" According to this rendering there must have

been, and must continue to be, "**congregations**" in every generation. The American Revised Version renders it: "**Unto him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever.**" This is a guarantee that Christ's church is to be in existence in all generations. I have shown that Christ constituted His own church, and that it has continued every day since then.

I have also shown that the first church was a Baptist church. Therefore, Baptist churches are the only depositories of the great commission.

From *The Baptist Examiner*
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FREE FROM SIN - NOT FREE TO SIN.

By Pastor Wm. Troy Sheppard
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"**But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.**" (Rom. 6:22).

The Scripture is clear that genuine believers are "free", and it is just as clear what we are free "from". Listen to God's word, "**But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.**" (Rom. 6:22). Free? Yes, free! But, are we *from* serving God? Are we free *from* following after righteousness? Are we free *from* taking heed to God's Holy Word? Are we free *from* being obedient servants? Are we free *to* talk as we please, go where we please, dress as we please, think as we please, watch what we please, listen to what we please or do as we please? Are we free *from* holy living? Never! No, Never.

Some men are guilty of using their freedom in Christ "**for an occasion to the flesh**" (Gal. 5:13) and "**for a cloke of maliciousness**" (I Peter 2:16), but God never intended the doctrine of free grace to give any man a high regard for

sin or a low regard for righteousness. Jesus came to **“save his people from their sins”** (Matt 1:21), not to save His people *to* sin. Christ came to free us *from* sin, not make us free *to* sin!

What consecrated separated Christians call the "pursuit of holiness" others who wear the name of Christ call "legalism". They say we hinder "Christian liberty". To which we should reply "how free are we"? After all, are there any commands for the Christian? Is the Christian "free" to do any and every thing? Oh if men would just stop and think about what they are saying!

Those who are saved by God's free grace are free from sin. We are free from the penalty of sin (Rom. 6:23), the power of sin to condemn us (Rom. 6:14), and the power of sin to reign in us (Rom. 6:12). It is true that sin is alive in us and is an "infirmity" of our flesh (Rom. 6:19), but "legally" it has no rights to us, and "practically" we have power over it through the inner workings of the Spirit of God. Through the power of the Spirit we can resist sin and serve righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18).

It is true that we are not saved *by* keeping any law, not even the Law of God (Rom. 3:20), for salvation is *by free grace*. (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:21). But, it is equally true that those who are truly saved

by grace have also been **“created in Christ Jesus unto good works”** (Eph. 2:10) and that we are now **“become servants to God”** instead of **“servants of sin”** (Rom. 6:20-21).

The libertine will say, “You are majoring on minors” when you mention “rules” or “laws” for the Christian. But, the pursuit of holiness is not minor, it is major! For, the New Testament demands that we, **“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:”** (Heb. 12:14). And, **“...Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”** (II Tim. 2:19). Mark it well, the New Testament is full of rules for the Christian to live by and only a backslider or lost man will deny such. The quest of the believer should not be how much can I get away with and still go to heaven, but what can I do to please my Saviour on my way there. As Christians let us remember sin *is an enemy* to be hated, denied, mortified, fought against, and killed (Col. 3:5-10), but never a friend to enjoy, yield to, or obey (Rom. 6:12-13).

Dear reader, don't believe the lies of the so called carnal Christian. Christ never saved anyone so they would be free *to* sin. The grace of God frees us **“from sin”** and makes us fruitful servants **“of righteousness”** and **“unto holiness”** (Rom 6:18, 22-23), but never servants *of* sin or *to* sin. **Ω**



“I have reason to praise Him for my trials, for most probably, I should have been ruined without them.” — John Newton



HOMOSEXUALITY The Unnatural Sin

By Bill McDaniel
(1934-2019)

It will be a happy enlightenment when the Spirit enables one to see that the last four books of Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) contain an exegetical commentary on the moral law of God. These writings contain an expansion of the Ten Commandments by showing the various ways each may be transgressed. Nowhere is this more evident than in Leviticus 18, showing how very broad is the seventh commandment, **“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”** Such sins as incest, bestiality, adultery and sodomy are mentioned and condemned. The eighteenth chapter of Leviticus is an awful testimony to the depravity of human nature, especially in the realm of sexuality!

One such sin mentioned and forbidden is the abominable practice of homosexuality, **“Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind; it is an abomination”** (Lev. 18:22). The expression, “to lie with,” is used in Scripture to describe illicit sexual unions (See 1 Samuel 2:22, Genesis 19:33-35). So is the term “to go into” (Genesis 38:9, Genesis 16:4). Thus, to “lie with mankind as with

womankind,” is for two males to commit sex acts, one being “used” as one would use a woman, one man lying sexually with another man as one would with a woman, this the Apostle Paul calls “unnatural” in Romans 1:26-27.

The legal marriage union is modestly described in Scripture as “to know” and “knew” (Genesis 4:2, 25; Luke 1:35). This marriage bed is honorable in all and undefiled (Heb.13:4). Marriage in the Biblical sense is a man and woman becoming one flesh by the conjugal union (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:5, Eph. 5:31). On the other hand homosexuality is a going after strange flesh (Jude 1:7). Only a man and a woman can become one flesh by the sexual union. Two of the same gender (homosexuals) is strange flesh, for it is other than God ordained in the beginning. “Male and female made He them” (Gen. 1:27).

The original order of the sexes as ordained by God

To fully comprehend the perversion involved in the practice of homosexuality, we have but to consider God’s creation in the

beginning. God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Frank or Eve and Heather; one man and one woman to be his wife to live as husband and wife and to procreate the race. To them God gave the command to multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28). **“Adam knew his wife and she conceived and bare. . .”** (Gen 4:1). This was to be done by the heterosexual union. The *only* proper relation and sexual union is the heterosexual, i. e., one man and one woman becoming one flesh.

Homosexuality is in every case a violation of divine order

Many today are declaring homosexuality to be a legitimate and normal “alternate” lifestyle. Apostate “reverends” are embracing this perverse conduct. The liberal cesspool that is Hollywood is seeking to force Sodomy into general acceptance. The public school system, is the chokehold of liberal and humanistic social engineers, is pushing little children to believe that “gay is good.” States are passing special “hate crime” laws. We are told that the new national disease is “homophobia.” The media for the most part favors all homosexual causes.

The Scriptures are clear, homosexuality is a perversion of the divine order in every case and instance. It is abomination (Lev. 18:22, 20:13), i.e., a thing God detests. It is unnatural therefore it is a perversion. In fact, in Romans chapter one, the Apostle Paul calls homosexuality by such unflattering terms as “vile affections,” “against

nature,” “unseemly,” “their error.”

Homosexuality is never a legitimate behavior according to the Word of God. No Christian should approve of such a thing. It is always a vile thing in God’s sight! The (Christian) must stand upon the word of God against the acceptance of such a thing. In no wise is “*gay*” good. Let the Christian believe that sodomy was the sin for which God rained fire and brimstone down on the city of Sodom (Gen. 19) and was punishable by death under the old economy (Lev. 20:13)..

The society that tolerates and approves this sin puts itself under the judgment of God

The society that looks with favor or approval upon homosexuality will rot away into complete moral degradation. This is one of the sins that God said would defile the land (Lev. 18:27-30). God will not bless the nation that sanctions the sin of sodomy! Sodom and Gomorrah ever stand as a testimony to the fact that God detests the sin of homosexuality. **“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly”** (2 Peter 2:6). **“Are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of the eternal fire.”** (Jude 1:7). Though God will not rain fire and brimstone upon our land, yet the social and moral fabric *will* corrupt and society *will rot* away into moral decadence. God is not mocked and will in some way judge the

society that grants acceptance to homosexuality.

The apostle Paul's condemnation of homosexuality in Romans 1

Let us focus our attention upon the text in Romans 1:26-27, it being among the strongest texts in the condemnation of the way called homosexuality. The Apostle Paul is discussing the birth of paganism as apostasy from God's revelation. God revealed His eternal power and godhead in creation, which men perverted and suppressed in unrighteousness. As a result of their perversion of the truth of God, they fell into degrading sins and God gave them over to uncleanness. As God abandoned them to their own wicked lusts, they fell into the most vile and unnatural sins, even the sin of homosexual perversion.

We can read at least three statements declaring that God abandoned them to their own evil hearts. **"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves"** (vs 24). **"For this cause God gave them up to vile affections"** (vs 26). **"God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient"** (vs 28). As a consequence of God giving them over to the power of their lusts and the wickedness of their own depraved hearts, they fell into **"all unrighteousness"** (vs 29), even into the most degrading and defiling, homosexuality. Then, they forsook what the Apostle Paul calls **"the natural use"** and both men and women espoused and

practiced the lesbian and homosexual vices. **"Even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature,"** i.e., they became lesbians and sexually cohabited with other women.

Leaving the natural they perverted themselves into the unnatural. This did **"even the women."** Their females left the natural use, which is heterosexual, and turned toward their lusts which were lesbian. The Apostle Paul speaks yet the more harshly of the men. **"Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lusts one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly . . ."** Note the perversion, "men with men." This the law forbade. **"Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind, it is abomination"** (Lev. 18:22). When fallen sinners are ruled by their lusts and vile affections, when God lays the reins upon the neck, they will rush headlong into the most degrading way of life that leads to final destruction.

It ought to be noted that the Apostle Paul here uses words to describe the two genders that are a further condemnation of their acts. He calls the women "females" and the men "males," using the same terms as would apply to beasts and ignorant creatures. It is, **"for even their females did change the natural use..."** **"likewise also the males, leaving the natural use of the female..."** The word the Apostle Paul uses here, translated "women" is used only twice in the whole of the New Testament, and both times are here in Romans

1:26-27. It simply means the female of the species and comes from the word which means to give suck, or suckle.

In describing the conduct of male homosexuals, the Apostle Paul charges them with “leaving the natural use of the female.” The tense is, “having left.” They had already done so. Under the power of the vile affections and sordid lusts, they had already abandoned the natural order. They were driven to such behavior by the power of their insatiable lusts which burned out of control like the fires of hell. They burned with lust one toward another of the same gender. Men craving men! Having left the natural use of the woman, they are ignited with a lust too powerful to resist which craves other males. Their lusts flow from the *gehenna* that constantly burns as a perpetual fire in their hearts.

Let us make a point of comparison regarding the apostle Paul’s use of the words “the natural use.” The “natural” use of the woman is, of course, the heterosexual, i.e., man and woman in sexual union as ordained by God. This is to be consummated in a lawful union of marriage. Since homosexual unions are unnatural, the lust for homosexual relations is also unnatural. Thus, there is a natural lust and an unnatural lust. Natural lust is described by the Apostle Paul and 1 Cor. 7:1-9 as a man desiring a woman. Granted, this is a sinful lust according to Christ’s teaching in Matthew 5:27-28. The point is, it is “natural” lust in that it is not a desire for that which is perverse. Heterosexual unions (husband and

wife) are ordained by God, while homosexual unions (two of the same gender) are forbidden because they violate the original ordination of God. Perhaps this is the proper place to make another point against homosexuality. In the beginning God made them male and female (Gen.1:27). To put it as modestly as possible, the anatomical design of the bodies of men and women supports the heterosexual union in conjugal relations.

The Apostle Paul calls the homosexual union “vile affections.” Affections and our modern language might well be rendered “passions.” Vile passions! Passions that are evil, dishonorable and degrading. Such as are not found even among the ignorant beasts. Homosexual acts are “*unseemly*,” i.e., shameful and disgraceful. *It is a shame to speak of such things, much less to practice them!*

The Apostle Paul traces homosexuality two its birth and paganism

How often are these two sorts of sin found together! Homosexuality practiced in idolatry fills the cup of human depravity. Ignorance of God leads to a variety of heinous sins, none of them greater than the perversion found in homosexuality. It was a common sin among the Greeks and the Romans, people that knew not God. To engage in idolatry is to exchange the truth of God for a lie, and to engage in sodomy is to exchange the natural for the unnatural. Both are drastic perversions of God’s order.

In Romans 1 the Apostle Paul presents idolatry and homosexuality as the ultimate degradation and consummate defilement of human nature and behavior. It is therefore abominable that some today are seeking to “Christianize” this perverted lifestyle as legitimate, Christian behavior. Pity the pathetic and apostate “reverends” that support homosexuality in the name of God! Practicing homosexuals are lost (1 Cor. 6:9-10) just as are practicing atheists or idolaters.

Homosexuality brings judgment upon those who practice it

The Apostle Paul says in Romans 1:27b, **“and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet,”** or which was fitting or proper to their sin. God is able to make the judgment fit the crime, often making sin the punishment for sin. Homosexuals pay a very heavy price (in this life) for their sin. God gives them over to the power of their lusts. He gives them besotted minds unable to discern the truth (Rom. 1:28). Statistics show that homosexuals forfeit as much as thirty years of life expectancy by their “alternate lifestyle.” There are very few *old* homosexuals. Their numbers are ravaged by such diseases as AIDS. While they do live there is the guilt, the shame, the loneliness and alienation from their families. These are the judgments of God upon them. The fire and brimstone upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is called an

example to such as live ungodly. On the average, homosexuals die much sooner than their straight counterparts.

The politics of homosexuality

Homosexuals, with the complicity of the bias liberal media, the moral debauches in Hollywood, bleeding-heart liberals, and spineless, politically-correct politicians have been very successful in politicizing both the homosexual lifestyle and the disease of AIDS. (*Originally called GRIDS for Gay Related Immune Deficiency*—Ed.) First they adopted a harmless sounding name as a covering for the true nature of their behavior. Homosexuals have become “gays.” This is a deliberate ploy on their part to remove the stigma associated with “pervert.” As a result of this politicization of homosexuality we now have special “hate crime legislation” that imposes harsher penalties for any act of violence against one based on their “sexual orientation.”

This very article would be considered “hate speech” by the politically-correct crowd. Does this mean they also consider the Holy Scriptures to be filled with “hate speech” since they condemn homosexuality? They seek to bully their critics into silence by accusing them of being “homophobic” (the new national disease that requires “sensitivity training”). Well, I slap you homophobia on the snout. By the way, why are male homosexuals not called “femaphobic” since they do not love women in a sexual way?

The shameless perversion of the Scriptures by homosexuals

Every false movement seems to have a religious wing. There are some homosexuals who are “religious,” attending where “gay is celebrated.” They pretend to find homosexuality in Scripture in such examples as Jonathan and David because it says their souls were knit together in love (1 Sam. 18:1). Again they are so brazen as to suggest the same of Jesus and the apostle John because Christ loved John and the apostle leaned on the breast of the Holy One of God. They have charged that the Apostle Paul was either a homosexual, or homophobic, since he talked a lot about homosexuality.

Such homosexual organiza-

tions as N.A.M.B.L.A. (North American Man-Boy Love Association) have advocated the abolishment of all laws restricting sex with children. And don’t forget how many serial killers are homosexuals. They are a horrible blight upon any society.

We Christians are bound to take the side of Scripture in such matters as homosexuality. **“Let God be true, but every man a liar”** (Rom. 3:4).

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WHAT IS HELL?

by H. B. Taylor
(1870-1932)

In the New Testament there are two words translated hell. They are *hades* and *gehenna*. Hades was the place of abode of all departed spirits before the death of the Lord Jesus (Luke 16: 19- 26). And has two apartments —Paradise and Hades proper. Between these two there was a great gulf or chasm that none could cross. Christ went to Hades (Luke 23:43; Acts 2:31). The body never goes to Hades. Christ’s body was buried but His spirit was with the thief in Paradise. The rich man’s body was buried but his soul was alive in

Hades. After Christ had with His own blood entered into Heaven and purged it (John 14:2; Heb. 9:23), the way into Heaven itself was then opened (Heb. 9:8), so when the Lord Jesus ascended He emptied Paradise and carried all Old Testament saints with Him to Heaven because of His finished redemption (Heb. 9:12, Eph. 4:8). Since that time all believers at death go straight to Heaven (Phil. 1:23; Eph. 3:15; 2 Cor. 5:1-2). Paradise being now emptied, Hades is the present abode of the wicked dead and of them only. Hades sustains about the same relation to

Gehenna that a county jail does to a state prison. Hades, like the jail, is the place where the wicked are kept until their trial or judgment. The judgment occurs after the resurrection of the body. When they are tried and then they are sent to Gehenna or the lake of fire. Hades itself will be cast into the lake of fire after the judgment of the wicked (Rev. 20:14). Hades is a place of conscious torment in real fire (Luke 16:22-24).

GEHENNA

The final abode of the wicked is Gehenna. Several things are taught in the New Testament about it.

1. It is a prepared place (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10). Prepared for the most depraved and dangerous prisoners —the devil and his messengers.

2. For a fitted people (Rom. 9:22). Gehenna is a specially prepared place for vessels of wrath specially fitted for perdition. The word translated destruction in Rom. 9:22 is translated perdition in 1 Tim. 6:9, 2 Peter 3:7 and Rev. 17:8-11. It *never* means annihilation. Isaiah 66:24 and Daniel 12:2 seem to teach that a part of the preparation of the lost for hell is in their resurrection bodies. These bodies, if anything like the bodies of the saints, will be flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). They will also be indestructible if like the saints (1 Cor. 15:23). They shall be such as to bring shame to the wicked and everlasting contempt and abhorring to all the beholders (Isa. 66:24).

3. Gehenna is a place where the damned are tormented by fire and brimstone day and night for ever and ever (Rev. 20:10, 14:11).

4. This fire will be unquenchable (Mark 9:43-48). Think of it! Imperishable bodies of flesh in unquenchable fire.

5. An undying conscience (Rom. 2:15), always an accusing conscience —a worm that dieth not. A gnawing, burning conscience on the inside and unquenchable fire on the outside. No wonder God says they have no rest day nor night forever and forever (Rev. 14:11).

6. The wicked live in Gehenna as long as God lives. The strongest expression in the Bible for that which never ends is “**forever and ever.**” That expression is found 12 times in (the book of) Revelation. Eight times it is used of God “**who liveth forever and ever,**” etc. Once (22:5) is used of the righteous. Three times it is used of the conscious suffering of the wicked (14:11, 19:1-3, 20:10). As long as God lives, that long will the wicked suffer.

7. But some man says, I do not see any justice in that. Well, note, that the righteous in Heaven shout over God’s justice in His judgments (Rev. 19:1-6). They see it whether you do or not. Again, a man in one minute kills his fellow man. He goes to the prison for a life sentence. Suppose he lives fifty years. His offense was committed in one minute; he is punished over twenty-six million minutes for one minute’s sin. That, too, for only one offense. Multiply that by an innumerable number of offenses

not against a depraved man, but against a Holy God and you see that even from the viewpoint of earthly courts the wicked ought to suffer eternally. Add to that the fact that he sins eternally (Rev. 22:11) and you will know in part the why of eternal punishment. Down here it is given us to know only in part (1 Cor. 13:12).

8. Who goes to Gehenna? (Rev. 21:8). The unbeliever as well as great sinners. How shall you escape the damnation of Gehenna, if

you reject Jesus Christ, man's only Savior? (Acts 4:12, Heb. 9:22). **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"** (Acts 16:31).

*There is life for a look
at the crucified One*

*There is life at this moment
for thee.*

Eternal, non-forfeitable, unending, non-losable life is offered thee just now, O sinner, if you will but receive Christ (John 1:12, 6:37, 10:27-29). Do it now. **Ω**

THE SCRIPTURES AND CHRIST

Arthur W. Pink
(1886-1952)

It is not until man is made thoroughly displeased with himself that he begins to aspire after God. The fallen creature, deluded by Satan, is self-satisfied till his sin blinded eyes are opened to get a sight of himself. The Holy Spirit first works in us a sense of our ignorance, vanity, poverty and depravity, before He brings us to perceive and acknowledge that in God alone are to be found true wisdom, real blessedness, perfect goodness and unspotted righteousness. We must be made conscious of our imperfections ere we can really appreciate the Divine perfections. As the perfections of God are contemplated, man becomes still more aware of the infinite distance that separates him from the Most High. As he learns something of God's pressing claims upon him, and his



own utter inability to meet them, he is prepared to hear and welcome the good news that Another has fully met those claims for all who are led to believe in Him.

"Search the scriptures," said the Lord Je-

sus, and then he added, **"for, they are they which testify of me"** (John 5:39). They testify of Him as the *only* Savior for perishing sinners, as the *only* Mediator between God and men, as the *only* one through whom the Father can be approached. They testify to the wondrous perfections of His person, the varied glories of His offices, the sufficiency of His finished work. Apart from the Scriptures, He cannot be known. In them alone He is revealed. When the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto His people, in thus making known to

the soul He uses naught of what is written. While it is true that Christ is the key to the Scriptures, it is equally true that only in the Scriptures do we have an opening up of the **“mystery of Christ”** (Eph. 3:4).

Now the measure in which we profit from our reading and study of the Scriptures may be ascertained by the extent to which Christ is becoming more real and more precious unto our hearts. To “grow in grace” is defined as **“in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”** (2 Peter 3:18); the second clause there is not something in addition to the first, but is an explanation of it. To “know” Christ (Phil. 3:10) was the supreme longing and aim of the Apostle Paul, a longing and aim that to which he subordinated all other interests. But mark it well, the “knowledge” which is spoken of in these verses, is not intellectual but spiritual, not theoretical but experimental, not general but personal. It is a supernatural knowledge, which is imparted to the regenerate heart by the operations of the Holy Spirit, as He interprets and applies to us the Scriptures concerning Him.

Now the knowledge of Christ which the blessed Spirit imparts to the believer through the Scriptures profits him in different ways, according to the varying frames, circumstances and needs. Concerning the bread which God gave to the children of Israel during their wilderness wanderings, it is recorded that **“some gathered more, some less”** (Ex. 16:17). The same is true in our apprehension of Him of

whom the manna was a type. There is that in the wondrous person of Christ which is exactly suited to our every condition, every circumstance, every need, both for time and eternity; but we are slow in realizing it, and slower still to act upon it. There is an inexhaustible fullness in Christ (John 1:16) which is available for us to draw from, and the principle regulating the extent to which we become **“strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”** (2 Tim. 2:1) is, **“according unto your faith be it unto you”** (Matt. 9:29).

REVEALING HIS NEED

1. An individual is profited from the Scriptures when they reveal to him *his need of Christ*. Man in his natural estate deems himself self-sufficient. True, he has a dim perception that all is not quite right between himself and God. Yet he has no difficulty in persuading himself that he is able to do that which will propitiate Him. That lies at the foundation of all man’s “religion”, begun by Cain, in whose “way” (Jude 11) the multitudes still walk. Tell the devout religionist that **“they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:8), and he is at once offended. Press upon him the fact that **“all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”** (Isa. 64:6), and his hypocritical urbanity at once gives place to anger. So it was when Christ was on earth. The most religious people of all, the Jews, had no sense that they were “lost” and in dire need of an Almighty Saviour.

“They that are whole need not a

physician, but they that are sick” (Matt. 9:12). It is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit, by His application of the Scriptures, to convict sinners of their desperate condition, to bring them to see that their state is such that **“from the soul of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness”** in them, but, **“wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores”** (Isa. 1:6). As the Spirit convicts us of our sins – our ingratitude to God, our murmuring against Him, our wanderings from Him—as He presses upon us the claims of God—His right to our love, obedience and adoration, and all our sad failures to render Him His due—then are we made to recognize that Christ is our only hope, and that, except we flee to Him for refuge the righteous wrath of God will most certainly fall upon us.

Nor is this to be limited to the initial experience of conversion. The more the Spirit deepens His work of grace in the regenerated soul, the more that individual is made conscious of his pollution, his sinfulness and his vileness; and the more does he discover his need of and learn to value that precious blood which cleanses from all sin. The Spirit is here to glorify Christ, and the one chief way in which He does so is by opening wider and wider the eyes of those for whom He died to see how suited Christ is for each wretched, foul, hell-deserving creatures. Yes, the more we are truly profiting from our reading of the Scriptures, the more do we feel our need of Him.

**THE SCRIPTURES
MAKE CHRIST REAL**

2. An individual is profited from the Scriptures when *they make Christ more real to him*. The great mass of the Israelitish nation saw nothing more than the outward shell in the rites and ceremonies which God instructed, but a regenerated remnant were privileged to behold Christ Himself. **“Abraham rejoiced to see my day”** said Christ (John 8:56). Moses esteemed **“the reproach of Christ”** greater riches than the treasure of Egypt (Heb. 11:26). So it is in Christendom. To the multitudes Christ is but a name, or at most a historical character. They have no personal dealings with Him, enjoy no spiritual communion with Him. Should they hear one speak in rapture of His excellency they regard him as an enthusiastic or a fanatic. To them Christ is unreal, vague, intangible. But with the real Christian is far otherwise. The language of his heart is,

*“I have heard the voice of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside
I have seen the face of Jesus,
All my soul is satisfied.”*

Yet such a blissful site is not the consistent and unvarying experience of the saints. Just as clouds come in between the sun and the earth, so failures in our walk interrupt our communion with Christ and serve to hide from us the light of His countenance. **“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him”** (John 14:21). Yes, it is the

one who by grace is treading the path of obedience to whom the Lord Jesus grants manifestations of Himself. And the more frequent and prolonged these manifestations are, the more real He becomes to the soul, until we are able to say with Job, **“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee”** (42:5). Thus the more Christ is becoming a living reality to me, the more I am profiting from the Word.

CHRIST’S PERFECTIONS

3. An individual is profited from the Scriptures when *he becomes more engrossed with Christ’s perfections*. It is a sense of need which first drives the soul to Christ, but it is the realization of His excellency which draws us to run after him. The more real Christ becomes to us, the more are we attracted by His perfections. At the beginning He is viewed only as a Saviour, but as the Spirit continues to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us we discover that upon His head are “many crowns” (Rev. 19:12). Of old it was said, **“His name shall be called Wonderful”** (Isa. 9:6): His name signifies all that He is as made known in Scripture. “Wonderful” are His offices, in their number, variety, sufficiency. He is the Friend that sticks closer than a brother, to help in every time of need. He is the great High Priest, who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He is the Advocate with the Father, who pleads our cause when Satan accuses us.

Our great need is to be occupied with Christ, to sit at His feet as Mary did, and receive out of His fullness. Our chief delight should be to **“consider the apostle and high priest of our profession”** (Heb. 3:1): to contemplate the various relations which He sustains to us, to meditate upon the many promises He has given, to dwell upon His wondrous and changeless love for us. As we do this, we shall so delight ourselves in the Lord that the siren voices of this world will lose all their charm for us. Ah, my reader, do you know anything about this in your actual experience? Is Christ the chief among ten thousand to your soul? Has He won your heart? Is it your chief joy to get alone and be occupied with Him? If not, your Bible reading and study has profited you little indeed.

CHRIST BECOMES MORE PRECIOUS

4. An individual is profited from the Scriptures as *Christ becomes more precious to him*. Christ is precious in the esteem of all true believers (1 Peter 2:7). They count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord (Phil. 3:8). His name to them is an ointment poured forth (Song of Solomon 1:3). As the glory of God that appeared in the wondrous beauty of the temple, and in the wisdom and splendor of Solomon, drew the worshippers to him from the uttermost parts of the earth, so the unparalleled excellency of Christ which was prefigured thereby does

more powerfully attract the hearts of His people. The Devil knows this full well, therefore is he ceaselessly engaged in blinding the minds of them that believe not, by placing between them and Christ the allurements of this world. God permits him to assail the believer also, but it is written, **“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”** (James 4:7). Resist him by definite and earnest prayer, entreating the Spirit to draw out your affections to Christ.

The more we are engaged with Christ’s perfections, the more we love and adore Him. It is lack of experimental acquaintance with Him that makes our hearts so cold towards Him. But where real and daily fellowship is cultivated the Christian will be able to say with the Psalmist, **“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee”** (Psa. 73:25). This it is which is the very essence and distinguishing nature of true Christianity. Legalistic zealots may be busily engaged in tithing mint and anise and cummin, they may encompass sea and land to make one proselyte, and yet have no love for God in Christ. It is the heart that God looks at: **“My son, give me thine heart”** (Prov. 23:26) is His demand. The more precious Christ is to us, the more delight does He have in us.

INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST

5. An individual who is profited from the Scriptures has an *increasing confidence in Christ*. There is

“little faith” (Matt. 14:31) and **“great faith”** (Matt. 8:10). There is the **“full assurance of faith”** (Heb. 10:22), and trusting in the Lord **“with all thine heart”** (Prov. 3:5). Just as there is growing **“from strength to strength”** (Psa. 84:7), so we read of **“from faith to faith”** (Rom. 1:17). The stronger and steadier our faith, the more the Lord Jesus is honored. Even a cursory reading of the four Gospels reveals the fact that nothing pleased the Saviour more than the firm reliance which was placed in Him by the few who really counted upon Him. He Himself lived and walked by faith, and the more we do so the more are the members being conformed to their Head. Above everything else there is one thing to be aimed at and diligently sought by earnest prayer: that our faith may be increased. Of Thessalonian saints Paul was able to say, **“Your faith groweth exceedingly”** (2 Thess. 1:3).

Now Christ cannot be trusted at all unless He be known, and the better He is known the more He will be trusted: **“and they that know thy name will put their trust in thee”** (Psa. 9:10). As Christ becomes more real to the heart, as we are increasingly occupied with His manifold perfections and He becomes more precious to us, confidence in him is deepened until it becomes as natural to trust Him as it is to breathe. The Christian life is a *walk* of faith (2 Cor. 5:7), and that very expression denotes a continual progress, an increasing deliverance from doubts and fears, a fuller assurance that all

He has promised He will perform. Abraham is the father of all them that believe, and thus the record of his life furnishes an illustration of what a deepening confidence in the Lord signifies. First, at His bare word he turned his back upon all that was dear to the flesh. Second, he went forth in simple dependence on Him and dwelt as a stranger and sojourner in the land of promise, though he never owned a single acre of it. Third, when the promise was made of a seed in his old age, he considered not the obstacles in the way of its fulfillment, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Finally, when called upon to offer up Isaac, through whom the promises were to be realized, he accounted that God was able to **“raise him up, even from the dead”** (Heb. 11:19).

In the history of Abraham we are shown how grace is able to subdue an evil heart of unbelief, how the spirit may be victorious over the flesh, how the supernatural fruits of a God-given and God-sustained faith may be brought forth by a man of like passions with us. This is recorded for our encouragement, for us to pray that it may please the Lord to work in us what He wrought in and through the father of the faithful. Nothing more pleases, honors and glorifies Christ than the confiding trust, the expectant confidence and the childlike faith of those to whom He has given every cause to trust Him with all their hearts. And nothing more evidences that we are being profited from the Scriptures than an increasing faith in Christ.

A DESIRE TO PLEASE CHRIST

6. An individual is profited from the Scriptures when they beget in him *a deepening desire to please Christ*. **“Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price”** (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) *is the first great fact that Christians need to apprehend*. Henceforth they are not to **“live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again”** (2 Cor. 5:15). Love delights to please its object, and the more our affections are drawn out to Christ the more shall we desire to honor Him by a life of obedience to His known will. **“If a man love me, he will keep my words”** (John 14:23). It is not in happy emotions or in verbal professions of devotion, but in the actual assumption of His yoke and the practical submitting to His precepts, that Christ is most honored.

It is at this point particularly that’s the genuineness of our profession may be tested and proved. Have they a faith in Christ who made no effort to learn His will? What a contempt of the king if his subjects refuse to read his proclamation! Where there is faith in Christ there will be delight in His commandments, and a sorrowing when they are broken by us. When we displease Christ we should mourn over our failure. It is impossible seriously to believe that it was my sins which caused the Son of God to shed His precious blood without my hating them. If Christ groaned under sin, we shall too. And the more sincere those groanings be, the more earnestly shall

we seek grace for deliverance from all that displeases, and strength to do all that which pleases our blessed Redeemer.

RETURN OF CHRIST

7. An individual is profited from the Scriptures when they cause him *to long for the return of Christ*. Love can be satisfied with nothing short of a sight of its object. True, even now we behold Christ by faith, yet it is “through a glass darkly.” But at His coming we shall behold him “**face to face**” (1 Cor. 13:12). Then will be fulfilled His own words, “**Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world**” (John 17:24). Only this will fully meet the longings of His heart and only this will meet the longings of those redeemed by Him. Only then will He “**see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied**” (Isa. 53:11), and “**As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness**” (Psa. 17:15).

At the return of Christ we shall be done with sin forever. The elect are predestined to be conformed to the image of God’s Son, and that divine purpose will be realized only when Christ receives His people unto Himself. “**We shall be**

like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). Never again will our communion with Him be broken, never again shall we groan and moan over our inward corruptions; never again shall we be harassed with unbelief. He will present (us) to Himself “**a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing**” (Eph. 5:27). For that hour we eagerly wait. For our Redeemer we lovingly look. The more we yearn for the coming One, the more we are trimming our lamps in earnest expectation for His coming, the more do we give evidence that we are profiting from our knowledge of the Word.

Let the reader and writer honestly search themselves as in the presence of God. Let us seek truthful answers to these questions. Have we a deeper felt sense of our need of Christ? Is He Himself becoming to us a brighter and living reality? Are we finding increasing delight in being occupied with His lovely perfections? Is Christ Himself becoming daily more precious to us? Is our faith in Him growing so that we confidently trust Him for everything? Are we really seeking to please Him in all the details of our lives? Are we so yearning for Him that we would be filled with joy did we know for certain that He would come during the next twenty four hours? May the Holy Spirit search our hearts with these pointed questions. **Ω**



“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” — Rev. 22:7

The King is Coming

(Part 5)

Pastor Sam Wilson
Grace Baptist Church
Gladwin, Michigan

Turn your Bibles to 2 Timothy Chapter 3. I will read a few verses of Scripture and come back to these Scriptures in a little bit as we continue to talk about the signs that characterize the coming of the King.

We have already covered the saving Christ who is coming. Though He was mocked, ridiculed, and falsely accused of being a King—or at least they, in their ignorance, said it not knowing He is indeed a King. While Jesus Christ was upon this earth the first time, certainly He was not treated like a king. He was treated in a worse manner than probably any human being had been treated. But there is another day coming. There is a day coming when this world will regret—and there are already many who regret—the way in which they treated King Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ. If you die lost and in your sins, never repenting of those sins, and never trusting in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be eternally the enemy of God. You are currently at enmity with God and you will find that, while the world talks about a loving King, He is also a King of wrath, of hatred and of punishment.



Reading in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, Incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”** The King is coming!

Well, we ended this morning by noticing signs that characterize the return of Lord Jesus Christ and how those signs should remind us and put us on alert that Jesus Christ could come at any time.

We noticed this morning, the *world situation* as a sign of His coming in Matthew 24:7, **“wars and rumors of wars.”** We noticed also in Matthew 24:7 the predictions of famines, and compared it to our current world situation. And we concluded this morning with the earthquakes in all of the different places around the world. And as I mentioned, I hope that from this day forward that when we hear

of these things or see these things, we will be reminded that the coming of Christ draws nigh.

We now move on to some other signs of the return of Christ. The first that I mention is pestilence or disease. Matthew 24:7 says that **“there shall be famines, and pestilences.”** Oftentimes the results of war can be famine, and the result of famine can be pestilence. Now pestilence defined in the Greek here means, “contagious or an infectious epidemic disease that is virulent and devastating.” In our nation we may not be devastated by much pestilence, but I’ve thought about AIDS which certainly serves as a pestilence not only in our country but in countries throughout the world. It is estimated that in the United States of America there are 40 million people who are currently living with AIDS. There is no doubt that this is a sign or an evidence of God’s judgment against the immorality of our nation. It is a judgment against homosexuality. It is a judgment against the use of drugs. It is a judgment of God sending a message that these things are an abomination to Him and will not be tolerated. This also points to the possibility of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I think about lesser pestilences such as the swine flu. The swine flu worldwide killed 25,174 people. In the United States of America swine flu killed 10,837 people. Call it an epidemic or not, but if your loved one was one of those 10,837 who died, you might look at it a little more seriously. In the United States of America there

was recorded 115,431 cases of the swine flu; that doesn’t include those that went undiagnosed. Consider also in many countries malaria, smallpox and SARS, or other epidemical diseases certainly can be known as pestilence. It is evident that the return of Christ draweth nigh.

Then there is the economic crisis. The third horse, the black horse of the Apocalypse, refers to famine and economic disaster. It teaches us that in that day and time a person will have to work all day long, and a day’s wages will only pay for but one meal. The economy of our nation, the nations of the world, the war problems, the job problems all point to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me mention also that the Bible tells of the increase of *occult activity*. Now, a good portion of the time, in the Bible when you read the word “sorcery” (see Revelation 9:21, 18:23, 21:8, 22:15), that word “sorcery” has two meanings: sometimes it has reference to drug use and other times it has a reference to the *occult*. The word *sorcery* there is translated from the Greek to the English word that has to do with our pharmacies for our medicines, i.e., a reference to drugs. In 1963 our government banned the Bible and prayer from public schools. Now in 2011 in many public schools, in particular in California, they are offering classes in sorcery, practicing witchcraft and classes which have to do with the occult. It is an evidence of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The nation of Israel became a sovereign nation again in 1948. Israel remains a land of trouble and turmoil. The tribulation period is said to be the time of Jacob's trouble or Israel's trouble (Jer. 30:7); it points the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then there is the idea of rapid or increased transportation. The Bible says in Daniel 12:4, **“O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”** God was telling His prophet Daniel, “I’m giving this vision of the last days to you, but it is not for your time; it is for the time before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ”. The Bible says “many shall run to and fro.” We do a lot of traveling in the Grace Baptist Church. Many have traveled to Hawaii, some have traveled to Israel, many have traveled throughout the states. There is much traveling that takes place. Many people are running to and fro, and it is incredible. When we think that man's primary means of transportation, when this was written—people didn't go very far, did they? It took them a long time to travel. But the sovereignty of God looking ahead, seeing the automobiles, the airplanes, jets, boats, and the ability to travel anywhere in the world; He prophesied that in the last days there will be traveling to and fro. In 1789 it took George Washington eight days to travel 200 miles to his inauguration in New York City. Now the fact that it took eight days is not significant, but what is amazing is that Julius

Caesar could have traveled it just as rapidly as George Washington did. From the time of Caesar to the time of George Washington they had made no real advances in the abilities of travel; no real progress had been made. But in a very short period of time in the last 50 years or so, there have been tremendous advancements in our ability to travel to and fro. Not only are we able to drive at enormous speeds, but a jet can fly around the world in 24 hours and a spacecraft can travel all the way around the world in 80 minutes; 80 minutes to travel all the way around this world!

People today travel more than ever. International tourism is a multi-billion-dollar business involving over 200 million people traveling outside of their own countries every single year. Considering all of the countries involved, it averages out to over 2 million people traveling outside their countries every single year. Spending on tourism worldwide totaled more than \$3 trillion dollars in 1992. Now I couldn't find more modern statistics. I'm sorry, but that's the best I could find. Over \$3 trillion dollars; can you imagine what that number is today? It has probably tripled. That would be over \$9 trillion dollars and is expected to double if the Lord Jesus Christ does not come in the next 10 years. Daniel prophesied around 2500 years ago; today we see it as a reality.

The next sign I mention is the sign of violence. We live in a very violent society. We live to where there are places that none of us want to travel and it would be a

nightmare for us to be traveling in certain areas and to be broke down. Several years ago when I took a wrestling team to Detroit and we were staying in the Renaissance Center, I decided to walk down to where, at that time, they were building the new stadium for the Tigers to play in. And as I was walking a police officer came to me and he said, "Sir, what are you doing?" And I said "I'm heading down to see that stadium." And he said, "You are not in a safe area and I advise you for your own health's sake to turn around and leave this area." And I did, he didn't have to tell me twice. I asked him to keep an eye on me until I got to a safe distance and I did not venture toward the new stadium again.

In 2010 the estimated population of the United States of America was 308,745,538 people. The total number of major crimes committed went over 11,000. Violent crimes against someone were 1,246,248 violent crimes committed against others. Crimes against property: 9,082,887. Murders committed: 14,748. This statistic here amazes me: 84,767 rapes took place in America in 2010. Robberies: 367,832. Assaults: 778,901. Burglaries: 2,159,878. Thefts: 6,185,687 and car thefts, 737,142. We live in a violent society. We sometimes don't fully appreciate that violence because we live in a small town where there is not a whole lot of violence. But I just heard recently that in the State of Michigan per 100,000; Flint, Saginaw, and Detroit rank in the top three of the nation's cities

crimes and murder; can you imagine three of them in our own state.

There are 9.8 homicides committed for every 100,000 people. Violent crime rate for every 100,000 is 403 or 404. Property crime rate per 100,000 is 2,941. There is a violent crime committed against someone else every 25 seconds. A home will be burglarized every 9 seconds. A woman is raped every 6 minutes, and there is a murder taking place once every 25 min. We live in a violent society. We live in a day and time when things are not going to get better; they are simply going to get worse. We live in a safe place but there are many places where parents are afraid for their children to go out into the street, places of great danger and places of little hope.

The next sign we noticed is the increase of knowledge. The Bible says "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Knowledge certainly has increased within this generation almost beyond imagination. According to research studies the total store of human knowledge is now doubling, at the minimum, every eight years. Eighty percent of all scientists who have ever lived are alive today. It is estimated that every minute they add 2,000 pages to man's scientific knowledge. The scientific material that they produce every 24 hours would take a person five years to read. About half a million new books are published every year. That is indeed an increase of knowledge.

When Apollo 13 was lost in space, computers worked out in about an hour and a half on a way

to bring it back. It is reported that it would have taken a scientist, working with a pencil and paper, over 1 million years to figure out the same formula in order to bring Apollo 13 back. In 1970 when computer technology began to develop so fast that if the automobile industry was developing at the same speed as the computer knowledge, we would be able to buy a brand-new Rolls-Royce for three dollars and you could fit eight of them on the head of a pin if the technology in one area was the same as the other.

The most basic building block of computer technology is the transistor. It was invented by Bell Labs in 1948. In 1994 a computer chip could hold 3.1 million transistors, more than twice than any previous year. By the end of the decade, by the year 2000 a computer chip will contain more than 1 billion transistors. Today they have become so complicated that only highly trained technicians are able to understand them.

You know what's kind of sad? That of all of these amazing scientific discoveries and technological breakthroughs they have in reality not made mankind one bit happier. Is this world really a better place? It seems like the more gadgets and the more luxuries with which man tries to find happiness and satisfaction, the more discontented and miserable he becomes. In our day and age knowledge has certainly increased.

Now, all those so-called developed countries of the world, such as the United States, claim to have the most advanced, the most ex-

pensive educational systems that the world has ever known. Can you tell me why we are turning out so many confused, ignorant and violent children? Explain that one to me. Sin! This technology is not always a good thing. The computer is just like everything else in this world; what should have been for the good, they have turned for the bad. There is much bad found therein. Indeed, the increase of knowledge shows the possibility of the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I will simply mention the days of Noah. The Bible says that in the days of Noah they were taking and giving in marriage. Today 52.8% of all marriages end in divorce. Noah's day was a day of immorality, it was a day of violence; those days certainly are here upon us.

In closing, turn again to 2 Timothy 3:1-5. We will briefly look at these verses in light of the signs that are characteristic of His coming. Please give this message much thought. I have given you many statistics. I do not expect you to remember the numbers, but simply remember the reality of what the Bible says will take place in the tribulation period. However, Christ must come first; may we grasp the reality that He could come at any time.

“This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come.” Now in the Greek this word “perilous” means much the same as in the English, it means *dangerous*! We live in a dangerous world. We live in a world where you could be sitting in a McDonald's

and someone will walk in and open fire and leave many dead. We live in a world where you can be at a political rally and a madman arrives and begins shooting, severely injuring one of our Senators and killing an eight-year-old girl. We live in a society where you could be sitting in a dorm room or in a class and a sniper opens fire and kills many. We live in a world where you can be at school such as Columbine, or the school in Kentucky minding your own business, bothering absolutely nobody, and someone opens fire and leaves many dead. We live in a society where you could be driving down the road and someone drives by and shoots you as you drive, or you could be out in your yard playing and someone just drives by and shoots you just for the fun of it.

We live in a society where people can be busily engaged in their jobs working and mad maniacs can fly airplanes into the buildings and kill 6,000 people. We live in a society where on the streets of foreign countries they seek to overthrow rulers and genocide takes place as they kill their own people. We live in dangerous times. I am not just talking about dangerous times when it comes to guns and mad men. A professional quarterback made a statement last week. He said, before you come to the games, do a lot of drinking. In his exact words, "get all lubed up". It is a 4:15 game! "Get all lubed up, get rowdy and have some fun." I wonder if it ever crossed that idiot's mind that those same people who get all "lubed up" will get in their automobiles and drive out on

these roads putting my life and my loved one's lives in jeopardy. It is not just a dangerous society because there are madmen, but I don't have the statistics on how many people are killed by drunk drivers every year, by carelessness, by those who are high, those who have no business being on the highway. We live in a dangerous society. "**Perilous times**" —That word "perilous" also means grievous. There is a lot of grief in this world.

It further says, "**lovers of their own selves.**" Isn't that our day and time; a day and time where self-esteem is so exalted? All the educators are told to make sure you build up the student's self-esteem. We live in a society where you actually cannot fail a student, even if they deserved to be failed. Grievous times! "**Lovers of their own selves**" i.e., people who care more about themselves and their self-esteem and their image that they do anything else.

"**Covetous.**"—Think about the increase of stealing and the increase of adultery. This is what adultery is, it is covetousness. The desire (in particular of young people, and sometimes us old people), to fit in and "keep up with the Joneses" is an evidence of covetousness.

"**Boasters**"—We hear it every day, not just in the world around us, but listen to the televangelist's, and listen to them brag.

"**Proud**"—When I thought of this, I actually thought of our last two presidents. I thought of Obama and I thought of Bush. I thought both of them had too much pride

for the positions they had; it is a humbling position.

Pride is taught even when it's blasphemy! How many times a day do people take God's name in vain? How many and all the movies where the swearing God's name in vain, the mockery that is made of God!

“Disobedient to parents”—I'll tell you, coach children and you will find out how disobedient children are to their parents. A lot of parents don't care if their children obey or don't obey them.

“Unthankful”—Even we are sometimes guilty of not being thankful for what God has given to us, and the blessings that we have received.

“Unholy”—Has there ever been a more unholy society than what we have today?

“Without natural affection”—I was reading one of the Sovereign Grace, Landmark paper's (*The Landmark Baptist*) in which was an article against homosexual marriage and it had in there a marriage announcement that was going to take place; pictures of two men who were going to get married. It has been made legal in some states in the United States of America! I was reading in Leviticus just the other day that when man lies with mankind, it is an abomination! It was an abomination in the book of Leviticus and it is still an abomination! And yet, it is accepted in our day and time.

I appreciated what Mark brought out, things I did not know about the Boy Scouts. Originally, the Boy Scouts — you know, our government changes everything;

but you can have homosexual leaders or scoutmasters—but the Boy Scout oath says you cannot.

“Truce breakers”—I think of all the contracts that are signed by professional athletes that are not worth a dime. They will sit it out, they say, I am not going show up. But what I really thought about was the politicians who, behind closed doors, make shady deals that negatively affect our country; “Truce breakers”: where peoples' word means absolutely nothing.

“False accusers”—When it is okay to lie to get ahead? I remember reading a while back, and I am not being political, I don't care what you think of Sarah Palin or don't think of her, it doesn't make any difference to me. But I do remember someone writing an article about her and even admitted that it was full of lies; but he wrote it anyway. You think of all the “Inquirer's” and all the magazines that are liars and false accusers.

“Incontinent”—That word incontinent means, “without self-control” and to be morally corrupt. That fits our society.

“Fierce”—In the Greek this word means to be savage and brutal.

“Despisers of those that are good”—You stand against abortion, or you can stand up against homosexuality, people will hate you, and you know what the world will call it? They will call it a hate crime. We are considered as guilty of a hate crime when we speak against these things. Well I've got news for them, God hates it, and

we should hate it too! They are lovers of other things.
“**Traitors**”—Oftentimes even Every time they spend their money, instead of paying their tithes, family against family. they are showing they are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.
“**Heady**”—This means rash and reckless behavior. We certainly see that.
“**High-minded**”—Means to be lifted up with pride, and pride is mentioned twice to illustrate how much God hates it.
“**Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God**”—You know what is really sad? This is often seen as much in saved people as it is in lost people. Every time they are somewhere else besides God’s house (at the appointed times) they are showing they are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.
“**Having a form of godliness**”—This means a pretense, a claim. There is no God that is found therein, and this world is absolutely filled with people who have a form of godliness but it is not real. You know, many of those? We come into contact with them every day. Churches in this town are full of them. They have a form of godliness but they do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. May God impress upon our hearts, the King is indeed coming. Ω

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