



BEACON

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Seeking One Who Will Stand in the Gap for God

Marvin L Weir

God's prophet, Ezekiel, reveals how ugly and deadly sin is. The prophet's message from Jehovah reveals how bad choices led to Israel's apostasy.

Ezekiel speaks to the people, saying:

And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her, Thou art a land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls; they take treasure and precious things; they have made her widows many in the midst thereof. Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, *and* to destroy souls, that they may get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed for them with untempered *mortar*, seeing false visions, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, when Jehovah hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery; yea, they have vexed the poor and needy, and have oppressed the sojourner wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should build up the wall, and stand in the gap before me for

the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I brought upon their heads, saith the Lord Jehovah (Eze. 22:23-31).

Today, we live in a land far from clean and growing more corrupt. The worldly wisdom that permeates our society has rubbed off on those who comprise the Lord's church, and this will be our study in this article.

As with the prophets of old, there is a conspiracy among many preachers today. Souls are being devoured because of false teaching. Selfishness and a desire for success at any price keep hirelings (so-called preachers) today whispering "sweet nothing's" into people's ears. Many are heavy on drama, emotional tear-jerkers, funny stories, and noticeably light on Scripture! They may have a PhD degree, yearn to be called "Doctor," and are "ever learning, [but are] never able to come to a knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). Their beloved companion is the NIV. It assists them in making the same worn-out arguments that the denominations made 60 or 70 years ago. It appears the KJV and ASV (1901) are too difficult for these learned men to understand.

They make a mockery of sacred matters! These uncertain voices daub "untempered mortar, [see] false visions, [and] divine lies." Listen carefully as Ezekiel pinpoints the root of the problem of false

teachers: “Saying, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, when Jehovah hath not spoken” (Eze. 22:28). There are multitudes of people today who profess to be followers of God who teach that which the Scriptures have not revealed! False teachers are experts at manufacturing lies and then finding gullible people willing to accept them. The conspiracy is to change the Gospel of Christ to a “different gospel; which is not another *gospel*” but a perversion of “the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:6-7). Even though men may be fooled, God is not deceived and thus warns:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent (Rom. 16:17-18).

Ezekiel 33:31 vividly describes the exact condition of the liberal, erring members of the Lord’s church today. The sacred writing says,

And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but do them not; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their gain [covetousness, KJV].

Coffman comments on this verse, saying,

This means they sat before Ezekiel pretending to be God’s people, whereas they had no intention whatever of obeying the Lord’s commandments.

As with the priests of old, there is a conspiracy among many elders today. Souls are being devoured because no godly shepherds are leading the flock. Lacking the faith to trust and obey, violence has been done to God’s law by ignoring it. No distinction is set forth to the members between “the holy and the common” (44:23). And “neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean” (22:26). Members of the church wallow in sin, and “spot [or] wrinkle” stain the “glorious *church*... that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

Liquor Destroys

Liquor never built a cottage. It never filled a hungry stomach, inspired a kiss of purity, planted a garden, or caused a happy little girl to swing upon the gate in anticipation of her father’s return.

It deals in mortgages and evictions. It snatches bread from the fingers of childhood. It triumphs in blows, hate, suspicion, fear, lust, and disease. It tramples the flowers, strikes the hinges from the gate, and sends the little one flying from her father’s approach.

Selfishness, hopelessness, and decay smite the land where it rules.

Author Unknown

Few are the number that are concerned and troubled! Instead of the echo of a “thus saith the Lord” reverberating in the members’ ears, the shepherds are as quiet as the proverbial church mouse! What a derelict condition of one who is obligated and commanded to “feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

A godly elder will always hold

to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers (Tit. 1:9).

A little bad leaven allowed to work its evil influence will leaven the entire lump (1 Cor. 5:6).

Bad leaven is to be purged out—not encouraged, tolerated, or ignored (5:7). Jehovah is searching today for godly preachers, elders, and members. He wants and needs men who are willing to build the wall and stand in the gap. Failure to “stand in the gap” will lead.

Blossom, TX

Why We Cannot Fellowship Denominations

W. R. Craig

We in churches of Christ who hew to the “old paths and the good ways” are often asked why we do not work with the denominations. It is not a selfish spirit on our part, but a matter of principle. Personally, I had rather mingle with all mankind as much as possible than to live in seclusion. But I must abide by the Word of God and not my own feelings. First Peter 4:11 tells us we must “speak as the oracles of God.” First Peter 3:15 tells me to “be ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope.” This means I should be able to give a Bible answer for everything we do or refuse to do. Therefore, we do not at any time fellowship any religious program of or with the denominations because:

1. The denominational world has not obeyed the Gospel as revealed in the “Great Commission.” If they have, we are not preaching the truth. If we are preaching the whole truth, they lack the obedience that the Lord requires. Read Acts 2:38, Romans 6:3-4, and Romans 6:17. The denominations teach that the things commanded in these passages are “non-essential” to salvation. Can we then fellowship bodies of people who deny these plain Scriptures?

2. The denominations, we admit, use many unscriptural things in their worship and work: instrumental music, societies usurping the work of the church, human names, creeds, confessions of faith, sensational means of getting a crowd, recreational activities—ball teams, youth camps, car washes and rummage sales to finance the work and activities of various groups in the church, Junior church services, special devotionals for youth (corporate worship is not sufficient), down grading God’s simple worship and substituting choirs, choruses, and other entertainment. We have spent years teaching and debating that these things are wrong. Now, if we take part with them in these unscriptural practices (you will be forced to take part in some of them, if you work

with any denomination in the country, they will not leave them off in order to get you to work with them), how can we convince them that they are unscriptural?

3. Paul said, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord” (Col. 3:17). To do a thing in the name of Christ is to do it by His Authority! Can we enter any unscriptural practices by the authority of Jesus Christ? If so, where is it found in the Bible?

4. John said, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God” (2 John 9). Denominations do not abide in the doctrine of Christ. They have added things He never authorized, viz. instruments, etc. Let us hear John again,

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 10-11).

Briefly, these are a few, among many, of our reasons for not working with the denominations in a religious way. We have friends and relatives among the denominations. We love and enjoy them, but we cannot fellowship them in their religious beliefs and activities. To have fellowship with them is sinful (Eph. 5:11).

Deceased

“We may be generous and loyal in the larger affairs of life, but if we fail in little things—small kindnesses and obligations and courtesies, the opportunities for which come to us with every day, and which we so often pass unnoticed—we shall miss much of life’s best joy and real success.”

Author Unknown

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Beacon

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Linda Worley

Carla Burseson

Bill & Pam Busch

Linda Parks

Please Remember

May 17

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

May 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Weekly Services

Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad