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Holding to the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith

THE SECRET THINGS

Contents

We will examine two points:

First, should the state legislate morality?

Second, what are public results of secret actions?

FIRST, SHOULD THE STATE LEGISLATE MORALITY?

Does the State have an interest in what goes on in one's home, in "the bedroom," behind closed doors or in other private areas?

The sodomites, adulterers, whoremongers, drug users, prostitutes and pimps, sinners of every description raise the same cry: As long as I am not hurting others, what right do you have to stop me?

Proverbs 14:34 *Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*

Righteousness... Basically, it is conformity to the ethical or moral standard established by God in his word. (Righteousness: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. TWOT)

The State not only has the right but it has the **responsibility to legislate morality in terms of God's moral and ethical laws**, not only in the bedroom, but in every area of life. The State that does not legislate God's morality in the bedroom is on the broad road to extinction. God judges according to the heart even more than he does according to the actions.

A righteous life conforms to the standards established by God's word. However, a righteous life does not result in eternal life, for that is only available through the applied righteousness of Christ.

Job was a *perfect and upright man*, and his righteous life style is defined in chapters 29-31. In those chapters, we see how righteousness is worked out into society through an individual. We also are told that Job did not depend upon his righteous life style for his peace with God. He was at all times looking toward his Redeemer.

TWOT continues:

Whether by nations or individuals, righteous conduct can only be secured by plowing up fallow ground, [that is, plucking up or plowing under the wicked and worldly

Should the state legislate morality?1; Public results of secret actions 3; Concluding Comments 7; The pornification of society...7; An answer for "insurance"...11; Misused Power...11; Various...14; Everlasting Dominion of Christ... 17; Christian Faith on the Altar of Football...19; Personal...21; God's Providential Care...22; Where is mine honour?...24; Bible Studies at the White House...24; Books...24

affections of the heart] sowing in righteousness, and reaping in mercy, i.e. making a new base for righteousness. {#Ho 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you}

All must become new persons whose actions are governed by the law of God. Righteous conduct issues from a new heart [that only Christ can produce]. {#Eze 36:25-27 *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*}

Habakkuk puts it another way: *the just shall live by his faith*. {#Hab 2:4 [if one has the faith in Christ that makes him righteous, he will have righteous actions Again, Job 29-31 gives excellent examples of righteous actions.]}

{#Isa 32:15 *Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Isaiah 16 Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. 17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*} Here Isaiah couples righteousness with the work of the Spirit, all resulting in peace and therefore eternal, assured quietness. It is possible that this thought lies behind the figure in #Ps 85:10 [H 11], '*Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*'

Because there has been reconciliation between man and God [through Christ], peace comes to bless his way. Isaiah apparently refers to the state of these people: '*thy*

people shall all be righteous.' True ethics derive from imparted righteousness. (TWOT)

In other words, true morality in individuals or nations comes from the righteousness of Christ placed in individual hearts through faith, and then lived out in lives.

Isaiah 60:21 *Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.*

Isaiah prophesies concerning the Gospel Church. He speaks of the indwelling Spirit of God through faith in Christ, and that Spirit working to produce righteous actions that glorify God in His people's lives.

"They shall inherit the land for ever.] Those that are righteous indeed, are heirs of the world together with faithful Abraham. The meek shall inherit the earth; and as for the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {#Mt 5:3,5}" (John Trapp, 1601-1669)

By their fruits ye shall know them! If righteous actions are missing, then we are allowed to judge that they do not have the applied righteousness of Christ.

Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

The second part of the verse says, **any people**. Thus, this verse applies to both a nation and to any individual.

• **IN 1846, CHARLES BRIDGES MADE THIS OBSERVATION:**

"If it be not beneath statesmen to take lessons from the Bible, let them deeply ponder this sound political maxim, which commends itself to every instinct of the unsophisticated mind. Indeed it would be a strange anomaly in the Divine administration, if the connection between godliness and prosperity, ungodliness and misery, established in individual cases, should not obtain in the multiplication of individuals into nations."

In other words, on the individual level, God in his Word has clearly linked godliness with prosperity and ungodliness with misery. Because nations are made up of individuals, nations are also linked to the same things.

"The Scripture records however — confirmed by the result of impartial and extended observation — clearly prove this to be the rule of national, no less than of personal, dispensation. The annals of the chosen people, as they were a righteous or sinful nation, are marked by corresponding exaltation or reproach.

Exaltation., Deut. xxviii. 13. Josh. x. 42. 1 Kings, iv. 20-24. 2 Chron. xvii. 2-5, 11, 12; xxxii. 22, 23. Reproach, Deut. xxviii. 43, 44. Judg. ii. 7-15. 2 Kings, x. 31, 32 ; xviii. 11, 12. 2 Chron. xv. 2-6 ; xxxvi. 11-17. Jer. vii. 29. See the name of reproach given by God himself. Isa. i. 10 ; lvii. 3. Hos. i. 6-9. Zeph. ii. 1. Comp. Wisd. v. 23."

Biblical history proves that godliness and prosperity as well as ungodliness and misery is the fate of nations as well as individuals. Godly nations prosper, and sinful nations shall suffer misery. Deuteronomy 27 & 28 clearly spells out the blessings and curses of glorifying God or failure to glorify him.

"Not the wisdom of policy, extent of empire, splendid conquests, flourishing trade, abundant resources— but righteousness—exalteth a nation. It is both the prop to make it subsist firm in itself, and a crown to render it glorious in the eyes of others. Greece in her proud science; Rome in the zenith of her glory—both were sunk in the lowest depths of moral degradation. Their true greatness existed only in the visions of poesy, or the dream of philosophy."

The greatness of these nations exists only in the vain imagination of men. A nation is not great because of its political wisdom, its conquests of its enemies, its excellent trade policies that make other nations debtors to it, its manufacturing abilities, its natural resources, nor anything that men consider greatness. Both Greece and Rome were considered great nations, but they were overrun with degradation. Their greatness only existed in fanciful stories and dreams. Comment: Sadly, not only does statist's education but home education lust after Greek "wisdom", *i.e.*, classical education.

"Contrast the influence of righteousness, bringing out of the most debased barbarism a community, impregnated with all the high principles, that form a nation's well-being. Thus to Christianize, is to regenerate, the community; to elevate it to a more dignified position; to exalt the nation (Deut. xxvi. 16-19), and that, not with a sudden flash of shadowy splendour, but with solid glory, fraught with every practical blessing. But sin is a reproach to any people."

Christ commanded His people to Christianize the nations; nations have risen and fallen based upon His people's response to that command. Contrast the influence of ungodliness which produces suffering and misery with the influence of Christianity which produces peace and prosperity. Sin is a reproach to any people; that is, there is no individual nor nation who can escape the misery of sin, nor is there any that can escape the peace and prosperity of godliness.

"No nation is so low, as not to sink low under it; while to the mightiest people, it is a blot in their escutcheon, [protective covering] that no worldly glory can efface [remove]. What an enemy is an ungodly man to his country! Loudly as he may talk of his patriotism, and even though God should make him an instrument of advancing her temporal interest; yet he contributes, so far as in him lies,

to her deepest reproach.”

No individual or nation is so low he can go no lower. Ungodliness removes the protective covering that only God can provide. (Proverbs 21:31 *The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.*) Men and nations can invest all their resources to protect themselves, but only God can protect. God uses the temporal interests of men to advance his interest.

Bridges than makes this important observation:

“What an enemy is an ungodly man to his country! Loudly as he may talk of his patriotism, and even though God should make him an instrument of advancing her temporal interest ; yet he contributes, so far as in him lies, to her deepest reproach.” (Charles Bridges. Proverbs. P. 194. The Banner of Truth Trust. Carlisle, PA. 1981 Reprint.)

The ungodly, uncontrolled man is a menace, even an enemy to his country, no matter how loudly he proclaims his patriotism, nor how much he might seek to advance his nation’s interests.

Those in authority who desire to remake America after their own image are against any alternative news source that does not play their tune. They continually make plans as how to stop “conservative” talk, whether carnal or religious conservatism.

I appreciate the truth presented by conservative sources, but they promote the pagan god of Humanism. Their god is the god of secular power. Their answer, even in Christian circles, is that if we can get enough people on our side, we will win.

Zechariah 4:6 makes it clear that the only answer is to get the Christian God on our side by our living commitment to Him. The recovery and exaltation of this nation depends upon people who believe the gospel of Christ, and live a righteous life, as defined by Scripture, e.g., Job.

We are in the midst of a flood of immorality, infidelity, lawlessness and ungodliness, yet few are calling for righteousness.

Bridges closes his comment on Proverbs 14:34 with this statement:

“Let the little remnant in the midst of thee [that is, Britain, though it applies to our nation] remember their high responsibility. (Matt. v. 13.) Let them take care, that their personal and relative profession add to the righteousness, not to the sin, of the nation. Let them plead for their country’s true prosperity with humiliation, faith, and constancy. Let them labour for her exaltation with more entire union of heart.”

PUBLIC RESULTS OF SECRET ACTIONS

Pornography has infested the church like a cancer.

Never before has such a large portion of the Church lived in contradiction of what we believe. Jesus didn’t mince words when he said, “*But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*” At that point in time, adultery was punishable by death! If we don’t confront the issue of pornography, the church is going to continue dying from the inside.

Due to the public pressure by the wicked, the State has withdrawn from “the bedroom;” that is, things done in secret. The State now legislates against unimportant things like smoking indoors. Smoking indoors will not condemn a nation to God’s judgment, but the wickedness of God-defined sins will certainly condemn a nation to history.

(The Daily Caller noted that in January 2015, “3,335 women were pregnant aboard military vessels, representing about 14 percent of the 23,735 women then serving such duty, according to the data. But by August 2016 that number reached nearly 16 percent, an all-time high. The Navy reported 3,840 of the 24,259 women sailors who were aboard Navy ships were pregnant.” <https://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/faith-and-morals/item/26603-no-urinals-but-plenty-of-potential-problems-on-gender-neutral-navy-ship>)

The secret things certainly matter before God, far more than what is done in public.

Proverbs 4:23 *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

The life of the State depends upon righteous laws, as this nation had 150 years ago when Blackstone’s Law Dictionary established the legal standard in America.

Matthew 11:29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

Take my yoke means that we willingly and gladly accept the yoke of His laws upon us; that is, submit to His commands and precepts. Psalms 2 shows us the counsels of men as to how to remove the yoke of God’s law from themselves, 2: 2 *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*

Hungarian PM: ‘Soros Empire’ plans to de-Christianize Europe. Notorious billionaire working side-by-side with E.U. (The West is dead unless God intervenes. His predetermined counsel is being accomplished.) <http://www.wnd.com/2017/07/hungarian-pm-soros-empire-plans-to-de-christianize-europe/>

Joyfulness comes from submission to His ordinances, and walking according to His laws, commands and orders, always doing the will and work of the Lord.

Yoke... is a symbol of subjection and servitude. The

Lord invites the believer to take *his* yoke upon him, and learn of him; that is, give up self-will in order to be in submission to His-will as revealed in His word, and be content to be in the lowest place. Those believers are the ones who will find rest for their souls: **For his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.**

Christ uses *yoke* to mean taking on the genuine Christian religion, and following its laws as found in commandments. (John 14:15, with Proverbs 7:2, &c.) Psalms 2 tells us that the unsaved consider the **yoke of the law unbearable** binding cords and bands that must be broken. Yet Psalms 119 tells us that His people find the **yoke of the law** a light and joyful yoke. (See also the joy promised by our Lord in John 13:17, 15:11.)

I mentioned to a fellow pastor some time ago that an Old Testament passage that was being quoted by a New Testament author had to be understood in the context of its Old Testament usage, which made the New Testament usage mean something other than what the pastor was using it to mean. (That was years ago, so I do not remember the passage, only the pastor's answer.)

In other words, the understanding of the Old Testament passage in its entire context had to be brought forward in order to get the proper New Testament understanding. He told me that the New Testament author did not use the Old Testament meaning of the passage, and that the quoted passage would stand on its own; such thinking allows the modern "teacher" to change the clear understanding of a New Testament passage where the speaker is quoting from the Old Testament.

All fundamental errs and heresies in the Church may be traced to our Lord's words, ***Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.*** Partial truth leads to err. Charles Bridges: "**Truth separated from truth becomes error.**"

Matthew 11:29 *Take my yoke ... find rest..* Corrupt theology has removed our Lord's words from their Hebrew Scriptural context, which has led to many false teachings "in the name of the Lord".

The context of 11:29 is Christ warning, rebuking and even condemning the cities of vv. 20-24 for rejecting Him. When He quoted Jeremiah 6:16, the "Jews" to whom He spoke clearly understood its context; they understood that He was comparing them to their fathers of Jeremiah's day. God warned their fathers many times, yet they ignored the warning, and destroyed themselves:

Jeremiah 6:13 *For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. 14 They have healed also the hurt of the daughter*

of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. 15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. 16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

Christ told them that it was the fruit of their fathers' thoughts that destroyed their nation. He was calling the Jews to a genuine conversion of the heart and attitude toward God, or judgment worse than that of Sodom would come upon them. (And it did.)

Jeremiah shows us that "judgment cannot be turned aside by mere sacrifice without a change of heart"—that is to say, there must be genuine conversion of the mind, will and emotions, a life-style change that comes from the heart. (Keil-Delitzsch) Christ called for such a change in his message in Matthew 11.

In Jeremiah 6, the Lord pronounces judgment against his people for their wicked thoughts and intents of the heart. He calls the pagan nations to prepare for war against Jerusalem; He warns Jerusalem that because of the wickedness of His people, the enemies will ***make the land desolate, a land not inhabited***, 6:8. (Christ's warning to the children of those who rejected Jeremiah's warning came to pass in 70 AD. Mat. 11:24.)

V. 13, *from the least even unto the greatest of them, they are all given to covetousness*, which is a sin of the heart. That secret sin reveals itself in dealing falsely.

V. 14, the Lord calls his people to repent of their secret sins, covetousness, and return to Him in obedience, but the religious leaders assure them that all is fine, ***peace, peace when there is no peace***, v. 14.

V. 15, His people had become so hardened by the world around them that they had no shame over their wickedness. Jeremiah 3:3 tells them that they have a whore's forehead, unable to be shamefaced.

V. 16, the Lord pleads with them:

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

But the people say, *We will not walk therein.*

• **THE LORD CONTINUES:**

17 Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not harken. 18 Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. 19 Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring

evil upon this people, **even the fruit of their thoughts**, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it. 20 To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me. 21 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.

God's judgment cannot be avoided with merely changing actions. There must be a genuine conversion of the mind, will and emotions.

V. 17, *Harken to the sound of the trumpet...*

The sounding of the trumpet to Israel of old was a signal for alarm of impending doom. Jeremiah warns God's people to turn to Him with their innermost being, or be annihilated.

But the people say for the second time, **we will not return.**

V. 18, Therefore hear... The prophet calls on all the peoples of the world to listen and learn as He brings His judgment upon His people.

1 Peter 4:17 *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

God's terrible judgment brings upon His covenant people the just reward of **the fruit of their thoughts because they refuse to listen and return to his law.**

Their thoughts... The context is judgment for their abominable thoughts controlling their covetous actions. They refused to control their thoughts and thus their actions.

In Galatians 5, Paul describes the works of the flesh that result in destruction. 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5 tell God's people that they have the power of the resurrected Christ working in them to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

The Israel of God today has that power of the Spirit; how much more is the Gospel Church worthy of chastisement for not claiming that power to bring about self-control?

1. Look back to ancient history, and see how success and prosperity forsook our fathers (1 Corinthians 10:1) when they left Jehovah God's way, and followed the way of the heathens. However, His people refused to con-

sider and change.

2. God raised up prophets from among his people, sounding the **trumpet** of warning of impending doom if they did not conform their thoughts and actions to the "law of the Lord." They refused to hear and change.

3. He calls to His congregation to hear and know and understand what is about to come upon them for their sins, as they rejected His plea to return to Him for their rest.

4. God calls the entire earth to witness: He is going to bring evil against *his people* for their opposition to and rejection of His law. Notice that God's action against them is not in response to their actions. Rather, judgment is the *Fruit of their thoughts*, viz. self-destruction.

Matthew 12:35, *A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

5. There was no shortage of sacrifices in the temple, but those sacrifices were mere outward service. The hearts of those offering the sacrifices were in rebellion against *my words, ... my law.* **The judgment was not a result of not doing, but of an unconverted**

heart. To obey is better than sacrifice, 1 Samuel 15:22.

6. V. 21, Stumblingblocks case people to fall. This is an interesting statement by the Lord.

Jeremiah tells God's rebellious people that God Himself will place things before them that will cause them to stumble.

James tells us that God tempts no man, rather *every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.* (1:14)

Some obvious stumbling blocks that cause His people to self-destruct: bill boards, entertainment, advertising to motivate debt, &c.

I wonder if the nice sounding patriots and those who offer hope other than righteousness are the stumbling blocks set before this nation in order to bring God's judgment?

• **BUT THEY DO NOT HAVE TO STUMBLE:**

Isaiah 26:3 *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

They would not fall if their hearts were stayed upon

him, but their hearts were set and hardened in their own ways.

In other words, here we see His people, Israel, refusing to be self-controlled, so God places stumbling blocks before them. They will go after those things that please the eye, the flesh, and appeal to their pride, and thus they destroy themselves because of their lack of self-control.

Neither old Israel nor the new Israel of God can blame God when the results of their hardness come to pass, either on a personal level or national level.

7. Note the length and depth of God's judgment:

Jeremiah 7:19 *Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? 20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.*

Every area of creation suffers for man's sin.

Jeremiah clearly tells us that the Lord offered his people **rest for your souls**, if they would return and walk in His ways. They refused. He sent many prophets to sound the warning, yet they still refused. In fact, Jesus Christ said that rather than turn from their sin, they killed the prophets:

Matthew 23:37 *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

According to Matthew 24, 23:38 was fulfilled in the "Great Tribulation" which took place in 70 AD.

His call to His people was far more than simply to bring their actions into conformity to His law-word. Rather, it was a call to **convert the thoughts and intents** of the heart, which they refused to do. It was the unlawful, secret things of the heart that caused God to move against His people by placing **stumbling blocks** before them. And because of the uncontrolled heart, they self-destructed.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

Hosea 13:9 *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.*

(Trinity Songbook: 396. "I was a wandering sheep, I did not love the fold; I did not love my Shepherd's voice, I would not be controlled. I was a wayward child, I did not love my home; I did not love my Father's voice, I loved

afar to roam. (3 more verses. Horatius Bonar, 1843)

Christ brought the entire thought forward when He offered **rest for your souls**. The rest Christ offered to the cities of Matthew 11 is available only through faith in His finished work. Ezekiel promised that there would be a new covenant, where one would love the word and law of God.

Ezekiel 36:22 *Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. 23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 ¶ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

Hebrews 10:16 *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* (He 8:8-10)

That new covenant is Christ. That new covenant not only offers forgiveness of sin, but provides a new heart that now loves the Lord's **yoke**, both the **word** and the **law of the Lord**

• DO THE SECRET THINGS MATTER?

Certainly they do, just as much as the things done openly. The difference is that people see unlawful deeds, and the Lord sees the unlawful thoughts of the heart. It is the Lord who brings judgment upon individuals and upon nations.

Secret things that are out of public sight—that is, the thoughts and intents of the hearts that never see action. The secret things "behind closed doors" have very real national consequences.

Is it too late to turn God's judgment aside in this nation? Probably, for even those called by His name love the prophets who prophesy falsely, and flock after them. Those false prophets were identified in Jeremiah 5:31, which was given before he gave the words of chapter 6.

The stumbling blocks are all around us, and His people are falling victim to them like flies.

We must confess our sins, and cast “down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” which is done by reading and meditating on His Word. (2 Corinthians 10:5) Under the new covenant with our Mediator in heaven, and the indwelling Spirit, we are without excuse.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Proverbs 14:34 *Righteousness (in the thoughts and in the actions) exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*

The unsavory **fruit of the thoughts** will come to pass. (See Ezekiel 8, where it was the “ancients of the house of Israel” who were leading in the abominations of the imagination. We do not have time to pursue what the Lord showed Ezekiel.)

Matthew 5:28 *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*

Luke 12:3 *Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.*

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

“I am harming no one but myself” is the enemy’s lie. We not only harm ourselves, but whole nations pay the price for the secret (and open) open rebellion against God’s law-word.

A *righteous life* conforms to the standards established by God’s word. However, a *righteous life* does not result in *eternal life*, for that comes only through the applied *righteousness* of Christ.

Isaiah 32:15-17, unites righteousness with the work of the Spirit, which results in peace and eternal, assured quietness. Because there has been reconciliation between man and God **through Christ**, peace comes to bless man’s ways.

In other words, true morality in individuals or nations comes from the righteousness of Christ placed in individual hearts through faith, and then lived out as exem-

plified by Job.

Isaiah 60:21 *Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.*

Isaiah prophesies concerning the Gospel Church. He speaks of the indwelling Spirit of God through faith in Christ, and that Spirit working out in His people’s lives, *righteous actions that glorify God*. If *righteous actions* are missing, then we are allowed to assume that the *righteousness of Christ* is also missing.

We are in the midst of a flood of immorality, infidelity, lawlessness and ungodliness of all descriptions, yet few are calling for righteousness in thought and deed.

Matthew 5:13 *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” means also “Thou shalt have no other powers ahead of me.” “Thou shalt have no other hope other than righteousness ahead of me.”

Is our hope in the imparted righteousness of Christ? Is that hope being lived out daily?

If our hope is in Him, then we are prisoners of that hope. His hope in us causes us to work for and expect the expansion of the Kingdom of God over the whole earth. His people are captive to the hope as found in Zechariah; the hope of the overflowing of Godly righteousness over the earth:

Zechariah 9:12 *Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee;*

THE PORNIFICATION OF SOCIETY

By Rob Slane

The facts on porn are appalling.

Science is only beginning to study it, but we know that pornography can literally restructure and shrink the brain. FightTheNewDrug.com, founded to publish research and raise awareness, says porn is a public health issue that transcends mere religion.

Studies show that two thirds of Christian men regularly use porn and more than half of pastors view it.

The average age of exposure to pornography is 11. There’s a new sexting scandal at a school every week.

Here’s some irony for you. Playboy magazine quit publishing nude photos because it can’t compete with ubiquitous porn online. The porn production industry is in decline because so many amateurs now produce

and share it for free.

“Sex week” at several elite universities features “workshops” by porn stars specifically themed around certain perversions. Course credit is often available. (And “Christian” parents support those evil institutions!)

Recent horror stories in the news include the busting of a child porn ring that resulted in 200 prosecutions, and live-streamed gang rapes on Facebook.

The latest article on this topic to catch my eye came from Rod Dreher on The American Conservative website. You can almost hear him weep in sorrow:

This society has a death wish. I wish I had some idea how it could be saved. What concerns me most of all right now is the horrifying complicity of conservative, even conservative Christian, parents in the spiritual, moral, and emotional ruin of their children and of their moral ecology because they, the parents, are too damn afraid to say no, my kids will not have a smartphone, I don't care what they and society think of me.

I hope that all Christians reading these words share his sorrow, and that it will induce some parents who have perhaps been blasé to take a long, hard look at their situation and take whatever action they can to protect their children's innocence.

The issue of pornography is a difficult one to even talk about, but we must. This month I'll consider the societal phenomenon, addressing what I believe is one major way we are being deceived and then briefly looking at why pornography is so destructive. Next month I'll look at the issue more at the individual level, first asking what the root of the problem is and then looking at some possible remedies.

• THE NEW DEFAULT POSITION

An article by Conor Friedersdorf in *The Atlantic* quotes one of the world's biggest “porn stars” expressing concern that we're not doing enough to stop pornography getting in front of children. Yet the same article states that “accessing hard core porn is (properly) legal.” This now seems to be the default position: Pornography is fine for adults, but we just need to keep it from children.

Now it is of course true that pornography filtering down to children is a very great evil. Young minds are more susceptible to habit-forming from new stimuli in ways that adult minds are perhaps not. Nevertheless, if we concentrate all our efforts on simply stopping pornography getting into the hands of children, we miss the point completely. The problem is not primarily that

pornography is falling into the hands of children, but rather that as a society we have opened the floodgates to allow porn in and we have normalized it.

It is absurd to think that it is possible to normalize something like this and for it not to filter down to children. Children, by their very nature, want to grow up to be adults, and they often want to do adult things before their time. So if we have largely normalized pornography among adults—and we have—then no amount of paywalls and banning of smartphones or anything else is going to make much difference. We have become a pornographic society, and children, who aspire to do what adults do, will generally find ways of getting their hands on it by hook or by crook.

Look at it like this. There are two types of activity that adults seek to protect children from. First, there are perfectly good activities that we want them to grow up into, but for which they need to come of age before we allow it. For instance, driving a car. Then there are activities which are bad in and of themselves, and which we try to protect them from not just because they aren't old enough to do them, but because we don't ever want them to do them. Taking heroin would fall into this category.

So which category does porn fit into? Is it like driving? Or is it like heroin? Is it something a child should one day be able to do, only not just now? Or is it like heroin; something that no sane parent would ever want their children to get into, no matter how old? If our culture puts it in the same category as driving a car, something to be avoided as a child, but something that is perfectly normal once you turn a certain age, then it can be safely said that we have lost all moral compass and are quite sick. If, on the other hand, we see it in the same category as heroin, then at least we would be acknowledging it as a problem to be dealt with.

Just so you know, in 2004 an expert psychiatrist testified before Congress, “Modern science allows us to understand that the underlying nature of an addiction to pornography is chemically nearly identical to a heroin addiction.”

Sadly, I would say that we have moved in the last 10 years from treating it in the heroin category to the driving category. “We don't want you to touch it now, but of course there will come a time when it becomes your right to consume as much of it as you like,” is essentially the message. And yet the schizophrenic nature of this is obvious when you think about why it is we don't want children seeing it. Isn't it because we know it pollutes

their minds? Isn't it because we instinctively know that it demeans and degrades them? Isn't it because we are well aware that it will give them a terribly unhealthy and warped view of the opposite sex? Of course it is, but are we really naïve enough to think that it doesn't have the same sorts of effects on adults?

But they're adults, and we can't stop their rights, can we? Well, I am not suggesting that we suddenly enact a law that bans it all. Such a law at the point we currently find ourselves at would be as effective as King Canute commanding the sea to go back. But I am suggesting that our culture urgently needs to stop looking at the main problem as preventing pornography falling into the hands of children, which is in reality a byproduct of a much larger problem. Instead we need to focus on the acceptance and normalization of pornography among adults.

- **WHY IT'S SO DESTRUCTIVE**

A Christian culture would understand the problem instinctively. It would see that pornography, by its very nature, cannot be anything other than dehumanizing, not just for the people making it, but for the viewer and—crucially—for the whole of society. We would understand that just as the continual watching of extremely violent films or computer games is bound to desensitize people (no matter how much the makers of such things try to convince us otherwise), so too pornography cannot fail to desensitize us, not just to sex itself, but to people in general. We would understand that you cannot have people watching this stuff, which objectifies and commoditizes people, and expect them to come away from it with a view of people which does not at some level objectify and commoditize other people.

In other words, a society that normalizes pornography has already sown the seeds of its own destruction. If we defend the rights of people to view this stuff, ultimately all we are doing is defending the rights of people to destroy society, since the health of that society very much depends in the long run on people not objectifying and commoditizing one another.

Of course, none of this gets to the root of the problem or suggests remedies for individuals who have fallen into the grip of pornography. The fact is that it has an astonishingly magnetic lure, and is a notoriously difficult vice to overcome.

What drives a person to use pornography, and what is the remedy?

If I were to take a poll of readers to ask what they think is the driver behind pornography, my guess is that

the most common answer would be just one word: lust. That's helpful as far as it goes, but we need to explore the meaning behind it. A good place to start is by studying the words of James in his epistle:

From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust and have not. Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain. Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts (James 4:1-3, KJV).

I bolded those phrases because it seems to me that they are key to understanding lust and all sorts of other sins that James alludes to. Lust is at root a desire to have something that we don't have and isn't rightfully ours. We pursue it zealously but ultimately fail to find satisfaction. It is a vicious cycle in which the failure to obtain satisfaction drives us to seek it again in ever more misguided ways. Porn or drugs are often referred to as a "gateway." Users go on to seek harder and harder stuff in order to attempt to meet increasingly warped desires. Of course, true satisfaction never comes.

Like all other vices, pornography is driven by twisting good desires in a direction that they were never meant to go. Pardon the pun, but there are no original sins. "Original sin" is of course an important doctrine, but there are no "original" sins in the sense of actions that are entirely thought up by the devil or by man with no reference to God. Rather, all sins are perversions and mockeries of something good that God has given to man.

Imagine a father who buys his son a toy drum, only to later find him using the drumstick to hit his little sister. When the boy hits his sister, some of the actions involved are nearly identical to what the stick was meant to be used for. But his thoughts and actions have become twisted to entirely different purposes and ends.

This is how pornography works. God created us with the good desire to be sexually satisfied. It is a consummating, intimate part of the marriage relationship, which the writer to the Hebrews tells us is honorable (Hebrews 13:4). Without it, humanity would die.

Pornography takes this God-given desire and distorts it to the point it is no longer recognizable. We end up directing our desire at people and fantasies that were never intended for us.

The irony is that, by using the gifts that God has given us for entirely different and incompatible purposes than the ones intended, we find that fulfillment eludes us. If

the sexual drive was created to lead us toward a closer and better relationship with our spouse, how can pornography, which is entirely non-relational and involves people who we have never even met, fulfill? The answer, which James implies, is that it can't. To the extent that it appears to provide some fulfillment, it is like scratching an itch. Only temporary relief, but with the catch that when the itch returns, it will be even harder to appease than before.

Herein lies the pornography trap. We are designed to find fulfillment in a real relationship, but it is partly the fact that pornography is non-relational that makes it so appealing. Relationships are hard. Life is often a monotonous routine. Living with another sinner is often far from easy. But as for the people in the pictures or the video, you don't need to worry about their sins. You don't need to live with them and deal with their issues day after day.

And so the thrill and excitement of being taken out of normal life into some fantasy world where satisfaction apparently resides can become intoxicating. No faithfulness is required to obtain satisfaction there. No commitment is required to achieve satisfaction there. No dealing with another person in an ongoing relationship is required to get satisfaction there. And yet the irony is that true, lasting satisfaction is the one thing it can never bring.

• WHAT THEN IS THE REMEDY?

Here are five suggestions.

1. Come to see how much it dehumanizes both yourself and others.

Pornography is by its very nature dehumanizing. It objectifies and commoditizes people. Once we are desensitized to people, we lose our ability to discern what is appropriate behavior and can justify almost any kind of sin against one another.

2. Understand that it cannot bring you the satisfaction you desire.

Any counselor of those with a porn habit will tell you it has never yet brought anyone true joy or lasting happiness. In fact, it's just the opposite, having ruined countless lives. If you are having to look for satisfaction in something which demonstrably cannot bring you what you are looking for, it's probably a good time to question whether you are seeking satisfaction in the right places.

3. Recognize how ridiculous it is.

C.S. Lewis famously used this illustration to point out the absurdity of a strip club, but it applies to porn as

well:

Imagine an alien world where scores of men have assembled to watch a striptease. A small, covered platter is brought out—and with all eyes wide, someone slowly removes the lid, revealing a steaming hamburger. Cheering and howling begins, and others snicker, elbowing their friends. Some just sit quivering in their seats.

If such a world did exist, we would not think it merely odd. We would think something inside the audience was broken. A healthy appetite for food is good, but when appetites turn into manic behavior, something is in a state of disrepair.

There's something to be said for trying to step outside of yourself for a moment to ponder. Porn involves fantasizing about having a sexual encounter with a person you've never met, never will meet, and if you did meet the person it would be completely wrong to pursue. Isn't it completely absurd?

4. Stop referring to your habit as an addiction.

The word addiction has become one of the most abused words of our day, and is often used as an excuse for avoiding responsibility. We'd be better off using Biblical terminology such as Christ's teaching in John 8. "Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin ... if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed."

I have no doubt that pornography produces certain chemicals in the brain that can take a powerful hold on us and some people will face extreme difficulty in breaking the habit. If using the word addiction helps us recognize how serious of a problem we've gotten ourselves into, that's fine. But the idea that we are passive victims is not borne out either Biblically or practically.

Pornography falls into the category of sexual immorality, and Scripture is plain that this is a sin that we should avoid, can avoid, and must avoid, chemicals and habits notwithstanding.

5. God tells us that those who don't break with it will be excluded from the Kingdom of God.

This is a sobering truth that should cause appropriate fear. The Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God." Despite the elaborate attempts of many modern Christians to ignore, twist, deny, confuse, or dispute the very clear teaching of this passage, there it is. Make of it what you will.

Much more could be said about these and other helpful ideas for fighting this sin, but there is a bottom line Biblical remedy. “Flee from sexual immorality” (1 Corinthians 6:18). That’s it. All the reasoning in the world will not help the user of porn to break his or her porn habit unless they are prepared to do the one thing necessary: Run away from it. Have nothing to do with it. _ Rob Slane lives with his wife and six home-educated children in Salisbury, England. He is the author of *The God Reality: A Critique of Richard Dawkins’ The God Delusion*, contributes to the Canadian magazine *Reformed Perspective*, and blogs on cultural issues from a Biblical perspective at www.theblogmire.com. You can follow him on Twitter at @theblogmire or send email to him at rob_slane@hotmail.com <https://samaritanministries.org/blog/the-pornification-of-society-part-1>

AN ANSWER FOR “INSURANCE”:

You do not have to violate your Biblical faith by purchasing health insurance that pays for abortions and treatments for conditions provided for in the federal Affordable Care Act that result from immoral practices. You can be consistent with your faith by sharing medical needs directly with fellow believers through Samaritan Ministries’ non-insurance approach. This approach satisfies the individual mandate in the Affordable Care Act (see 26 United States Code, Section 5000A, (d), (2), (B)).

Every month the more than 63,000* households (more than 207,000 people) of Samaritan Ministries share more than \$23 million* in medical needs directly—one household to another. They also pray for one another and send notes of encouragement. The monthly share for a family of any size has never exceeded \$495*, and is even less for singles, couples, and single-parent families. There are also special provisions for members 25 years of age and younger.

Visit samaritanministries.org for more information, or call toll-free at 1-888-268-4377. Tell them Bettie Need (bettie.need13@gmail.com) sent you.

MISUSED POWER

In Matthew 20:20, 21, we find a strange request from the mother of James and John.

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

The two disciples were actually the ones making the request; evidently, they encouraged their mother to also speak to the Lord about the matter. The mother is Salome, said to be the sister of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of the Lord. If she is Salome, no doubt James and John sought the special favor of being seated on the Lord’s left and right in the glory of His kingdom based upon their connection with the Lord through their mother.

How many seek special favors from the Lord based upon someone else’s “connection” with the Lord?

These two heard the Lord tell the twelve disciples that they would be seated on twelve thrones judging Israel. In the context of Matthew 20, the Lord told His disciples that the time of His departure and the time of His glorification in His kingdom was at hand.

The twelve expected the literal twelve thrones to soon be established over the literal twelve tribes of Israel in a manner more glorious than either David or Solomon. Accordingly, James and John moved their mother to speak to the Lord for their exaltation to the places of chief prominence, power and authority in what they perceived as the Lord’s soon coming, glorious, temporal kingdom.

Matthew 20:22, 23, the Lord placed conditions upon ruling with Him, which was suffering with Him. (2 Tim. 2:8-13.) The two disciples readily agree to the conditions, but the Lord understood that the two did not really understand what they were asking. To start with, contrary to their idea of Christ’s kingdom, the glory He was about to ascend to was not earthly glory, but His heavenly glory with His Father. It should be noted that though His kingdom is not of this world, it totally controls this world, and all the affairs of men. (John 18:36, 19:11.)

How many followers of Christ have desired temporal wealth and power only to learn the danger of carnal wealth and power after they were destroyed? Christ could be saying that these two did not realize the dangerous situations they were seeking in their request for temporal wealth and power. Both wealth and power easily lead to denial of the Lord, for they many times lead to independence from God.

Evidently, the motive for these disciples making this request was their desires for temporal glory and splendor, not their desires to serve the Lord. The Lord assured them that instead of temporal glory, they would suffer as He was going to suffer, for all who live Godly will suffer persecution.

The Lord dealt gently with James and John, using the situation to strengthen the very basic foundation of God's kingdom, *viz.* self-abasement and humility before God rather than temporal power and wealth.

Matthew 20:24, the other 10 were not as charitable as was the Lord: they *were moved with indignation*. As I thought on these things, I wondered if the *indignation* was because James and John thought of making the request first?

The Lord uses the situation to again teach the proper order in God's kingdom: He pointed out how pagans fight over and misuse temporal power, and He pointed out that the way up in God's Kingdom is down in the temporal realm.

Matthew 20:26, *But it shall not be so among you* was spoken to the then present 12, the spiritual leaders in the kingdom that was soon to be established upon profession of faith in Christ; that kingdom was to be and is the Gospel Church. (Mat. 16:16, &c.)

In other words, there must be religious and civil leaders in the world, or anarchy will develop. Religious leaders, *i.e.*, *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you.* (Heb. 13:17.) Civil leaders are addressed in Romans 13.

Another teaching here is that the Lord says that one spiritual leader, pastor, is not to rule over another, and each leader answers to his own Master, the Lord.

[Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. (Php. 2:3.) *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. [And] be at peace among yourselves.* (1 Thes. 5:11-13.)

Matthew 20:28, the Lord uses Himself as an example; He points out that He came not to obtain temporal splendor, wealth and power as James and John desired, but to give Himself *a ransom for many*. How foolish, therefore, for His followers, especially those with whom He is going to build His kingdom, to desire and work for something for which their Master did not desire nor work for: temporal splendor and authority. Christ's desire was not for His own well-being, but for the well-being of His people. (Acts 13:48.)

The point that caught my attention in this exchange is the character of Zebedee's two sons who made this request for temporal power and authority. We understand

more about James and John from Luke 9:51-56. These two men had probably the most zeal of any of the others, except maybe Peter, but the Lord rebuked them for their misdirected zeal.

We see that at this time, the spirit of these men was not really kindly toward others, for they were interested in their personal concerns, ideas, opinions and goals. The Spirit was sent back by our Lord Who then gave them the overriding love one for another and for the lost. He redirected their attitudes and motives.

The Lord did not say in Matthew 20 that they would not be seated as they desired, but He did say that their present spirit, as exhibited in Luke 9:54, was not a godly spirit. Obviously, these two disciples, though they were zealous for the word of God, would misuse temporal power and authority at this time if God gave it to them – they would have used their authority to force others to believe like they did or even to destroy all who might disagree with them.

AUTHORITY

Matthew 20:25-28, the natural view of authority as the ability to enforce, with armed force if necessary, its will upon others, which is exactly what James and John desired to do in Luke 9:54, "*Lord, let us command fire to come down from heaven and consume them because they do not agree with us.*" This attitude of authority, as exhibited by these two disciples, is typical of the world's attitude without the Spirit of love, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: authority to the ungodly is for establishing and retaining their power and subduing all dissension to their own will.

James and John show us that even the followers of Christ are not immune from the desire to forcefully put down all dissent and subdue all people to their will – they wanted to destroy the Samaritans by calling down fire upon them because they did not receive the Lord as they thought they should. (Lk 9:53.)

Throughout church history, various men have not only desired to, but have actually put people to death because the "offenders" did not view Scripture as they did, or, even as here, because men did not "receive the Lord" as they thought should have been done. Nor is it difficult to find professed Christians today who have James' and John's malicious spirit against all who disagree with them — one gets the distinct impression that if they had the authority and power in God's Kingdom as requested by James and John, they would certainly *command fire to come down from heaven even as Elias did, and consume* those who do not understand the "fin-

er points” of God’s word as they perceive them.

In fact, not only would they *command fire from heaven* against all disagreement if they had God’s authority, but they would certainly call for the sword if they had civil authority. A dark time in the Reformation was when several of the Paedobaptist leaders used civil authority to enforce their baptism view.

Many have experienced the malicious spirit toward those who do not hold to the dispensational, premillennial faith from those who do.

There are many “Christian” publications and “Christian” speakers difficult to follow because they have such a malicious spirit of anger, hatred and bitterness against those who disagree over things not clearly addressed by God’s word. They seem ready to call down fire from heaven against all dissension.

Obviously, it is Godly work to confront false understandings of Scripture with Truth, but equally obvious is that any malicious spirit against those who do not agree with us is condemned by the Lord. Though the voice against disagreement may be controlled, the spirit is malicious in God’s sight, and He judges the thoughts and intents of the heart.

One of my college instructors used to say, “Let’s agree to disagree agreeably.” Any malicious spirit in disagreement, even in disagreement with the devil’s crowd, according to James 3:15, *descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*

We might commend James and John for their zeal for the person, work and word of God in Christ, but it was not Godly zeal. It was a malicious zeal of anger and revenge, and it came not from above; it was totally contrary to the fruit of the Spirit of God, meekness and humility.

Certainly, there are points of doctrine one must defend even against those who *call on the Lord out of a pure heart*, but the points must be defended in the meek, loving spirit of Christ, or the “defender” becomes the “offender” against God and a captive of the enemy of our souls, 2 Tim 24:24-26:

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

There is a vast amount of devilish zeal being promoted today under the name of “Christian” zeal.

The Lord spoke very clearly: even a zeal for the Word of God that inwardly desires to kill and destroy any disagreement is earthly, sensual and devilish: It is not godly zeal.

• CONCLUSION

First, *the mother worshiped the Lord, desiring a certain thing of Him.* Her motive in worshiping the Lord Jesus in this case appears to be self-centered: she wanted something, so she worshiped the Lord. At least we have no record of her going away sorrowful because she had no assurance of her request being granted.

Those who have been involved in the Lord’s work for any length of time cannot count the number of people who *worshiped the Lord* for a purpose: they *desired a certain thing of Him*: they attended church faithfully and did everything that was expected of them until the *certain thing* did or did not materialize. Then they were no place to be found: they stopped *worshiping the Lord*.

There was a man in Louisiana who became a “good Christian,” and convinced a well-off Church member to invest in a “money making” plan. He invested though he was warned by the pastor. After he got the investment, he left Christianity behind, and he left with the man’s money. However, he did no more than take advantage of the man’s desire for something better.

Second, many times prayer is represented by men as little more than a blank check to be presented to the Lord; James and John presented their “blank check” request to the Lord, and agreed to meet the conditions, but they received a sermon rather than their hearts’ desires. Thus answers to prayer must be conditioned upon the will of the Lord, but at times He will answer wrong request with sad results, *e.g.* Ps 106:15. Their prayer requests did not influence the Lord to give them their hearts’ desires: they did not have a “blank check.”

Observe that in the short time span of Matthew 20, we are shown a tremendous contrast in two types of prayer. Mark 10:35, 36, tells us that James and John approached the Lord with their request, and the Lord *said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?* Their hearts’ desires were to each be exalted with Christ in His Kingdom.

The stark contrast is found in Matthew 20:30-32: though facing great discouragement from people, two blind men continued to cry out to Jesus, and the Lord *said, What will thou that I shall do unto you?* Their hearts’ desires plead for the Lord’s mercy.

The obvious difference between the two prayer requests was the hearts' motivating attitudes. The two disciples were motivated by pride, thinking they were "special" in the Kingdom. Therefore, their hearts' desires were to receive special treatment, and they received a lesson on humility. The two blind men illustrated the Lord's lesson to James and John, as well as a lesson to all who would believe on His name down through the centuries.

On down in Matthew 20 and following the selfish request by James and John, we have the two blind men. They clearly realized their helpless condition; they realized they had no claim on the Lord. All they had was hope in the Lord's mercy: "*Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.*"

Crying out from their humble and helpless position, they realized that they only had the Lord's mercy upon which to base their request.

When the hardened, proud heart humbles to the point that it can only cling to the Lord's mercy, then it too can receive its desire – He will certainly, willingly and gladly give the humble heart's desire that sincerely clings only to his mercy through Christ our Lord, and pleads for His will to be done.

The contrast between the disciples and the blind men fulfills the Lord's words of Matthew 19:30: *the first*, the proud followers of Christ, *shall be last, and the last*, the humble who cling only to His mercy, *shall be first* in the Kingdom of God.

Third, the account is also given in Mark, and both Matthew and Mark conclude the previous section with *the last shall be first, and the first last*. (Mk. 10:31, Mat 19:30, 20:16.)

We see, therefore, that in spite of the Lord's clear words concerning humility, the sons of Zebedee still requested to be placed in an exalted position. Thus the question arises: How many people attend school and seminary looking for and seeking an exalted position in the Kingdom of God?

A few years ago, we had a pastor move into our county apparently on his way somewhere else. A small, local church there was his first "stop" on his way up, and as soon as a larger church made an offer, he left within a few months. The local church almost perished from his whirl-wind tour of duty there.

Fourth, For whom it is prepared by the Father. It is God's sovereign choice who will be exalted in this world in both the temporal and spiritual realms, and in the

world to come. (Dan. 4:32, 35, &c.) His choice is then worked out by bestowing His grace upon the individual objects of His good pleasure. (Phil 2:13.)

The Father alone determines "Who's Who" in His kingdom on earth and in heaven. There is nothing man can do to determine his own position apart from God's grace. Of course, we only see "exaltation" this side of death in the temporal realm, and only have faint glimpses of any "exaltation" on the other side. One will not know his position in the Heavenly Kingdom of God until he gets there with Christ.

VARIOUS

* **Spurgeon collection launched** online

<http://www.bpnews.net/49114/spurgeon-collection-launched-online>

* **On Monday, the Supreme Court** declared that birth certificates were no longer designed to list the biological parents of children, and ordered that states must now grant same-sex couples the ability to place their names on birth certificates. This, of course, defeats the purpose of having a birth certificate — why not just have a certificate of legal parentage? — but according to the Court, everyone must be made to feel like a biological parent, even where there's no biological connection to the child." (Daily Wire)

Last week TruthRevolt reported that Oregon became the first state in America to add a "third gender" option to drivers' licenses (meaning that Oregon residents getting a license can choose from male, female, and X). Apparently, the latest cultural battleground is the birth certificate. In both of these instances, biology and science are taking a back seat to ideology and identity politics.

<http://www.truthrevolt.org/news/supreme-court-decision-about-same-sex-parents-and-birth-certificates-defies-science-and-biology>

* **The Mechanic and The Cardiologist**

A Lexus mechanic was removing a cylinder head from the motor of a LS460 when he spotted a well-known cardiologist in his shop.

The cardiologist was there waiting for the service manager to come and take a look at his car when the mechanic shouted across the garage, "Hey Doc, want to take a look at this?"

The cardiologist, a bit surprised, walked over to where the mechanic was working.

The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and asked, "So Doc, look at this engine. I opened its heart, took the valves out, repaired or replaced anything damaged, and then put everything back in, and when I finished, it worked just like new.

So how is it that I make \$48,000 a year and you make \$1.7M when you and I are doing basically the same work?"

The cardiologist paused, leaned over, and then whispered to the mechanic.....

"Try doing it with the engine running.

Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness.

Copied

*** DHS whistleblower: Shariah threatens U.S. like ‘dragon’ that kills**

America facing crisis that’s ‘capable of devouring us if we’re not careful’

One day as Philip Haney was reading the Declaration of Independence to a group of people, he had a revelation. He came across the passage that asserts when a government becomes tyrannical and fails to secure the people’s God-given rights, “it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

Suddenly, Haney realized why the Obama administration had been so unwilling to prevent Islamic terrorists from entering the country. At the same time, he realized the motivation behind the vehement left-wing opposition to Donald Trump.

“It struck me like a bolt of lightning – that’s the reason why they’re doing it,” Haney said in a recent interview with “The Hagmann Report.” “They’re seeking to alter or abolish the current form of government and replace it with one that they consider to be more suitable.” ...

<http://www.wnd.com/2017/07/dhs-whistleblower-shariah-threatens-u-s-like-dragon-that-kills/>

*** Killer cop Mohamed Noor was ‘diversity’ hire**

Questions continue to mount about the strange shooting death of Justine Ruszczyk Damond at the hands of a Minnesota cop. ...

So it didn’t matter that Noor had been the subject of three complaints of unprofessional conduct including a lawsuit that alleges he brutalized another woman in May 2017.

Terminating him would require answering to the city’s powerful Muslim advocacy groups, something no Democrat in Minnesota wants to do....

http://www.wnd.com/2017/07/killer-cop-mohamed-noor-a-diversity-hire/?cat_orig=politics

*** More slaves today than at any time in history**

There are more slaves today than at any time in human history, reported Benjamin Skinner, a fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard Kennedy School of Government. An estimated 27 million people in the world are forced to work, held through fraud, under threat of violence, for no pay beyond subsistence, in forced marriages, in sex-trafficking and prostitution. ...

Those wanting slaves replaced Indians with Africans purchased from Muslim slave markets.

http://www.wnd.com/2016/02/more-slaves-today-than-at-any-time-in-history/?cat_orig=diversions

As in the past, the Muslims are the leaders in providing and selling slaves today. The Muslims were the ones who provided the slaves worldwide, including to the Americas.

*** Nothing too good for the taxpayer.**

Check out Prosper High School’s proposed \$48 million mega stadium that features banquet hall suite

<https://sportsday.dallasnews.com/high-school/high-schools/2017/07/18/video-proposed-prosper-venue-another-blast-high-school-football-stadium-boom>

How stupid can taxpayers be to place themselves in terrible bondage to the anti-Christ’s humanistic education system, just so

the community’s children can have a lovely temple in which to worship the sport’s god? Look on your property tax bill! 80% of ours goes to the school board that placed a lien on our property. What right does my neighbor have to place a lien on my property so his granddaughter can be taught anti-Christianity, and so she can play volleyball, or other sports. The wicked are smart, and they know that “sports” will sell an oppressive bond program.

*** Poll: Declining Number of Protestants Identify With Specific Denomination**

... Since Trump took office in January, meanwhile, Christian refugees coming to the U.S. outnumber Muslim refugees.

http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/protestants-gallup-poll-religion-decline/2017/07/18/id/802412/?ns_mail_uid=81002676&ns_mail_job=1742570_07192017&s=al&dktnbr=11hbtjtxHyper-grace, URL to article: <http://www.wnd.com/2014/08/christianitys-central-doctrine-being-twisted/>

The road to destruction is paved with good intentions.

*** All areas of society have been conquered** by the “gays”, and the church is falling fast to the “gay agenda.” The next several years will bring attacks against Christians and the church using the law, just as the Muslims use the sword. How will we prepare and respond?

http://www.tcfamily.org/2013%20Additions/2013_07/A%20WARNING%20TO%20THE%20CHURCH.htm

<http://ipost.christianpost.com/news/the-gay-agendas-planned-psychological-attack-on-straight-america-12488/>

*** Churches warned: ‘Tidal wave of gay theology’ looming**

Read more at <http://www.wnd.com/2014/08/churches-warned-tidal-wave-of-gay-theology-looming/#aUtWc7CVjzBu4AeI.99>

*** The Utah Polygamy Ruling opens Pandora’s box** against the biblical family. The sodomites got a real boost from it.

<http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/faith-and-morals/item/19032-the-utah-polygamy-ruling-and-the-tale-of-the-slippery-slope>

*** Paddling to be allowed at Three Rivers ISD**

<http://www.caller.com/story/news/education/2017/07/20/three-rivers-isd-students-get-paddled/464387001/>

* How sad:

Developers plan to demolish historic Notre Dame Church in Worcester, erect 4-story luxury apartment building

The developers behind the Roseland Apartment complex are eyeing Worcester’s historic Notre Dame des Canadiens Church for demolition in order to make way for a four-story apartment building with 84 units and retail space.

http://www.masslive.com/news/worcester/index.ssf/2017/07/developers_of_luxury_worcester.html

Men had a different view of highness and glory of God in their structures. They sought to exhibit the majesty of the Heavenly Kingdom and throne of God. The majesty of God has been lost, as we see the hastily thrown up buildings which are to represent the kingdom of Heaven. The US churches of 100 years ago reflect that majesty of the Heavenly Kingdom.

*** Conference teaches K-12 educators how to combat ‘whiteness in schools’**

<https://www.thecollegefix.com/post/34912/>

*** Why You’re Being Invited to Fewer Weddings**

Fewer people are getting married, and they’re inviting fewer

guests.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-28/why-you-re-being-invited-to-fewer-weddings>

* **Banks resort to negative interest** amid market collapse.

[“A negative interest rate means the central bank and perhaps private banks will charge negative interest: instead of receiving money on deposits, depositors must pay regularly to keep their money with the bank. This is intended to incentivize banks to lend money more freely and businesses and individuals to invest, lend, and spend money rather than pay a fee to keep it safe.” The target is 10%. Thus, \$10,000 will only produce \$9,000 when withdrawn. The purpose is to force large depositors, companies especially, to spend the money.]

Read the article at <http://www.wnd.com/2016/02/banks-resort-to-negative-interest-amid-market-collapse/>

* **Negative central bank interest rates now herald new danger for the world**

Sub-zero rates are becoming the “new abnormal” in a shaky world economy. With fresh panic hitting markets, are we finally hitting the limits of what monetary policy can achieve

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/12149894/Mapped-Why-negative-interest-rates-herald-new-danger-for-the-world.html>

* **China to buy Chicago Stock Exchange**

“Congress Is Wary of Chinese Deal for Chicago Stock Exchange”

<http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2016-02-17/congress-is-wary-of-chinese-deal-for-chicago-stock-exchange>

* **China is buying up American companies fast**, and it’s freaking people out.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/chinese-outbound-acquisitions-concerns-2016-2>

* **Foxconn announces \$10 billion investment** in Wisconsin and up to 13,000 jobs

MADISON - Foxconn Technology Group announced at the White House Wednesday its plans to invest \$10 billion to build a massive display panel plant in Wisconsin that could employ up to 13,000 workers but would require up to \$3 billion in subsidies from state taxpayers. ... (Probably low paying jobs, \$10-\$12.50 per hour. Amazon had a big Job Fair, offering \$10-\$13 per hour jobs.)

At \$3 billion for 13,000 jobs, the deal would cost \$231,000 per job. The subsidies would total more than the combined yearly state funding used to operate the University of Wisconsin System and the state’s prison system. (I guess with the New Math, this all makes sense. Those of us who worked in the “trades” in the 60s, cannot imagine how anyone survives on \$15 or less an hour today. Jobs are returning, but at how much lower is the pay than the ones that went “off-shore”?)

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/2017/07/26/scott-walker-heads-d-c-trump-prepares-wisconsin-foxconn-announcement/512077001/>

Foxconn currently makes the LCD displays in China. Now, courtesy of the US tax payers, Foxconn will make high-end LCD displays in the USA. There are no high-end LCD made in the USA at present. FoxConn is owned by the Chinese, so our wealth continues to be transferred to China. Why are we giving the Chinese \$3 billion to build here for their profit? Was not a US

owned company sought to build the LCDs here?

But the money is fiat paper notes anyway. The FED will gladly “print” and loan more digital “money”, as long as they can collect the interest on added paper.

* **Scaramucci still stands to profit from SkyBridge** from the White House

The investment firm, which Scaramucci founded in 2005, is in the process of being sold to RON Transatlantic and Chinese conglomerate HNA Group. The sale, set in motion in January when Scaramucci was shedding his holdings in anticipation of landing an administration job, has drawn the scrutiny of regulators and is taking longer than expected to close.

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/07/26/scaramucci-trump-skybridge-profits-241006>

Thanks to the love of money, Russia now owns 20% of US uranium. Their purchase was made possible by a total of \$40 million donation to the Clinton Family Foundation while she was Secretary of State.

While Christians raise their hands and sing “worship songs”, and exalt the occult “Star of David,” they fail to worship God in their private life. Ignoring social, educational and political responsibility, they seem to be unconcerned that they are turning the whole world over to the Wicked One.

* **Wicked within:** U.S. plunges toward ‘occultism and demons’
‘You would have to be living under a rock to deny this current reality’

Television shows featuring exorcisms as entertainment. Lucifer as a crime-fighting hero on television. Occult symbols used in music videos.

References to demons seem to be everywhere in American culture. And the rise in occultism comes at a time when experts, including Catholic priests who specialize in the rite, claim exorcism is becoming more common.

* **Now, Karl Payne, author of “Spiritual Warfare: Christians, Demonization and Deliverance,”** argues America is becoming desensitized to images of evil promoted by the mass media.

“Yes, pop culture is glorifying occultism and demons, and you would have to be living under a rock to deny this current reality,” he told WND. “And if a person had WiFi, the Internet or cable television, he could still find it in the desert, under that rock.”...

<http://www.wnd.com/2017/07/wicked-within-u-s-plunges-toward-glorifying-occultism-and-demons/>

* **SATAN TEMPLE’S GOAT-HEADED STATUE DEBUTS SATURDAY**

Christina Hall, Detroit Free Press, Published 6:45 p.m. ET July 24, 2015

The \$100,000 Baphomet statue depicts Satan as a winged, goat-headed figure.

DETROIT — A controversial monument to be unveiled Saturday downtown is an event that Michigan Christians have tried to shut down, according to a news release Friday.

(Baphomet is an image depicting Satan. There is a boy on one side and a girl on the other side, looking up in great admiration to Baphomet’s face. Check the image. Ed.)

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/07/24/satan-statue-unveiling/30642219/>

Furthermore, there are similar images being erected in various

other public areas around the nation.

*** A small Minnesota town is about to get the nation's first public Satanic Temple monument**

Veterans Memorial Park in tiny Belle Plaine, Minn., is packed with remembrances for the town's men and women in uniform. Soon, it will get one more: A solemn black cube holding an upturned helmet, its sides adorned with upside-down pentagrams.

The Satanic Temple announced Friday that it had received approval to install the monument, which is in production. Within a couple of months, it is expected to take its place alongside a flag-lined walkway, a marble plaque and a retired UH-1H Iroquois "Huey" helicopter positioned as if it is hovering above the ground....

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/a-small-minnesota-town-is-about-to-get-the-nations-first-public-satanic-temple-monument/2017/05/05/b13b75f0-31bf-11e7-9534-00e4656c22aa_story.html?utm_term=.d3e89dcb80b2

*** 'Young Marxist' Clubs Sprouting Up Across the Country**

"This generation essentially has no personal experience with communist or socialist societies."

Students at Edina High School in Minnesota received an invitation earlier this year to join the school's newest, student-led group: the Young Marxists Club, according to Intellectual Takeout.

Similar Communist clubs have popped up in secondary education systems around the country in recent years, in places from Norman, Oklahoma to Santa Clara, California. ...

<http://www.truthrevolt.org/news/young-marxist-clubs-sprouting-across-country>

Midst all the effort by the enemy of the Cross to cast off God's cords and bands, eradicate Christianity from the earth, the profession of faith by the once pagan king of the whole earth, Nebuchadnezzar learned that *all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?* (Dan 4:35)

Our God reigns, and his people are assured: For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14)

Do we believe the Law, Prophets and Psalms?

If so, His people have a vision of a glorious future under Christ the King.

****Many Americans are too drugged-out to work**

(Nearly half of job applicants fail drug screenings.)

A slew of reports finds a fresh reason for the chronic inability of American companies to fill skilled jobs: not a lack of skills, and hence a training-and-education crisis, but a surfeit of drug abuse. Simply put, prime-working age Americans without a college diploma are often too drugged-out to get the best jobs. Opioids remain at high levels, but the surge in drug use is now heroin and the powerful contaminant fentanyl.

<https://www.axios.com/many-americans-are-too-drugged-out-to-work-2467304330.html>

*** Special-ops troops' drug, alcohol abuse prompts call for congressional review of 'culture'**

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/jul/30/navy-seals-drug-use-shows-mission-toll-on-special/>

*** Hungarian PM: 'Soros Empire' plans to de-Christianize**

Europe — Notorious billionaire working side-by-side with E.U.

<http://www.wnd.com/2017/07/hungarian-pm-soros-empire-plans-to-de-christianize-europe/>

*** Crisis in America's Churches:** Bible Knowledge at All-Time Low. (Including in the pulpit, ed.)

<http://TheologicalStudies.org/crisis.html>

*** U.S. town bans residents** from criticizing mosque

New restrictions on speech about Islam akin to 'surrender'

<http://www.wnd.com/2017/08/u-s-town-bans-residents-from-criticizing-mosque/>

America is committing suicide with its own laws.

The Inauguration of the

EVERLASTING DOMINION OF CHRIST

By Thomas Williamson

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." - Daniel 7:13-14.

There is general agreement that this prophecy has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of Man to whom dominion is given in this passage. (A few commentators see the Son of Man as a reference to the nation of Israel. This view is unacceptable, since the plain language of the prophecy refers to a man, not a nation). It is generally understood that Christ is given a Kingdom that is everlasting and will never be destroyed. Can we deduce more from this prophecy? Does the Bible tell us when Christ receives this Kingdom? Has this glorious event already taken place, or is it still in the future? Does it really matter when it takes place? Given the importance of the concept of the Kingdom of God in the Bible, it will be instructive and helpful to examine the question of when this prophecy was fulfilled.

There is a presumption that the prophecy was fulfilled during the reign of the last of the 4 great world kingdoms that Daniel prophesied about in Daniel 7:1-7. It is generally agreed that the 4 "Beasts" that Daniel described were Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, and that Rome was the last of those kingdoms.

The same 4 kingdoms appear in Daniel 2:37-45, and we are told in 2:44 that in the days of the kings of the 4th kingdom (Rome) "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall

stand for ever.”

Meanwhile, the event described in Daniel 7:13-14 sounds very much like the Ascension of Christ. Daniel describes the Son of Man coming into the presence of the Ancient of Days “with the clouds of heaven.” In Acts 1:9, we are told that “And when [Christ] had spoken these things, while they beheld he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”

As for Christ receiving dominion and a kingdom, that had clearly already taken place at the time of His resurrection and Ascension, since He stated to His disciples in Matthew 28:18: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Let’s check out what the commentaries say, in order to see if we are on the right track in assigning this prophecy of Daniel to the time of Christ’s Ascension.

MATTHEW HENRY: “Our Saviour seems plainly to refer to this vision when He says (John 5:27) that the Father has therefore given him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man, and because He is the person whom Daniel saw in vision, to whom a kingdom and dominion were to be given. He is said to ‘come with the clouds of heaven.’ Some refer this to His incarnation: He descended ‘in the clouds of heaven,’ came into the world unseen, as the glory of the Lord took possession of the temple in a cloud... I think it is rather to be referred to His ascension; when He returned to the Father the eye of His disciples followed Him, till ‘a cloud received him out of their sight,’ Acts 1:9. •••

“We are told, abundantly to our satisfaction, that ‘he came to the Ancient of days:’ for he ascended to ‘his Father and our Father, to his God and our God (John 20:17): from Him He came forth, and to Him He returns, to be glorified with Him, and to sit down at His right hand.”

MATTHEW POOLE: “One like the Son of Man;’ that is, the Messiah: this is the same with the stone, Daniel 2; He came ‘with the clouds of heaven,’ Matthew 24:30, i.e. gloriously, swiftly, and terribly, Jeremiah 4:13. ‘They brought him near before him.’ this relates to His ascension, Acts 1:9-11, at which time, though King before, Matthew 2:2, yet now, and not before, He seems to receive His royal investiture for the protection of His church and the curbing of their enemies, which He says He had before, Matthew 28:18, 1 Corinthians 15:25, Daniel 2:44.”

JOHN WESLEY: “ ‘A son of man’ - That is, the Messiah, he came with the clouds of heaven, gloriously, swift-

ly and terribly. ‘And came’ This relates to his ascension, at which time, he received his royal investiture, for the protection of his church, and curbing of their enemies.”

JAMIESON, FAUSSET AND BROWN: “He ‘comes with the Ancient of days’ to be invested with the kingdom. Cf. Psalm 110:2: ‘The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength [Messiah] out of Zion.’ This investiture was at His Ascension ‘with the clouds of heaven’ (Acts 1:9, 2:33-34, Psalms 2:6-9, Matthew 28:18)....

“Tregelles thinks the investiture here immediately precedes Christ’s coming forth; because He sits at God’s right hand until His enemies are made His footstool, then the kingdom is given to the Son in actual investiture, and He comes to crush His so prepared footstool under His feet. But the words, ‘with the clouds,’ and the universal power actually, though invisibly, given Him then (Ephesians 1:20-22), agree best with His investiture at the ascension, which, in the prophetic view that overleaps the interval of ages, is the precursor of His coming visibly to reign, no event of equal moment taking place in the interval.”

KENNETH GENTRY, in “He Shall Have Dominion:” “We must notice that Daniel 7:13-14 speaks of the Christ’s ascension to the Ancient of Days, not His return to the earth. It is from this ascension to the right hand of God that there will flow forth universal dominion.”

GARY DEMAR, in “‘Last Days Madness:” “There is a third cloud motif in Scripture. The reference is found in Daniel 7:13-14, the passage that Jesus quotes in Matthew 24:30. Notice that the coming of the Son of Man in Daniel 7 is not down but up! Jesus comes up ‘with the clouds of heaven’ to ‘the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.’ “

HAROLD FOWLER, in “The Gospel of Matthew:” “In Daniel’s vision, coming on the clouds means that the Son of Man was coming onstage, into the scene. It is not a coming toward Daniel or toward earth, but a coming seen from the standpoint of God, since Daniel uses 3 verbs that all indicate this: ‘coming ... approached ... was led to’ the Ancient of Days. This is no picture of the Second Coming, because the Son of man is going the wrong way for that. His face is turned, not toward earth, but toward God. His goal is not to receive His saints, but to receive His kingdom.”

HERMAN RIDDERBOS, in “The Coming of the Kingdom:” “For Christ, too, the resurrection is even meant His investiture with power in accordance with

Daniel 7, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' This is a clear reference to the prophecy in Daniel 7:14, not only as to the fact but in the words themselves."

BRIAN TABB, Bethlehem College and Seminary: "At Jesus's ascension He is installed as the true king of the world. According to the Apostles' Creed, He 'ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.' Jesus is taken up to heaven in a cloud (Acts 1:9-11), and Stephen declares that he sees the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56). These texts suggest that Jesus' ascension fulfills the important prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14."

KEITH MATHISON, LIGONIER MINISTRIES: "The coming of one like a son of man to the Ancient of days (vv. 13-14) is the climactic section of this vision, and it is of crucial importance. Much confusion has been caused by the assumption that this text is a prophecy of the Second Coming of Christ. The context precludes such an interpretation....

"In verse 13, Daniel witnesses 'One like a son of man' come with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of days to be presented before him... The 'coming' that is seen in this vision, then, is not a coming of God or a coming of the one like a son of man from heaven to earth. It is a coming of one like the son of man to God who Himself is seated in heaven on His throne. The direction of the 'coming' is not from heaven but towards heaven. It is for this reason that this vision is not a prophecy of the Second Coming of Jesus from heaven to earth. Rather, as Calvin long ago explained, it is better understood as a prophecy of Christ's ascension to the right hand of God after His resurrection (cf. Acts 1:9-11, 2:33, 5:31).

"The one like a son of man is presented before the Ancient of days for the purpose of His investiture. When He is presented before the Ancient of days He is given a dominion and a kingdom that all should serve Him (v. 14a). There seems to be an allusion here to the event described in Genesis 1:26, when the first man was given dominion over all the creatures (cf. Psalm 8:4-8). The establishment of the kingdom will restore God's creational purposes. This kingdom given to one like a son of man is to be everlasting (v. 14b). As in the vision of Daniel 2, we see here a depiction of 4 human kingdoms followed by the establishment of God's eternal kingdom. Both texts seem to indicate that God's kingdom will be established sometime near the end of the 4th human kingdom."

Some may object that Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 7:13-14 must refer to an event that takes place in the

future, after the Last Judgment which appears to be described in Daniel 7:9-11. However, this argument is not rigorous or conclusive. C.I. Scofield in his study notes states that "The vision (Daniel 7:9-14) reverses the order of events as they will be fulfilled." If true, the investiture of Christ as King could take place prior to the judgment scene in Daniel 7:9-11.

Meanwhile, not all commentators agree that Daniel 7:9-11 refers to a future judgment. Adam Clarke says, "This is not spoken of the final judgment: but of that which He was to execute upon this fourth beast, the Roman empire; and the little boasting horn, which is a part of the fourth beast, and must fall when the other falls."

Most of us will probably interpret the Daniel 7:9-11 judgment to mean the future Last Judgment, but this does not rule out a First Century AD fulfillment for the presentation of the Son of Man before the Ancient of Days, since this appears to be a separate vision, and we are not told that it follows the previous vision in chronological order.

We must keep in mind that Daniel 2 clearly speaks of this kingdom being set up during the time of the 4th great world empire (Rome), and that the New Testament describes the Kingdom as a present reality in this age (Colossians 1:13, etc).

So what is the significance of all this - what is the bottom line? Many of us have been taught the Christ did not bring in the Kingdom as a result of His first advent. Supposedly, we are waiting for Him to return the second time and set up the Kingdom at that time. In the meantime, we are in a "parenthesis" in God's plan, with God's Kingdom work on hold and in abeyance until Christ comes back.

However, Daniel's prophecy makes it clear that the promised Kingdom began during the time of the 4th great world empire (Rome). In Matthew 28:18, Christ described His absolute dominion as a present reality, not something that was put on hold.

We are in the Kingdom now, and we have the privilege of serving and working for the advancement of that Kingdom. May God help us to make the most of this glorious opportunity.

False Start

CHRISTIAN FAITH ON THE ALTAR OF FOOTBALL

David Bordy

If confession is good for the soul, then writing this post should be like spring cleaning for my heart. Hi, my

name's David and I have a football problem.

I'm a loyal, 3rd-Generation Miami Dolphin fan (don't laugh... "it's root-root-root for the home team. If they don't win, it's a shame"). I've rooted for them since I was little and Dan "The Man" Marino was lighting up the record books. I rooted for them when they went 1-16, with their only win coming off a last-second field goal against a struggling Baltimore Ravens. I rooted for them when they finally made the playoffs this year. J-E-T-S and P-A-T-S are four-letter words in my house. My passion is indeed adamant. In addition, I also got into fantasy football the last few years. Our seminary has a small league and I've been managing it the last two seasons. To do both these things involves a lot of time and a lot of commitment. I do both with a lot of passion and excitement, the same amount that I'm sure many of you have when it comes to football.

This begs the question though.... Can football be a religion? Can it be an idol? Why doesn't GOD get as much passion and attention as football does with the average Christian NFL enthusiast?

Let's put it this way. If football is a religion, it's got a LOT of committed disciples. According to the Nevada Gaming Commission, 41% of all sports bets in 2011 were spent on Football, a total amount of \$1.34 Billion. That's Billion... with a B. Needless to say, a lot of folks will be watching the Super Bowl around the world this weekend. According to Sports Illustrated, the price Fox will charge for a 30-second commercial during this weekend's big game is between \$5 Million and \$5.5 Million. It would seem that the Worldwide Church of Pigskin has many devout and active members.

In light of this growing "body" of football believers, what do we do with respect to the real Church, a Christian family whom (at least in America) is declining? In 2013, the Huffington Post wrote that between 4,000-7,000 churches in America close their doors every year. No one's paying \$5.5 Million for a 30-second spot on the Sunday morning announcement screen. It begs one to ponder whether or not the rise of the one "church" has something to do with the decline of the other.

Idols take many forms. God has indeed given us the gift of football, but it (like anything else) has a great temptation to take the place of Him or His worship. As a pastor, I've seen members come into an Ash Wednesday Service late because of a playoff game. I've seen members leave when the sermon goes a little long. (Our service ends around 11:30, and kickoff in the Midwest, of course, is at noon). I've seen church business meetings

intentionally scheduled on Pro Bowl weekend, so as to not interfere with the actual January afternoon playoff schedule. But hey, I'm pointing the finger at myself too. Most of my beloved Dolphins' games were noon kickoffs this season and I can't help but wonder if that secretly motivated me to inch out the door of the church just a little bit faster. This is something that ALL Christian football fans struggle with, especially given that most football happens early Sunday afternoon, directly piggy-backing off our Sunday morning worship schedules.

To that end, there are 4 important factors here that we must keep in mind, so as not to let "The Football gods" become our new deity of choice:

Repent. We often sing of casting down our idols... but if the first step to fixing a problem is admitting you have one, then, as wonderful as football is, let's call it what it IS... an IDOL. Now that we've admittedly got an idolatry issue on our hands, let's repent. I'll be the first to start.

"Lord, I regret that my passion and devotion to the Miami Dolphins (or you enter your own team here) is often with more zeal, energy, and consumption of my time than my relationship with AND/OR my worship and service of You. The entertainment itself has exceeded the Source of it, and for that I repent. Give me the passion and thrill of a Hail Mary playoff touchdown every time my thoughts turn to You.... and turn my thoughts to You infinitely more often than to a brown leather ball. Amen.

Put More Eggs in the RIGHT Basket. I'm not saying to burn your subscription to NFL Sunday Ticket or Red Zone. I'm not saying to cut football out of your life completely. But I AM saying that your loyalties should not be evenly split. If football gets X hours of your attention and God/Scripture/Prayer/Worship gets Y, all I'm saying is that the formula MUST be $Y > X$. So let's take steps to ensure that's the case:

Step 1: Add up all the hours you spend watching football. You may need a calculator because 3-hour + football games are on Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. **Step 2:** Take that total sum and pull out your calendar. Pencil in more committed hours of prayer, worship, and service on your calendar than that sum of football hours. The more hours the better. **Step 3:** Add up all the time you spend reading football articles or draft reports, watching SportsCenter or other such football media programs in-between games, or fine-tuning that all important Fantasy team of yours. **Step 4:** Take THAT sum and pencil into your calendar a greater

amount of scripture reading, sermon listening, commentary reading, etc. **Step 5:** Repeat steps 1-4, using the same amount of hourly devotion to God, even during the offseason. (Your plan may not look exactly like this, but you get my point.) Time with/for God > time with football.

Recharge your zeal. It isn't just a matter of the amount of time we spend with God over football. But the quality of that time, in relationship to the quality of football time. This is where I feel the most guilt. As a DolFan, my emotions run the entire gamut, especially in the 4th. I feel joy, sadness, anger, longing, pain, optimism, and a deep connection to my team... all of which turn my heart into thunderous drum corp. Again, this is NOT a bad thing. God created us to be emotional beings and gave us an emotional Model (e.g. John 11:35). I'm only contending that we should be asking God to give us the SAME amount of emotional zeal as the football does.

Similarly, we will experience the gamut of all those previously stated emotions. The joy of fellowship, the sadness for the state of this world, the anger over our sinful habits, the longing for Christ triumphant return (Rom. 8:22), the pain for the hurting saint and the lost sinner, optimism in light of God's sovereignty, and a deep intimate connection with the Savior. If we feel any of these emotions lack in our relationship with God, then we can ask Him to help us feel them more. "Restore unto me the JOY of Your salvation" (Psalm 51:12). I can guarantee, from God's word, that He WILL grant that request. He wants us to desire Him above all others, so of course He'll help us do that, even more so than we do for football.

Invoke the Doctrine of Common Grace. My subscription to reformed theology demands that I subscribe to the doctrine of Common Grace, which says in short that there are some benefits of God which apply to the non-believer as well as the believer (e.g. Matt. 5:45). This leads us to understand that seemingly secular things in God's creation can be redeemed for the gospel purposes. Football is no exception. In my years of ministry, my youth students or congregation members looked forward to our annual Super Bowl party. The non-churchy atmosphere of our home, coupled with the copious buffet of irresistibly delectable snacks, made this the perfect, non-threatening opportunity to invite unsaved friends to a "church" event.

So use football, Super Bowl weekend or otherwise, for gospel and fellowship purposes. Realize that our God IS "the Football god" and creatively use His wonderful gift

of the gridiron to shine gospel light.

Finally, let me add that I think part of the reason why the temptation of football is so great is because this game is particularly similar to life. Personally, I'm just starting the 2nd quarter of my life. The 1st quarter was just feeling out the field, and the strong opponent (namely the "lion seeking whom he may devour"). Now, I'm becoming more comfortable, learning which plays work and which defensive traps to avoid. I learn when to punt the ball and when to go for it. The 3rd quarter of middle age is where you carry the momentum of the first half of life to really run up the score and wear the other team down. The 4th quarter is simply giving everything you've got left, leaving it all out on the field of life when that final horn sounds. In every quarter, you've got to listen carefully to the Coach. You've got to run HIS plays, because He sees the entire field. He knows the entire opponent. He ensures the victory.

For many red-blooded American Christians, the battle for competing attentions between faith and football will be an on-going struggle, and that's good. But the solution to this struggle is the same solution that Vince Lombardi offered. He once asked his players in the locker room this question: "There are two dogs in a fight. Which one wins?" "The one that's bigger and stronger", the players answered. "No.", Lombardi replied, "It's the one you FEED".

[http://www.patheos.com/blogs/chorusinthechaos/false-start-christian-faith-altar-football/?utm_source=\[!\]%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NL%20Best%20of%20Patheos%20&utm_content=9275](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/chorusinthechaos/false-start-christian-faith-altar-football/?utm_source=[!]%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NL%20Best%20of%20Patheos%20&utm_content=9275)

Personal note: I had lunch with a couple of pastors, and after lunch, the only topic was football. I felt like the "third man out", for I care nothing about football, and know very little about it.

PERSONAL

After several months, the incision from the spleen surgery is "filling in", and the scar is working its way towards the surface. As we have watched the "wound" fill in, we are amazed at the way God designed a "self-healing" body. We are certainly fearfully and wonderfully made.

Now that the incision is just about healed up, it is time to look at my nose surgery. The deviated septum makes it quite difficult to breathe at times.

The scoliosis and the left eye leave somewhat to be desired. I am scheduled to see an orthopedic specialist at Wright-Patterson Hospital.

Bettie's nephew from Brazil has a scholarship to ob-

tain his doctorate in music at Bowling Green University in Bowling Green, Ohio. He came up with his fiancée, and they were married in our front yard.

The Lord has opened a door to provide pulpit supply for two Presbyterian churches: One in Ludlow Kentucky, which is a little over an hour from us, south of Cincinnati. The other in Russellville, Ohio, which is about 40 minutes from us. (10 minutes north of the Ohio River) Both are very firm in the Orthodox faith including postmillennialism. Obviously, if I am preaching in a church where I might not agree with certain policies, I would never address those disagreements from the pulpit nor with their members. Both churches understand my strong commitment to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. Both churches are stronger in the Orthodox faith than any Baptist church we have found within 90 minutes of us. When folks have contacted me about not being able to find a good Baptist Church, I have encouraged them to check out the Presbyterian churches.

My wife, Bettie, is headed for South Africa to visit her oldest daughter and their 12 children. She is looking forward to seeing her two youngest grandchildren for the first time.

The Lord is good. Thank you for your prayers.

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE

John Huffman

A hen clucked as she stirred from her nest in the hayloft of a Paris stable. She gently turned the one egg she was guarding, and then settled down to continue her rest for the remainder of the summer night.

It was 2:00 in the morning on August 24, 1572. Those familiar with the history of the Huguenots of France will shudder at the mention of the date. For the inhabitants of Paris on that fateful night, there was no apparent cause of alarm. All seemed well in Paris. True, there was always a rumor of bloodshed between Protestants and Roman Catholics, but the wars seemed to be at a lull, and open hostilities had ceased. Besides, the Roman Catholic daughter of Catherine de Medici had just been given in marriage to the Protestant son of Jeanne d'Albret. Would not this alliance produce peace in France?

To celebrate the marriage, Admiral Coligny and the Prince de Conde, the two Huguenot leaders, had been invited to Paris to rejoice in the peaceful settlement. Religious toleration had been promised, and Huguenots were to be free to worship God as they wished.

The good and Godly Admiral Coligny believed that all was well. True, there had been an assassination plot against him, and he had been shot by a pistol in the finger, but was that not to be expected? It was well known that the Duke of Guise was jealous of Admiral Coligny. The Admiral was no man to flee Paris just because of a wound in the finger. Besides, the royal family had been playing tennis at the time of the assassination attempt, and they had disavowed any connection with the shooting. And the Admiral's finger was safely on the mend.

In his bedchamber, Admiral Coligny rested peacefully on his bed. He had led the Huguenot armies to victory on many bloody fields, and it seemed that the most recent military victory had bought him and his fellow Huguenots the toleration they had sought. Coligny was still in the prime of life, and though he was past 50, he could endure any hardship of the battlefield, and he could endure hours in the saddle with no apparent fatigue. He was admired by friend and foe alike for his courage, his humility, his determination, and his steady integrity.

Near Admiral Coligny, on a cot, slept his chaplain, a Huguenot pastor named Pierre Merlin. Merlin had long served Admiral Coligny as a military chaplain in all his campaigns, and also as the pastor of his castle church.

Merlin was a beloved pastor, a faithful friend of the Admiral's family, and a trusted leader of the Huguenot church. Daily, at the great table in the dining room of the castle, Coligny would call on his chaplain to read a chapter of the Bible and then lead the family and servants in a psalm, sung in the stirring, full-voiced vigor of the Huguenot manner. Coligny's wife and children loved Pastor Merlin, and he was respected even by the servants and peasants surrounding Coligny's castle at Chatillon-sur-Loing.

In Paris, the Protestant pastor was out of place, but he accompanied Coligny to Paris to lead in the Huguenot worship services and-to-be -them Admiral's faithful counselor.

Suddenly, the early morning stillness was broken by the tolling of the great bell in the tower of the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. It was the sounding of matin chimes, the usual early morning call to prayer. Pastor Merlin was unused to the Papist matin chimes, and he turned over in his bed at the sound. Outside in the hayloft, the hen stirred from her nest, turned her egg, and then tucked her beak back into her feathers.

But for a band of determined and desperate murderers, this was no ordinary matin chime. It was a prear-

ranged signal. Silently, the Roman Catholic Duke of Guise buckled on his sword. His men-at-arms, sworn to secrecy, tucked their daggers into their girdles and assembled in the street.

The young son of Catherine de Medici, young King Charles IX, broke out into a cold sweat at the tolling of the bell. His heart pounded within him, for he knew what it meant. His mother, the real power in the kingdom, had convinced him to go along with the plot hatched by the Duke of Guise. The young king, sweating profusely, sent one of his servants to call off the massacre. But it was too late.

It was planned that the first target would be the great Huguenot leader, Admiral Gaspard de Coligny. With him dispatched, the general massacre could begin.

In the early morning darkness, Besme, a servant of the Duke of Guise, led a small party of desperate men to the door of the house where the Admiral was lodging. The men knocked at the gate, demanding admission in the name of the King: The servant who answered the knock was instantly killed, and the ruffians streamed into the courtyard, butchering all those who stood in their path.

Upstairs, the Admiral and the Pastor both sat up in bed, and their eyes met. Coligny was a man of war. His trusty sword lay at his side. If his wife, Jacqueline, and his children had been in the house, the Admiral would have most certainly resisted to the death. But the Admiral was alone with a few of his most faithful retainers and men at arms. These faithful servants nobly stood at the top of the stairs and constructed a hasty barricade to buy their master some time at the price of their own blood. One after one, they were cut down after ferocious resistance. Coligny rose from his bed, stood in his chamber, and asked Merlin to pray. Merlin rose from his cot and firmly sought God's grace upon themselves, their families, and the people of France.

A panting and bleeding servant rushed into the room and cried out to Coligny that the enemy was near. Coligny said to the men about him, "I have long been prepared to die. Save your lives, if you can. You cannot save mine. I commend my soul to the mercy of God."

Coligny realized that France needed Pastor Merlin. If he were to die and if the massacre were to become general, then France would need her pastors. As it was Coligny's duty to die, so it was Merlin's duty to live. The pastor and the Admiral had only a brief moment to say their goodbye, and Merlin grasped the hand of Coligny, taking a last look at the man he had so long served. Even as Besme and his men slashed their way into the room,

Merlin leaped out of the window into the dark courtyard below.

Upstairs, Besme burst into the room and asked "Are you the Admiral?" Like his Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane, Coligny answered his interrogators simply and calmly, "I am he." With a fiendish laugh, Besme drew his sword and plunged it into Coligny's body. Besme pulled his sword out and then dealt the Admiral a terrific blow to the head. Coligny fell without a cry and almost without a shudder. The servants of the Duke then satiated their thirst for blood by stabbing the Admiral repeatedly with their daggers. They mutilated the corpse horribly and then threw it out the window. Pastor Merlin heard the thump of the lifeless and bloody corpse as it hit the ground. He had silently slipped into the stable of the courtyard and taken refuge in the hayloft. From his hiding place, he could see the Duke of Guise spitefully kick the body of Coligny.

The terror of St. Bartholomew's Day has been often told. Coligny was only the first of ten thousand Huguenots slain in Paris alone. That Sunday, August 24, 1572, was a day of horrid bloodshed, and women and children were also butchered in the general massacre. For several days, the massacre would continue across France until perhaps 60,000 of the best citizens of France were killed.

During those long and agonizing days, God preserved Pastor Merlin in that stable hayloft in the courtyard outside Coligny's lodging. To venture from his place of concealment would be certain death. In His providence, the God who preserved the prophet Elijah at the Brook Cherith preserved Pierre Merlin in that hayloft.

Just as God used the ravens for Elijah, so now God used that hen for Pastor Merlin. The hen in that hayloft faithfully laid one egg each day. The egg contained just the daily water and nutrition he needed to sustain life for several days until the bloody massacre was over.

This was not an isolated event. Two other Huguenot pastors, de Luce and Breng, were preserved in the same way, by means of a daily egg. Another Huguenot pastor, Du Moulin, was preserved by a spider after the pastor had taken refuge in a large baking oven. A spider immediately came and wove a dense web over the door handle of the oven. The pastor inside could hear his persecutors declare that he could not be inside—because the spider's web showed that the door had not been opened in a long time. Similar stories of God's protection abound during those awful days of intense persecution and martyrdom.

France would need her Reformed pastors in the days

to come. Merlin lived on to shepherd the widow and orphans of Admiral Coligny and to guide the Huguenots of France through the next few stormy years, serving as moderator of the next National Synod, where he provided needed comfort and stability to the Huguenot cause.

The God of Elijah, the God of Pierre Merlin, is still our God today. He can use the raven and the hen to preserve His people, and we should give thanks for the manifold acts of His providential care.

—Drawn from Gaspard de Coligny by Walter Besant, now out of print, and The Huguenots by William H. Foote and Jehovah Jireh, A Treatise on Providence by William Plumer, both reprinted by Sprinkle Publications

Mighty Men Herald, June, 2017

WHERE IS MINE HONOUR?

TRUMP SPEAKING TO CONGRESS.

I find the following interesting.

First, speaking as president, he was dressed the best he could be dressed, dark “power suit,” tie, &c.

Second, those listening to the president were also dressed in their best dark “power suit.”

What caught my attention was that all were dressed in their best. Yet when speaking for the Everlasting King of Eternity, men dress in very casual attire, even jeans and sport shirts. Those who attend to hear from God are commonly dressed in very casual attire, as though they might be going to “Disney World”.

Respect for earthly authority is readily and gladly shown, but normally respect for our Creator’s authority is totally ignored.

Malachi 1:6 *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, **where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?** saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name.*

BIBLE STUDIES AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Who’s Inside This Spiritual Awakening?

“I don’t think Donald Trump has figured out that he chained himself to the Apostle Paul,” Drollinger laughed....

<http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/politics/2017/july/bible-studies-at-the-white-house-whos-at-the-heart-of-this-spiritual-awakening>

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Lord willing, I will be speaking at the CAPTURE 2017, Inspiration and Interpretation conference Friday, Sept 8. It will be held at Dayspring Baptist Church, 1267 West 750 South, Trafalgar, IN 46181. (There is no charge to attend, but they would like to know how many to plan for.) See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/capture-2017-inspiration-and-interpretation-tickets-36674704027>

Books

Books by Pastor Need at <http://www.biblicalexaminer.org/Book%20store.html>

Both my first wife and myself committed ourselves to live within our means, debt free. Our income was minimal, but sufficient, which permitted me to be “full-time” though our church was very small. However, I did have a print shop in the basement of the church which provided some extra income. The Lord provided the means to make the church and the parsonage debt-free. Rising very early in the mornings and normally in the office by 5 AM (until my heart attack) gave a great amount of time to search out the many questions that came up. All of the large books were put together during that time, 1983 to when I had my heart attack, 2000.

At a preachers meeting some years ago, I was introduced with the words, “If you want to know too much about a subject, ask Brother Need.” I must plead guilty, for my method of research is to explore every avenue, and document all my sources. This can make my writings boring to many readers, so I include thorough POC and indexes, so one does not have to “wade through” a lot of reading that may be uninteresting to them. Rather they can trace their areas of concern through the indexes.

All articles by Bro Need unless sotherwise noted.