

Defender

"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Reactions to the Truth

Lee Moses

Most people do not like it when someone lies to them. We appreciate it when someone is willing to tell us the truth even though it costs that person dearly...or do we? The fact is that there are many different reactions to the truth, and not all are positive.

Downplay the Importance of Truth

Some people respond to hearing the truth by espousing the notion that truth is not very important. There are several different ways that people downplay the importance of truth.

Some out-and-out **deny that truth exists**. This was Pontius Pilate's modus operandi. He was given the tremendous opportunity to have an interview with Jesus Christ, and to ask Him about matters of eternal importance. Jesus told Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:37). Pilate drily responded, "What is truth?" (18:38). Since he denied the existence of truth, it is no wonder that he erroneously felt he could remove his guilt in the

death of Christ by simply washing his hands.

The truth-denying spirit of Pilate has truly come into its own in recent years. Young people are being systematically taught in public schools and colleges that there can be no absolutes. A popular movie subtly indoctrinates its viewers that "only a Sith [bad guy, LM] deals in absolutes." When there are no absolutes, when someone does "that which [is] right in his own eyes" (Jud. 17:6; 21:25), he always does that which is right. According to such reasoning, truth, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. It is virtually impossible to reason with those who deny truth exists. One hundred years ago, there were skeptics known as modernists who opposed the Bible and Christianity. They would seek to disprove the claims of the Bible and Christianity by reason, though their reasoning was flawed. However, by and large the new skeptics do not bother trying to reason whether the Bible and Christianity are true or false. As one writer observed, "The claims of Christianity are not denied; they are rejected because they purport to be true."

Another way in which some will downplay the importance of truth is to **deny that one can know the truth**. There is a faction of erring brethren who may not go to the extreme of denying truth exists, but they do deny that one can know he has arrived at the knowledge of truth. They say that we cannot get a firm grasp on truth, because it is always changing. They disparagingly relegate truth to the realm of subjectivism, and call for others to welcome the winds of change. What our erring brethren call "winds of change," the apostle Paul condemns as being "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14). Contrary to such aimless drifting, Paul counters, "But speaking the **truth** in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even Christ*" (4:15). If one can speak the truth, one can know the truth. And as Jesus promised, "If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And **ye shall know the truth**, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Jesus said, "**I am**

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Notes From The Editor

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Worship

When one considers the nature of worship itself, it is giving homage, reverence to one who is considered superior, we must also realize the greatness of God to truly worship Him. Consider the Messianic prophet, Isaiah. Isaiah's call is a perfect illustration of this. This great prophet is privileged to get a view of God's majesty, kingship, holiness, and glory.

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory (Isa. 6:1-3).

What a marvelous, majestic view, seeing the Lord on His throne with the supernatural creatures, seraphim, with six wings proclaiming God's holiness and sovereignty over all the earth. Notice also the reaction of Isaiah, "Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (6:5). This view of God caused Isaiah to worship the One who was so high and lifted up. Likewise, when

we see a proper view of Yahweh, we also will be brought to worship Him.

Another illustration of this discussion is John's vision. He saw God sitting on a throne in heaven in Revelation 4. Consider how John describes the majesty of God to show He reigns from the center of the universe and is in control.

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within (4:2-8a).

John discusses these four living creatures (beasts—KJV) that are around the throne of God. He uses figures to show their strength, service, intelligence, and swiftness. Having wings shows their mobility and being full of eyes represents their all-seeing nature. We are then told that these four living creatures "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God

Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (4:8b). These living creatures get a view of the greatness and holiness of God and continue to proclaim that holiness. However, notice the result of seeing the majesty of God and His holiness.

And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (4:9-11).

When those around the throne hear the creatures giving this praise, glory, and honor, they fall down and worship God. They recognize the worthiness of God to be worshiped which led to their worship of Him. When man sees the greatness and majesty of God, they, like those around the throne, will worship God. The fact is, today instead of seeing God's greatness and majesty, we denigrate God to the level of man (how many times do we hear the disrespectful phrase, "the man upstairs"). When we allow people to bring God down to man's level (see Ps. 50 as they thought He was like man, but God would rebuke or punish them), we

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

promote man not worshipping God. Paul describes the Gentile world in Romans 1 and says that while “they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God” (1:21) which resulted in that they “worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen” (1:25).

Israel itself is a wonderful illustration of this principle. The children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt. They cried out to God for deliverance. God heard their cries and raised up Moses to deliver them. God sent Moses to Pharaoh with the message: “Let my people go” (Exo. 5:1). God knew Pharaoh would not acquiesce to His demands. “And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand” (3:19). The ESV says, “unless compelled by a mighty hand” while the NASV has “except under compulsion.” Thus, God brought upon Pharaoh and Egypt ten plagues to *compel* him, and He showed His total power over the various gods of Egypt. Israel, living in the land, saw the plagues God brought upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. After the first three plagues, God separated the Israelites from the Egyptians, so the rest of the plagues only came upon the Egyptians. In instituting the Passover, God states: “And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage” (13:14).

Upon bringing Israel out of Egypt, Pharaoh’s heart is hardened, and he follows after them. When Israel sees Pharaoh and his army getting close, “they were sore

afraid” (14:10). God then prevented Pharaoh from coming near the Israelites.

And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but it gave light by night *to these*: so that the one came not near the other all the night (14:19-20).

God not only gave Israel protection from Pharaoh’s army, but He also provided deliverance for them.

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry *ground*: and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left (14:21-22).

When the Egyptians tried to follow, the water swallowed them up and they were destroyed. Through all these events, God is showing Israel His great power.

God then leads Israel to Mount Sinai. He calls Moses up to the mountain, where He tells him: “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself” (19:4). He sends Moses down to the people to prepare them for when He could come and speak to them.

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the

camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice (19:16-19).

God was preparing the people in all these events to have a proper respect for Him, and to be able to see His great glory and power. As recorded in the next chapter, God speaks to them giving them the Ten Commandments (20:2-17). Notice how the people reacted:

And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God *was*. And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee (20:18-24).

The Israelites got a glimpse of the greatness of God with the result that they had a proper fear (dread and respect) for God. However, no-

time how worship is connected with this. The first two of the Ten Commandments have to deal specifically with worship (not to make any graven image and not to bow down and serve them), as does the fourth (remember the Sabbath). After giving the Ten Commandments and the people requesting Moses to speak to them instead of hearing God directly, God tells Moses to reemphasize the aspect of worship. Moses is to inform the people that they are not to make idols but to worship only Him: altars and all sacrifices shall be only to God.

While the majesty and glory of God made an immediate impression upon the Israelites, sadly that impression did not remain. They soon lost sight of the awesomeness of God and forsook Him when He brought them to the Promised Land. After hearing a negative re-

port by ten of the spies who had been sent into the land to spy it out, they showed their lack of faith in Him. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19).

Also, after Israel took the Promised Land, Joshua and his generation died off. The next generation did not have that vision of God resulting in apostasy.

And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger (Jud. 2:10-12).

In our world today, we are witnessing a general lack of respect toward anything including God and spiritual matters. It is seen not only in our clothes we wear (seems many are intent on wearing the most disrespectful clothes they possess when they come to worship God), the speech they use (mouths filled with filthy, vulgar language), and attitudes seen during worship services.

To worship properly, we must first get a view of the majesty and awesomeness of God. While the worship of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4) shows us that not all worship is acceptable to God, when we really *see* God, it will change our attitude about our worship, in addition to changing our lives. It will compel us to put our entire being into worshipping the One who is worthy of such and doing so in the proper way.

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the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (14:6). To deny that one can know truth is to deny that one can know Christ!

Another means of downplaying the importance of truth is simply **ignoring the truth**. Perhaps the reader has seen the television advertisements featuring the "Aflac duck." The advertisements feature people wondering aloud what company can provide the insurance services they so desperately need. In response, the duck will quack with increasing volume and intensity, "AFLAC!" However, despite his having (according to the advertisement) the correct answer to

their question, no one pays attention to the duck. After all, he is just a duck. Likewise, many ignore the truth when it is told them. Among the church's self-proclaimed "elite," the change agents, there is a tendency to dismiss those fervently proclaiming the truth with a wave of the hand. Some hear that they need to repent and be baptized so their sins may be forgiven and ignore what they hear. Some hear about the coming Judgment Day and ignore what they hear. Peter wrote, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things

continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3:3-4). Too many upon hearing the truth, instead of allowing it to "prick their hearts," allow it to roll right down and off their calloused consciences.

Regardless of how some may try to downplay the importance of truth, they cannot decrease its importance. Truth is crucial to our society's success. How can one who has a disregard for the truth be trusted to tell the truth? How can one who has a disregard for the truth be trusted to live by any moral standard? And how can a society function when no one can be trusted to tell the truth or to conduct themselves according to an

objective moral standard? Even more importantly, and far more importantly, truth is the standard by which we will be judged before Christ. Paul warns of “the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16). As Christ said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). Unfortunately, too many “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 The. 2:10). They instead downplay its immeasurable importance.

Shoot the Messenger

Other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, perhaps no man in Biblical history is as worthy of commendation and emulation as the apostle Paul. This is because Paul was faithful and truthful. As he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write, “Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity” (1 Tim. 2:7). By that truth he preached and taught, he led many from the shackles of sin. Yet, consider the adversarial attitude taken toward him, even among some who had been saved by his preaching:

Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. **Am I therefore become your en-**

emy, because I tell you the truth? (Gal. 4:13-16).

Others were bringing these Galatian brethren a perverted false “gospel” that was troubling the souls of the Galatians as it caused them to turn away from the Lord (1:6-7). Yet, the Galatians did not count these liars their enemies; they considered truthful Paul their enemy.

In his play *Antigone*, Sophocles observed, “No one likes the bearer of bad news.” Although the Gospel is most certainly “**good** news,” some perceive it as bad news since it is challenging and demanding. Some will go to great lengths to “suppress the truth” (Rom. 1:18—NKJV). A common *knee-jerk* reaction to the truth is likewise to suppress the one who tells the truth, blaming the messenger for the message.

Mankind has a long history of shooting the messenger. Jehoiada was a priest in Jerusalem who saved the young infant Joash’s life and provided invaluable counsel once Joash became king of Judah. However, when Jehoiada’s son Zechariah provided godly and inspired counsel to King Joash, Joash did not receive it well:

Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear. And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith

God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD. Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon *it*, and require *it* (2 Chr. 24:17-22).

Micaiah suffered similar treatment at the hands of King Ahab of Israel. Ahab acknowledged that Micaiah was a true prophet of the Lord, but added, “I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” (1 Kin. 22:8). Then when he did not find Micaiah’s Divine message to his liking, Ahab returned Micaiah to his undeserved imprisonment, commanding he be fed “with bread of affliction and with water of affliction” (22:26-27).

Jeremiah was deemed “worthy to die” when he brought a challenging message from God (Jer. 26:11). Cain saw his brother Abel as a living testimony to the truth, so he killed him (1 John 3:12; compare with Heb. 11:4). Herod Antipas imprisoned and ultimately killed John the immerser because John told Herod, “It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife” (Mark 6:18). When Jesus Christ affirmed the truth that He was the Divine Messiah, the Jewish council responded, “He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands, Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?” (Mat. 26:66-68).

In the modern-day United States, the common approach is not literally to kill the messengers of truth. Despisers of truth shoot verbal bullets their way, calling them “confrontational, negative, unloving,” and such. The messengers of truth are indeed confrontational, because such is the nature of truth. True Christians who have come out of the darkness of a lie to obey the light of the truth are to “walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8). This means that they will necessarily rebuke the works of darkness (5:11, 13). This does not sit well with those who would rather continue in the darkness of sin.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God (John 3:19-21).

So yes, messengers of truth **will** be *confrontational* at times. The messengers of truth will also be *negative* at times, because not all truth is positive (Jer. 1:10; Eze. 3:17-18; 2 Tim. 4:2).

However, it is false accusation for anyone to attack the messengers of truth as unloving merely because what they have to say may be unpleasant: “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ” (Eph. 4:15). Only the truth can be spoken in love. Only the truth can cause one to grow into the likeness of Christ. Nonetheless, some will still attack truth-speakers as unloving. But since the truth is not important to such people, nei-

ther do they find it important to make only truthful allegations.

Embrace a Lie

One who finds the truth objectionable will often replace the truth with something contradictory to it and will cling tightly to the false replacement. Of Israel the Lord said, “That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, Children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; And to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, Speak unto us smooth things, Prophesy deceits” (Isa. 30:9-10). In place of the “right things” of the “law of the LORD,” they preferred “smooth things” and “deceits.” Things did not change for the better in subsequent generations: “A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love *to have it so*: and what will ye do in the end thereof?” (Jer. 5:30-31). Paul warned Timothy, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

It would not seem to make a bit of sense to embrace a lie, but most people are “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God?” (3:4—ASV). To most, “new and exciting” is easier to embrace than “the old paths?” even though only the old paths can provide “rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16). “And they bend their tongues *like* their bow *for* lies: But they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; For they proceed from evil to evil, And they

know not me, saith the LORD” (9:3). Yet, faithful Christians must continue “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim. 2:25).

Embrace the Truth

Of the Christians at Thessalonica Paul rejoiced, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 The. 2:13). They heard the truth, realized it was the truth, acknowledged it was the truth, and submitted themselves to the truth. Solomon’s eternally wise counsel is to “Buy the truth, and sell *it* not” (Pro. 23:23). The psalmist wrote of the blessed man, “But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; And in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psa. 1:2). As the psalmist pled to God, “Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: For thou *art* the God of my salvation; On thee do I wait all the day” (25:5). These are they who embrace the truth.

What happened to the man who saved a neighboring family from their burning house? Certainly, he was thanked profusely and adored by that family, was he not? Was he not admired by the rest of the community? So should the truth be adored, admired, and esteemed for the life which it provides in the face of eternal destruction. The truth, the Word of God, *sanctifies*, or sets apart, people from the world (John 17:17). What is going to happen to the world? It is going to be incinerated (2 Pet. 3:10; Mat. 13:40-43).

The man who saved the family from the fire may have brought news that was unpleasant to hear when he yelled that their house was on fire. He may have challenged them when he told them to crawl to avoid smoke inhalation. But he told them the truth.

“The ear that heareth the reproof of life Abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: But he that heareth reproof getteth understanding” (Pro. 15:31-32). Of the blessed man who embraced and continually imbibed the truth it is said, “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, That bringeth forth his fruit in his sea-

son; His leaf also shall not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psa. 1:3).

Conclusion

Four different categories of reactions to the truth have been considered: (1) Downplay the importance of the truth, (2) “Shoot” the messenger of truth, (3) Embrace a lie, and (4) Embrace the truth. But notice that there is a close relation between the first three reactions: When one has downplayed the importance of truth, this will cause him to reject the messenger of truth, and ultimately will cause him to embrace a lie. It may be the case that one has embraced a lie, which causes one to

downplay the importance of truth, and ultimately to come to detest the messenger of truth. Whatever the case, when one responds unfavorably to the truth, all of these three eventually run together. The one who fails to embrace the truth can only live a lie.

As much as one might think that no one would appreciate being lied to, many people—most people—react negatively to the truth. Those who are Christians have the responsibility of proclaiming the truth regardless of others’ reactions to it. Each person will be judged by his reaction and response to the truth.

Union City, TN

“Stand in the Gap”

Michael Hatcher

When Israel divided into two nations after the death of Solomon, Jeroboam took the northern nation of Israel (also called Ephraim) into total apostasy. He feared the people of the northern kingdom would return to Jerusalem to worship God, so he set up a new religion with temples in Dan and Bethel telling the people that going to Jerusalem was too far and they should go to his temples. From the division in 931 B.C. to its destruction by Shalmaneser of Assyria in 722 B.C. there was not even one king who followed God but all of them followed Jeroboam. God sent prophets to them (both non-writing and written) but they ignored all of His prophets and continued in their evil.

The southern kingdom (also called Judah) saw the evil of her “sister” Judah and the consequences God brought against them (Jer. 3). Instead of repenting and obeying God, it seems they became more entrenched in her

unfaithfulness (Eze. 23). From what the prophet records, Judah exceeded Israel in the scope and severity (16:46-53). This resulted in God finally destroying Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Just prior to this destruction, we have the works of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Both of these great prophets make a similar observation which is worthy of our notice. Ezekiel states, “And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none” (Eze. 22:30). Jeremiah expressing the same idea says, “Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it” (Jer. 5:1).

Jeremiah asks if there was a man that could be found in Jerusalem who

lives the proper type of life to avert the coming destruction. The rest of the chapter clarifies that God is just in removing Jerusalem because of their wickedness and idolatry. Ezekiel describes the same situation using the figure of a wall with a breach in it and asking if there was anyone who would stand in the gap in the wall. No one was found. What a sad statement when God says, “but I found none.” God could not “find a man” or find anyone to “stand in the gap.” No one available to avert the destruction.

I am thankful there are still men in the Lord’s church today who are willing and do “stand in the gap” putting on the armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18), willing to “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2) and “put the brethren in remembrance of these things” (1 Tim. 4:6). May their number increase.

Pensacola, FL

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