

# Back to the Bible

Second Annual Bible Lectureship  
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# Back To The Bible

Second Annual  
Bellview Lectures

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# BUILDING UP THE LOCAL CHURCH

*Tuck Andrews*

## **Introduction**

It is in God's providence that we are here today. God has blessed each of us with so many blessings, it would be difficult to innumerate on them. This is a great church and a good school. It is good to be with brother Bill Cline again and I appreciate the invitation to speak on this program. It is also good to be with other preachers and to have this opportunity to preach to them. If anybody needs preaching to it is preachers. It is wonderful to be with Joe and Bonnie Ruiz again. We are anxiously waiting for their return to Miami and the Westwood Lake Church.

The subject that has been assigned to me, "Building Up the Local Church," is a much needed subject. It is important to understand that if the local church fails to grow, the whole body of Christ suffers.

## **Discussion**

In order to make the church strong we must first fill it with a knowledge of God's Word. In Hosea 4:6, God said "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." In John 8:32, Jesus said "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Thirty years ago when I obeyed the Gospel, I was greatly impressed with the members of the Church of Christ because they all knew what they believed and why they believed it. The church was filled with the knowledge of God's Word. As a result of this knowledge the church grew rapidly, both numerically and spiritually. Things have changed in the last decade. As Paul once said concerning Israel, I must say concerning my brethren.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:1-3).

Most brethren today have majored in gimmicks and minored in studying God's Word. This is one reason the church is not growing as much as it should.

In Acts 20:32, Paul said in the long ago—"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to **build you up**, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

If the Word of God would build up the church at that time then it will today, if not, then why not? It is apparent that there is a famine concerning knowledge in the church today. This fact is so obvious that everyone inside and outside of the church can see it.

There are a number of reasons for this condition, and if the church is going to grow as God intended, this problem of "lack of knowledge" must be corrected.

I will give you two reasons why Christians are ignorant of what the Bible says.

First, they just do not study, (2 Tim. 2:15), and because they refuse to study, they do not recognize false doctrine when it is taught. For this reason liberalism has been and still is destroying many congregations of the Lord's Church.

Secondly, preachers have been spoon feeding the brethren for too long. We need to recognize that God is to be pleased with our preaching (Gal. 1:6-10). I can remember when preachers quoted these verses frequently, but some churches would not have, as their regular preacher, one that referred to this and other similar Scriptures. As their reason they would say he was a legalist, or did not preach on love enough, or that he was too negative. I have found out the ratio of positive and negative sermons a church needs, and I am going to pass it on to you. Recently, I gave all the members where I preach a questionnaire to fill out as to what we needed at Westwood Lake to help make the church grow. One answer I got back was that I should preach at least three positive sermons to one negative sermon. You see brethren one does not have to worry about this any more. Just go back home and give them three little sweet ones and one good hard one. If one does this the church will no doubt swell a lot, but it will not grow much, and a lot of brethren do not know the difference. They seem to think a large crowd always denotes growth. If this is true we should join up with Billy Graham as some have.

Paul said to preach the word all the time (2 Tim. 4:1-8). It is a great blessing to preach the Word, but if we neglect to preach it, and hear it, that blessing will be taken away from us.

Listen to the prophet Amos.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it* (Amos 8:11-12).

Someone is now probably ready to say that it is in the Old Testament and does not apply to us. However, Paul said in Romans 15:4 that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.”

Paul also states in Romans 1:16 “the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation.” It still is and must be preached kindly and yet without compromise.

James 1:21 says “the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” notice that he said “**engrafted.**” The Greek word for engrafted is *Em'-Foo-Tos* and means implanted. The word on the mantel shelf, on the pulpit, or in the preacher’s hand will not save. It must be preached, that is, implanted in the heart of the people.

It seems to me that the time has come for preachers to return to good, plain Bible preaching if we expect the local church to grow. Preachers will be at the judgement, and preachers will be judged by the Word just like everyone else (John 12:48).

To make the local church grow, we must fill it with Godly members.

Whether we like it or not, brethren, worldliness is taking over the church. One of the Christian graces is Godliness. This means that we must live as near like God as we can. The members of the church have lived as they have pleased for so long that preachers are generally afraid to preach against subjects like smoking, social drinking, immodest apparel, homosexuality and other sins of the world.

Smoking is a filthy, unhealthy, sinful habit. To deny this is simply to close our eyes to all the massive evidence that has been given. Again, I refer you to the Bible. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from **all filthiness** of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).

Ask your members if they think God would smoke. If they are ready to say no—but I am not God, then reply with—that is true but what about godliness meaning to live like God. There is no sound logical reason one can give for using tobacco in any form and it certainly is unscriptural. It is filthy and to use it violates 2 Corinthians 7:1. Do not let them come up with that old worn out coffee argument. It is just one of the excuses they will come up with. Have them decide if they would rather spend their money on cigarettes or put the money to better use by putting it in the collection plate on Sunday.

Drinking alcoholic beverages is bringing this great country of ours down to destruction and is taking the church of our Lord right along with it. Nearly every television program glamorizes drinking. “It is the intellectual thing to do and everyone is doing it” is having a corrupting influence on the minds of all Americans, especially our young people.

I am aware of all the flimsy arguments Christians make to support their drinking habits. It is said that foreign countries serve it with every meal. That proves nothing. It does not mean they know any better. In Romans 14:21 Paul said “*It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, **nor any thing** whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” How many preachers are here today that have seen homes destroyed, children hungry and cold, all because of alcohol? Can any person in his sound mind defend it’s use? It is my prayer that gospel preachers will rise up against this evil that is gnawing at the foundations of Christianity and society.

The church is not growing because we are ignoring what the Bible says about the kind of clothing to wear. Listen to Paul in 1 Timothy 2:9, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.”

Brethren, just where does this verse apply? Surely it must apply somewhere. What about the mini skirt, what about the brief bathing suit, or about the tight slacks? Are these things modest? Of course you know they are not. I, myself, have serious doubts about women wearing pantsuits in the worship service. It seems to me that we have been influenced too much by those women that are not satisfied in the role that God place them. Women seem to want to be masculine and men seem to want to be feminine. God did not make us that way and if we reverse the roles we are headed for destruction. Recently my wife and

I were in a large restaurant, and Elsie was the only woman that had a dress. I was really proud of her.

Brethren, if we want the local church to grow, then we must return to God, preach the Word, and live the Word. It is the only solid foundation for growth.

Thank you and may God bless you is my prayer.

# THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

## 2 TIMOTHY 4:5-8

*Bill Coss*

### **Introduction**

The great Gospel Preacher's work was almost over. He was soon to die for the cause of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As the old men fall out of the ranks, the young men must take up the Banner.

Verse 5—"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

- A. This appeal to Timothy meant—that he had to bear persecutions that would come as the result of the Truth.
- B. That truth must be preached at any cost—under any or all circumstances. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:1-4).
- C. "Do the work of an Evangelist"—This includes all the teaching needed to make the Gospel of Christ effective in the salvation of man.
- D. "Fulfil thy ministry." This is to be done by devotion, zeal and fidelity. You are to preach the word faithfully, zealously and courageously (Rom. 1:16-17).
- E. Romans 10:17—The greatest need of the Church is a greater faith in God.

Hebrews 11:6      Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto God.

John 14:1          Why do we see so many professed Christians going to pieces?

### **The Battle Is with the Devil**

- A. Physically against sickness, disease and death.
- B. Intellectually against illiteracy and ignorance.
- C. Morally against sin and uncleanness.
- D. Religiously against any and all false standards.

### The Bible Makes Known the Battleground

Ephesians 6:12 “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.”

- A. Genesis 1 Reveals God.
- B. Genesis 2 Reveals man.
- C. Genesis 3 Reveals the Devil.
- D. Genesis 3 Reveals man between the extremes. God and the Devil.
- E. Both God and the Devil tempt (try) man.
  - 1. Genesis 22:1-24 God tried Abraham commanding him to give his best.
  - 2. Job 1:1-22 God let the devil use Job.
  - 3. Matthew 27 Christ our Lord and His greatest battle the devils defeat.

We know by faith that both God and the devil wants our services. They both offer rewards, the devil offers his here in this world, God offers His here and the hereafter (Rev. 2:10).

Joshua 24:15 Man can approach and follow either.

Matthew 6:24 Man cannot serve God and mammon.

### The Battle Is on Our Own Ground “Your Ourselves”

Acts 20:28-31

There are two things facing the Church today and unless we fight with all our hearts to God, we could be destroyed to a larger degree.

Number one is those who are leaving the church or faith, but remaining among us.

1 Timothy 1:18-20 Paul warned Timothy “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

The brethren leaving the church were riding hard and heavy upon the Apostles heart. But he had the courage to turn them over to Satan—herein lies much of our problems today.

2 Corinthians 7:5 Paul said, “For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.”

- A. “The fights without” were the assaults upon Him and the church by the Judaizers of the Law, they hated Paul and the church and they went ahead of the Apostle to cause havoc.
- B. “Within Fears” Paul’s anxieties about his letters to the churches, and how they would be received. The condition of the church everywhere lay heavy on Paul’s heart.

This reminds me of brother Ira Rice late one night at his typewriter as we sat and talked in my home in Detroit.

“I hate what I do, but we must for truth sake fight”

- C. This is one of the saddest scenes on the face of the earth to see Christians, but above all Gospel Preachers turn their backs upon the truth and go back into Denominationalism.
- D. The book, *The Voice of Concern*, The preachers who have left the Faith in ray 22 years in the Chicago area, that is if you can stomach it as you read it.
- E. This Brotherhood is being liberalized today with a group that refuse to leave the church; they intend to stay and take it with them.

Galatians 2:4 “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.”

This cloud of liberalism is in the form of Love. They are educated; they have good positions; they give good to the church. They have the best of manners and many times young people are carried away.

### 2 Timothy 2:17-18

Paul says about “Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”

God help these Elders, and Preachers who cannot see this.

### 1 Timothy 3:1-8

“Know this also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”

1. Lovers of their ownelves (take a look at the intellectual snobs today).
2. Despisers of those that are good (social drinking, etc).
3. Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.
4. Having a form of Godliness.
5. Which creep into houses.
6. Every learning.
7. Resist the truth.
8. Reprobate concerning the faith.
  - A. These sins are being perpetrated upon the Body of Christ today. Oh! God brethren will we open our eyes, will we see it, or do we want to see it?
  - B. Faithful Christians down through the years have had no difficulty in seeing these kinds of persons who leave the faith and why.

2 Timothy 2:15—“They studied.”

- C. These liberals like being a part of the church, they have no desire to leave it. But they do not like the way it is. They feel there is some improvements which need to be made.  
Slowly but surely they begin.

2 Timothy 4:3—“For the time will come.”

### The Battle is the Lord's

#### 1 Samuel 17:47

At first they sound as if they want only to correct its “human imperfections,” but before they are through you begin to see a total disregard for the New Testament.

What I found in Greenfield, IN      Women leading in prayer, any church is alright, social drinking.

Now here is the Battleground we must meet them on. Are you listening?

- A. They say preach Christ—but don't put too much emphasis upon the church, you might run some off.

- B. Let me stop right here and say, I love the church and I shall fight until death do us part, the wife and I, the church is our life.
- C. These liberals say preach love, but don't put too much emphasis on the Commandments, such as: Repentance and Baptism, (etc.)
- D. Preach the man—not too much emphasis on the Plan.

And from these comes a constant stream of stand for nothings, souped-up, watered down—goats with pedigrees.

They do not consider the church today to be a true reproduction of the New Testament church.

They have educated themselves completely out of the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:7 “Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Here are some of the skirmishes we must get into today.

- 1. The cell church
- 2. Members at-large
- 3. Spirit over the Word
- 4. The so called new versions
- 5. Spontaneous Worship—lights-out
- 6. Youth church—Junior worship
- 7. Women leading in prayer
  - A. Further contribution is being made by “Editors” in our brotherhood who no longer know or else do not care about the “Restoration Principles” with their half truths and inuendoes.
  - B. Because they have learned a long time ago that their purpose is better accomplished by such tactics (Pat Boone is the example). Then having to face squarely their position in the light of the scriptures.
  - C. In every congregation in the last few years wherever I go in meetings, I have seen this liberal mess. It Is There. It is only a question of how large and how vocal.
  - D. And above all, whether the Elders are opposing this error in a united way, getting rid of it. This theological garbage is truly the Devil's worship.

**Faith Is the Victory  
No Coward Can Tread  
2 Timothy 4:1-4**

“I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (for the time).

A. The time is long past. But we can turn the tide because when you turn the searchlight of Heaven upon these works of darkness, men can see the light.

2 Timothy 3:16-17      “All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God”

Hebrews 4:12            It is quick, powerful and sharp.

Romans 1:16-17        The power is in the message and not in the messenger.

B. When you turn these on the liberals, they always, with tears in their eyes shout—you misunderstand us.

(Bro. Guy N. Woods and Ben Franklin (debate) are living examples)  
Let us “fight the good fight of Faith. Then when we lay down the tools of this life we can say

“I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith.”

# BACK TO THE BIBLE

*George E. Darling*

## **Introduction**

It is a genuine pleasure for me to be here tonight and to have been selected to deliver the Keynote address of this, the second Annual Lectureship of the Bellview School of Preaching. Let me say in the beginning that I love the Bellview church. I have the highest respect for its elders, its preacher and the faculty of this school. It was my good fortune to be associated with this school when it existed only in “seed form” in the mind of Brother Bill Cline, the able and efficient director, and I can say in the vernacular of the Advertising world—“You’ve Come A Long Way, Baby”—and I add to that—“You Ain’t Seen Nothing Yet”! We are expecting great things of this school and with the faithfulness of its faculty, the direction of its director and the oversight of the godly elders of this congregation, we know we will never be disappointed.

Too, I am humbled in appearing on a program with a group of such profound men. You’ve heard of “top shelf” preachers—well we have the “cream of the crop.” I’m glad to be the first speaker. This way you will have forgotten this speech before the lectures are half over. If you think I am pleading for your sympathy, you are right. No one knows my inadequacy more than I. I heard a story of two cows that were in the pasture as a large milk transport passed by with the advertisement “Our milk is fortified with Vitamin D—Homogenized and Pasteurized.” One cow turned to the other and said—“It sure makes one feel inadequate, doesn’t it?” So if my knees knock and my voice quakes—bear with me.

## **BACK TO THE BIBLE!**

What a theme! How much this is needed. When I obeyed the gospel in 1938 the one thing that impressed me more than anything else was the fact that Rue Porter backed up everything that he taught by the Bible. He quoted Book, Chapter and Verse, something I had heard little of in the Baptist Church. And something you hear little of from the average pulpit in the church of Christ today.

I. We need to go back to the Bible for authority in all that we do and teach.

A. At the Freed-Hardeman lectures this year a black brother told of a lapel button that says “The Bible Says It—I Believe it—and that’s all there is to it.” Brethren, that should be our attitude. Too many preachers are “Butter Men”—“I know the Bible says—but er—“ They have confused their minds with the writings of so called scholars—This is what ‘so and so’ has to say—he is a **GREAT SCHOLAR.**” If he is or was such a great scholar, why didn’t he or why doesn’t he go all the way? What does he teach on the one church—the Plan of Salvation—Christian Worship—etc.? We’ve pushed these “scholars” down the throats of our people until they don’t know what to believe. One young lady asked me recently if Adam Clarke was one of the leaders of the Restoration Movement. It seems that a Bible Class teacher had left such an impression.

When we reject the Bible as authority we might just as well turn to “Poor Richard’s Almanac” or Sears Roebuck Catalog.

Since the dark ages there has not been such attacks on the Word of God as we are experiencing today. It has become a “dead letter” or “a myth.” Look at the number of ‘**so called**’ translations and paraphrases that have cropped up during the past few years. Brethren, we are raising a generation of young people that will not know what to accept as the Word, twenty years from now. Not only do we find those who are demanding the “Modern speech or SLANG versions.” We have those who are contending for “The Whole Bible” and they mean by this the “Apocryphal Books.” Its not enough to write about these things in The Gospel Advocate we are going to have to preach from the pulpits and teach in our classes. It might surprise us to know how few of our people are reading our papers.

II. **We Heed to Go Back to the Bible for Church Government.**

A. God’s plan involves elders.

1. They must meet Bible Standard (1 Tim. 3:1-8; Tit. 1:5-11).
2. They are to rule the church (Heb. 13:7).

3. They are to “feed the flock” (Acts 20:28).
  4. They must set proper examples (1 Pet. 5:1-3; Heb. 13:7).
  5. They must give account for the church (Heb. 13:7).
- B. There is not a greater work on this earth. The man who is scripturally qualified and who faithfully serves in the church, as an elder, in my way of thinking has come as near to reaching the top as is humanly possible. My hat is off to that man or those men. They are few and far between.
- C. The Bible gives full instruction regarding this high and holy office (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and for us to disregard any part of God’s requirements is to show an utter disrespect for God and His Word.
1. What is happening brethren? You know as well as I that we have set idly by and watched men appointed to this office that are no more qualified than a goat. Or we will move into a situation and learn that ungodly and unqualified men are serving as elders. Our excuse is “I didn’t put them in so why should I rock the boat?” Suppose they were living in adultery—suppose they are covetous—self willed—or what have you—would you raise your voice or would you just let it slide?
  2. Oh but they are the best we have! If that is so, you’re in bad shape. We are placing men into the eldership that could not qualify as a Methodist Steward and we wonder why the church is in such a mess. “Convince the gainsayers” (Tit. 1:9) why they are not **convinced** themselves. They are not real sure whether Christ was crucified on Calvary or shot on Okinawa. These are the men who are **supposed** to be our shepherds and spiritual guides. To stop the mouths of “unruly and vain talkers” (Tit. 1:10-11). Why the devil himself could hold membership in some congregations today and the elders would have him waiting on the table or maybe even in the pulpit preaching! If they didn’t place his name before the congregation as a prospective elder—he could at least serve as a deacon, and I might add he would perhaps come closer to meeting the qualifications than many who are now serving in these offices. Yes, brethren we need to go Back To The Bible, in Church Government.

### III. We Need to Go Back to the Bible in Worship

- A. Again the Bible gives full and complete instruction. (John 4:24; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
  1. I believe that too few of us understand what it means to worship in truth. To me this has always meant—according to the teaching of The Truth—“Thy Word is Truth”—therefore, we should be able to give Book—Chapter—and Verse. If so, where do we find book, chapter and verse for singing during the Lord’s Supper? Or humming for that matter. If we can hum we can whistle. If not why not? Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:7, “And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?” If you are humming how can I tell whether you are humming “The Great Speckled Bird” or “I Never knew God Made Honky Tonk Angels” or “I have Found a Friend in Jesus” or “Little Joe the Wrangler”?
  2. Even the Lord’s Supper has been made into a Smorgasbord. Not too long ago one of our “Youth Ministers” (Book—Chapter and verse please) wanted to show off his work with his “Timothy Class” and did so by having them wait on the table—little boys not over 7 or 8 years of age, one of them about 5, and church members remarked “how cute”! But enough for that. I’d like to talk about this matter of “Youth Church or Young Folks church” where we send em’ off to another part of the building to get them out of our hair—but I’ll refrain, at least for the time being. It will come up during the Open Forum and far better qualified men will enlighten us.

### IV. We Need to Go Back to the Bible in Preaching

- A. Preaching on Hell has just about gone out of style! One would think that the Bible has very little to say on the subject. One writer is quoted as saying “Hell has gone out of style.” Not many preachers preach about it anymore and not many people really believe in it. This writer is included. The idea of an all-knowing God deliberately creating faulty human beings so He might roast them forever in lakes of fire seems very strange. There isn’t any “road to hell”—(taken from Editorial in *Four*

*State Gospel News*, March 76, by Bobby Key). Isn't that sweet? One good sister told me that she did not want her children scared with Hell, fire and brimstone preaching like she had been when she was a girl, well brother you would never have known she had ever been scared by anything if you could have seen her long finger nails barely missing my nose as she told me about it. I believe it was A. G. Hobbs that I heard tell of the woman coming to him after services and saying "You preached my mother into hell!" to which he replied, "I'm sorry, how long has she been there?" Preach the Word, brother.

- B. We need to preach the Bible on marriage, divorce and re-marriage. Oh I know it will bring the wrath down upon our heads, but its in the book! You cannot find many congregations today that do not have **several** adulterers and adulteresses on the membership list who have found "a hiding place." They feel perfectly at ease because they know they will not be challenged. Elders will say little about it because they might have a son or daughter that has been caught up in this sin. Preachers—some of them—like Jim Reynolds—won't preach the Bible on the subject because they know how their bread is buttered. In fact preachers like F. L. Lemby will make it easy for them to continue in their sins with his doctrine of "Baptism washes away all past, present and future sins." When I was in the Baptist church we called it "Once Saved Always Saved." If you read *Integrity Magazine* you know what I mean.
- C. We need to go back to the Bible in preaching on discipline. "Now we **command** you brethren, **In the Name of our Lord** that you **withdraw** yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." That's a command that could have been left out of the Bible so far as most are concerned today.
- D. We need to go back to the Bible in preaching for conversions and not preaching to swell the membership rolls. Our congregations are crammed with people who have never been genuinely converted and who do not actually want to be converted. If we will go **Back to the Bible** in our preaching this can be corrected. My time is up. Let me say in conclusion Preach **the Word, Brother**.

# ASCERTAINING BIBLE AUTHORITY

*Roy Deaver*

## **Introduction**

1. Colossians 3:17 enjoins, “And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” “In the name of the Lord” means by the authority of the Lord, as the Lord has authorized (Acts 4:7-10).

Christians are obligated (and privileged) to “walk by faith,” 2 Corinthians 5:7. The standard by which the Christian is to be governed is the standard of faith. In Romans 10:17 Paul declares that “faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Obviously then, the Christian walks by that which comes by hearing the Word of God, then where there is no Word of God there can be no faith. And, where there is no faith there is no pleasing God (Heb. 11:6). It is imperative that we be concerned about Bible authority and how to establish Bible authority.

It is my assignment to study with you at this time the matter of establishing Bible authority. It is my responsibility to explain, to prove, to illustrate just how God authorizes. I must show clearly, forcefully, simply, accurately, and scripturally how Bible authority is established.

2. May I suggest that this is a tremendously important matter. Unless we know how God (or the Bible) authorizes, we cannot be sure about anything that we do or say in the realm of religion. A certain young man was preaching for the Lord’s church in west Fort Worth. He had indicated a desire to teach with us at Fort Worth Christian College. I invited him to come to the office for an interview, I mentioned to him that there had been rumors to the effect that he was not sure that the use of mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship was sinful. We discussed this matter at length, and seemed to get nowhere. It was clear that he was tending to defend the use of mechanical instruments in worship. Finally, I said to him: “Regardless of other matters, are you willing to admit that there is no authority for the use of mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship?” He replied: “Brother Deaver, I’m not sure as to how God authorizes.” My response was: “In that case we certainly could not use you. For, if you do not know how God

authorizes, then you could not be sure of anything.” It wasn’t long until this young man had lined up with the Christian Church.

3. Abel made an animal sacrifice, and was pleasing to God. Noah was obligated to build the ark, and he did as he was instructed. Abraham built an altar, and there worshiped Jehovah. Moses built the tabernacle according to the pattern which was shown him in the mount. The Old Testament Israelite approached God through the priest of the tribe of Levi. There came the time when three times per year the men of Old Testament history were compelled to go to Jerusalem to worship God. David commanded instrumental music in worship to God. In Old Testament times there was the practice of polygamy, and there was the burning of incense.

As did Abel, must I make an animal sacrifice in order to be pleasing to God? Like Noah, must I build an ark? Like Abraham, may I worship God at an earthen altar and with animal sacrifice? Like Moses, must I build a tabernacle? Must I approach God by means of a priest of the tribe of Levi? In order to worship God acceptably, must I go to Jerusalem three times per year? Can I—like David—make use of mechanical instruments in worship to God? Can I engage in the practice of polygamy? and would it be all right for me to burn incense to Jehovah?

If I **can** do these things, and if I **must** do these things—how can I **know** that I can and how can I **know** that I must? If I **cannot** do these things, and if I **must not** do these things—how can I **know** that I cannot and how can I **know** that I must not? Was David or Moses or Abraham or Jacob ever baptized for the remission of sins? Did David or Moses or Abraham or Jacob ever observe the Lord’s supper on the first day of the week?

4. On a certain Thursday night the Lord met with His disciples, observed the Feast of the Passover, instituted the Lord’s Supper, and washed the disciples’ feet. In connection with the washing of the disciples’ feet the Lord said, “If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15). As Christians, we observe the Lord’s Supper. We do not observe the feast of the Passover, and we do not wash disciples’ feet. Of these three items, how do we decide that we are obligated to keep only one?

5. Further, when the Lord's Supper was instituted the Lord and His disciples were in an "upper" room." When Paul met with the brethren of Troas "to break bread" they were "gathered together" in an "upper chamber" and there were "many lights." In order for us to be scriptural in observing the Lord's supper, must we observe it in an "upper room"? Must there be "many lights"? How do we decide?

6. Further, in Romans 16:16, Paul says: "Salute one another with a holy kiss." In order for us to be pleasing to God must we salute one another with a holy kiss? If no, why not? If yes, then why don't we do it? In either case, how do we decide?

It must be evident that it is tremendously important for us to give serious and prayerful consideration to the matter of how to establish Bible authority.

## Discussion

### I. A Basic Proposition

We have already noted that it is the Christian's obligation and privilege to "walk by faith." We have noted also that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. We have directed attention to the point that where there is no Word of God there can be no faith. And, without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to God. In 1 Corinthians 4:6—the American Standard Version—Paul says: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other." In Galatians 1:6-9 Paul says: "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another *gospel* only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema." In Revelation 22:18-19 the Lord said: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." Obviously, God's condemnation abides upon any and

upon all who would go beyond, fall short of, seek to change, disregard, or attempt to make substitution with regard to—His Word.

Based upon these passages, we set it forth as an irrefutable **Proposition: The Scriptures teach that in Christian work and worship we must do only that which is authorized by the Word of God.** A corollary to this proposition would be: **It is possible for human beings to ascertain that which is authorized by the Word of God.** An additional corollary to this proposition would be: **It is possible for human beings to practice in Christian work and worship only that which is authorized by the Word of God.**

The New Testament frequently and abundantly declares that we are obligated to listen to the voice of God, as He speaks to us through His Son. We hear the Son by hearing His word. Everything the Christian does must be authorized by the New Testament. We must not go beyond its teaching. We must not fall short. We must not change. We must not substitute. We must not allow what God condemns. We must not condemn what God allows. We must not violate the laws which God has made. We must not make laws which God has not made.

## II. Significant Distinctions

In “handling aright the word of truth”—in striving to understand the matter of establishing Bible authority—there are certain significant distinctions which must be understood and respected.

1. **Old/New.** We must clearly understand the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible itself makes a clear **distinction** between the Old Testament and the New. In Matthew 26:28 the Lord said, “for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.” In Hebrews 9:15 we have: “And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” Then, in verses 16 and 17 of Hebrews 9 we read: “For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.” In Hebrews 10:9 the Record says, “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” In Hebrews 8:8 Paul quotes God as saying, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” Then, in verse 13 Paul

comments: “In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.”

Further, it is imperative that we realize that God has dealt with man in **three different distinct, systems, of religion**, and that we live in the time of the third system. It is a fact that the Bible sets forth three distinct systems of religion. Knowledge of this fact is absolutely essential to understanding the Bible. In referring to these systems of religion we generally use the word “dispensations.” There was the **Pat-riarchal dispensation**. In the Old Testament record, this period embraces the events from Adam to the giving of the Mosaic law. There was **Judaism**. This period embraces the events from the giving of the Law at Sinai to the cross. There is Christianity. This period extends from Pentecost of Acts 2 to the Lord’s final coming. This period is the time in which we live. This is the time of Christ—His gospel, His church. This is the time in which we must hear the Christ as He speaks to us through His New Testament. This is the time in which everything we do in matters religious must be authorized by the New Testament.

2. **Faith/Opinion.** It is necessary that we distinguish clearly between faith and opinion, between faith and human judgment. I **know** that the Bible says that Nicodemus came to the Lord by night. I **believe** that Nicodemus did come to the Lord by night. I have an **opinion** as to why he came by night. The Bible does not tell us why Nicodemus came by night, and any explanation which we might suggest in this connection would be opinion and nothing more. I would have no right to try to force the other man to accept my opinion, and he would have no right to try to force me to accept his opinion. There can never be unity in matters of opinion, and the Bible does not demand unity in matters of opinion.

In contemplation of a second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, and Paul was definitely opposed to their taking John Mark. There came “a sharp contention” between them. They parted company and went separate ways. I find great satisfaction in the fact that God is able to overrule even the frailties of men to the accomplishing of greater good. Because of this contention, we now have two missionary journeys instead of one, and we now have four workers instead of two or three. I find great satisfaction also in the lesson that if two of the finest gospel preachers the church ever had disagreed so sharply in a matter of human judgment, then most likely we will always have

disagreements in matters of human judgment. And, the Bible does not demand unity in matters of human judgment.

3. **Temporary/Permanent.** We must be able to distinguish between the temporary and the permanent. There were apostles in the early church—men to whom the Lord had promised the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, and men to whom the Lord kept His promise. These were men who possessed the spiritual gifts, and who were endowed with the power and ability to impart miraculous gifts to others. There were others in the early church who did possess certain spiritual gifts. These were persons upon whom an apostle had placed his hands, thereby imparting a miraculous measure of the Spirit. Certainly, it is true that we now have the benefits of the labors and teaching of the apostles, and that they still have a tremendous influence in the church of our Lord. But, the fact remains that we have no living apostles—miraculously endowed—in the church today. It is also a fact that there is no person in the church today who has the power to perform miracles. Living apostles, miracles, spiritual gifts—these things were necessary in the infant church, but were **temporary** in nature and character; they were never intended to be a part of **permanent** Christianity.

There was no complete, written word of God in the early church. There was a desperate need for divine guidance and instruction. Therefore, God placed prophets in the early church, and through these He revealed His message. There was such a thing as a “prophet” in the early church, and there was such a thing as a direct revelation from God. But, there is no living prophet in the church today, and there is no such thing as direct revelation from God to man.

On Pentecost of Acts 2, God made it abundantly clear that He wanted the gospel message to “be preached to the Jews. In fact, in verse 39 Peter—by inspiration—proclaimed that the Gospel message was for the Gentiles also. But, Peter himself did not understand the full force of what God had said through him. It was approximately ten years later that God performed miracles to convince Peter that he was obligated to preach to Gentiles as well as to Jews. It was in connection with the conversion of Cornelius and his household that God showed clearly—to both Jews and Gentiles—that the Gospel of Christ was for both Jew and Gentile. During the years from Pentecost to the conversion of Cornelius and his household the church **refused** to preach the gospel to Gentiles. Evidently, there was no sin inherent in this refusal. Our point just now

is that this refusal was a temporary matter, and certainly was no part of permanent Christianity.

We reach these conclusions, not arbitrarily, but necessarily—in due consideration of the totality of the Bible teaching on the matters at hand. If I were to say to an individual: It is your responsibility to “desire earnestly spiritual gifts,” and cite 1 Corinthians 14:1 as proof—I would be acting and teaching contrary to Bible teaching, even though this is the wording found in 1 Corinthians 14:1. We must distinguish between the temporary and the permanent.

4. **Circumstance/Condition.** In striving to learn about our duties, responsibilities, obligations and attitudes we must distinguish clearly between circumstances and conditions. Acts 16: 13-15 records the conversion of Lydia and her household. The Record says: “And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.” Sabbath day, place of prayer, sitting down, meeting of women—these were **circumstances**. The preaching, the hearing, the believing, the baptism—these were **conditions**. Circumstances vary; conditions do not.

Acts 16 also records the conversion of the Jailor and his household. The imprisonment of Paul and Silas, “their feet fast in the stocks,” the praying and singing at midnight, the prisoners listening, the great earthquake, the shaking foundations, the opened doors, the loosed bands—these were **circumstances**. The preaching, the hearing, the believing, the baptism—these were **conditions**, essential to the jailor’s salvation. We maintain that it is not difficult to distinguish circumstances from condition, and in this regard common sense is a vital factor.

5. **Incidental/Essential.** Likewise, we must be able to distinguish between the incidental and the essential. We recognize that in this area of consideration there is an overlapping with the matter of circumstance and condition. In some cases, the incidental will be involved in the circumstance, but in some cases the essential will not be a condition.

In Acts 16:10 we have the record of the great Macedonian call. God made it clear that He wanted Paul to preach the gospel in Macedonia. Luke says, "Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days" (Acts 16:11-12). In going to Macedonia, Paul and his company chose to travel by ship. They could have followed the land route. The **essential** thing was: Go into Macedonia. Traveling by ship was purely incidental.

According to Acts 20:7-9 the brethren of Troas met for worship on the third floor of a building. Obviously, the fact that the meeting place was on the third floor had nothing to do with acceptable worship. They could have worshiped on the first, on the second, or on the fifth. The **essential** thing was: worship God, as He has directed. The **incidental** thing was: third story.

6. **Means/Principle.** We must distinguish clearly between means and principle. Sometimes we become so involved in consideration of the **means** by which a principle is taught that we obscure or see the principle.

First Corinthians 14:26-40 is a part of Paul's great discussion on the subject of "Spiritual Gifts," and which discussion began back in chapter 12, verse 1. The attempt to study 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, without due consideration to the context, has produced tragic consequences among brethren. In fact, there are many brethren who are able to quote verse 34 who have no idea whatsoever as to what is in verse 26.

In these verses, Paul discusses a special meeting of brethren in Corinth. It was a meeting for the purpose of receiving the benefits of spiritual gifts; it was a meeting of brethren only. Paul gives specific instructions about those who would exercise the gift of tongues, about those who would exercise the gift of interpretation of tongues, about those men who possessed and would exercise the gift of prophecy, and with regard to the conduct of the prophets' wives. With particular regard to the kind of meeting under consideration, Paul mentions specifically two conditions in which **men** were instructed to keep silence; he issues the instruction "Let your women keep silence in the churches." Paul explains: (1) it is not permitted unto them to speak; (2) it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church.

Now, in our regular assemblies, our women are allowed and are encouraged to **sing**. When they sing, they speak. And, when they speak

when they sing, they **teach**. Women are allowed to “come forward,” to stand before the assembly and confess their faith in Christ that they might be baptized. They are allowed to confess their sins that they might be forgiven. All this, without sin and without shame. Obviously, our meetings are not the kind of meeting talked about in 1 Corinthians 14.

Does this mean that 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 has no application to the church today? It doesn't mean this at all. The **principles** set forth are just as binding as they ever were; the **means** (the circumstances, the situation) by which Paul set forth these principles do not exist in the world today. The binding sacred principles are: (1) let all things be done unto edifying; (2) God is not a God of confusion, but of peace; (3) let them be in subjection; (4) let all things be done decently and in order.

7. **Custom/Law.** Also, we must be careful to distinguish between human custom and divine law. I believe that this is the key to understanding 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Much of what is said in these verses relates to the custom prevalent in Corinth of women wearing the veil. It is my personal conviction that Paul, in these verses, does not teach that all Christian women, when appearing in public or in worship assemblies—at all times and in all places—must wear a veil. Paul, in these verses, and in consideration of a particular custom, **does** emphasize certain sacred principles which are just as binding now as then. From these verses we learn: (1) The head of Christ is God; the head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man; (2) The man is to do nothing which will bring dishonor to the Christ; the man is to seek always—by words, acts, life—to bring honor to Christ; (3) The woman is to do nothing which will bring dishonor to man; she is to maintain an attitude of respect and subordination; (4) It is right and good to be in harmony with the customs which are right within themselves; we should not offend others by breaking these customs; (5) We should not bring reproach upon the church by violating customs which are good; (6) We must not dress in such fashion as to become identified with impure people; (7) We must not dress in such fashion as to be offensive to God or to His angels (present in worship assemblies); (8) Our dress must indicate a deep and abiding concern about purity and decency.

### III. **Actions and Obligations**

As we contemplate “Bible authority” at this time /we have in mind the scriptural authority underlying our **actions** and our **attitudes** as

Christians. Our **actions** are the product of our **attitude**; our **actions** grow out of our **obligations**. Our obligations, as children of God, relate to one basic point: the **salvation of souls**. This is the God-given mission of the Lord's church—the salvation of the souls of men.

This basic obligation of saving souls involves our subordinate **general** obligations of (1) carrying the gospel to the world, (2) helping the needy, and (3) edifying the church. Carrying out these subordinate general obligations involves multitudinous **specific tasks**.

As to whether or not we will meet **these** obligations—if we expect to be pleasing to God—we have no choice. But, with reference to how we meet these obligations there **are** areas of choice.

But, how is Bible authority established with reference to **what** our obligations are? How is authority established with reference to **how** we are to meet these obligations?

#### IV. Authority Is Established by Example

1. The word “example” means, according to the dictionary, “That which is to be followed, or imitated: a pattern.” We mention this definition to point out that an “example” is to be followed or imitated. An example is “binding.” Literally hundreds of times in recent years the question has been asked: “When is an example binding”? In my opinion, this is the wrong question. Obviously, if it is an example it is binding, and if it is not binding it is not an example. The question ought to be: When does the Bible **account** of an **action** constitute an example?

2. Right at this point I should explain the sense in which I am using the word “binding” in relationship to examples. I have in mind the thought that (1) some things are **binding** (and are thus examples) in the sense that they must be done (These are **demand**ed; there is nothing optional—these facts being made clear by due consideration of the totality of the Bible teaching on the subject at hand), and (2) some things are **binding** (and are thus examples) in the sense that they **may** be done (These are author ized; they may be done; but they may be left undone).

3. For instance, I am **command**ed to observe the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25. I am instructed (by precept and by example) to observe it on the first day of every week. Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2. There is no option here. I am authorized (by example) to observe the Supper in an “upper chamber” with “many lights.” This is **binding** only in the sense that I am **allow**ed or **permi**tted to do it. It is optional.

I learn from other passages that the **place** is not the important thing, and I, therefore, conclude that the “upper chamber” is an optional matter.

4. Further, I am **commanded to give—as I have been prospered**. This is a **must** matter. I must not fall short of giving as I have been prospered. But, in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, I am taught by example that I may exceed giving as I have been prospered. The Macedonian brethren gave “beyond their power.” Did Paul refer to these brethren as an **example** for the brethren at Corinth? Is this an example for me? Is this account of this action binding on me? If so, in **what sense** is it binding? Does it teach that I must upon every Lord’s day give beyond my power? Or, does it teach that I may give beyond my power? How does the **example** “fit in” with the **command**?

5. If the New Testament makes it plain that “going” is the essential matter and that the method is optional, and if the New Testament records (with approval) that Paul traveled by ship—then I conclude that Paul’s traveling by ship is an example for me (and is binding upon me) in the sense that I may travel by ship. But, I **may** travel by plane.

6. In the light of 1 Timothy 1:3 I believe that it is **binding** (in the sense that it is authorized, and therefore may be imitated) for a gospel preacher to work with a church where there are elders. But, I also believe (1) that a congregation with elders may exist and work without a local preacher; (2) that a gospel preacher may work with a congregation which has no elders; and (3) that a congregation can exist which has neither elders nor a local preacher.

7. In the light of Acts 11:29, 30, I believe that it is **binding** (in the sense that it is authorized, and therefore may be imitated) for a congregation to select **two** of its members to constitute a **single hand** by which to reach out and extend blessings to others. But, I believe that congregation may also use the U.S. Postal system in getting blessings to others.

Whether an “example” is **binding** in the sense that it **must** be done, or in the sense that it may be done has to be determined by due consideration of the **totality** of the Bible teaching on the point at hand.

8. The fact alone of the Bible account of an action does not mean necessarily that the account of that action is intended to constitute an example. It is very important that we consider “actions classified.” The New Testament talks about—

- (1) Actions which were sinful. Judas betrayed the Lord (Mat. 26:47-49). Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). Peter bowed to human lawmakers (Gal. 2:11-14).
- (2) Actions which were **right** when performed but which would be wrong if we imitated that action now. The early church, for approximately ten years, refused to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul (Acts 21) acted in such fashion as to demonstrate that he, himself, walked orderly, “keeping the law.”
- (3) Actions which were **temporary** and **obligatory**. Early Christians were commanded to “desire earnestly spiritual gifts,” but spiritual gifts were temporary. Early disciples confirmed the Word by signs, but miracles were temporary.
- (4) Actions which were **temporary** and **optional**. Paul circumcised Timothy “because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:3). The apostles preached daily in the temple (Acts 5:42).
- (5) Actions which were **permanent** and **optional**. The Macedonian brethren gave “beyond their power” (2 Cor. 8:3). This they were not **required** to do, but were **allowed** to do, and the principle of going the “second mile” is a permanent part of Christianity.
- (6) Actions which were **permanent** and **obligatory**. The early Christians were obligated to give of their means. They were required to observe the Lord’s Supper.

Obviously, only the actions which were **optional** and **permanent** and/or **obligatory** and **permanent** have any relationship to present-day Christianity. When we find in the New Testament the account of an action (1) which was manifestly **right** within itself, (2) which was either **optional** or **obligatory**, and (3) which related to a **permanent** element of Christianity—then we have authority for imitating that action.

Perhaps it should be pointed out that an example does not exclude. An example authorizes traveling by boat, but does not exclude traveling by car. Acts 20:7 authorizes the observance of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week. The point which makes it sinful to observe the Supper on Thursday night is the fact that there is no authority for it. Several verses show our obligation to sing in Christian worship. The thing which makes it wrong to use “the mechanical instrument is the fact that **there is no authority** for it. The sacred principle of “walking by faith” necessarily involves respecting the silence of the Scriptures.

Determining when the account of an action constitutes an example requires (1) application of the principles of Biblical **Hermeneutics**, (2) application of the principles of logic, and (3) due consideration of the **totality** of the Bible teaching with regard to the subject at hand.

#### V. Authority Is Established by Implication

We often speak of “necessary inference.” The word “necessary” is not necessary. If it is an “inference” it is “necessary,” and if it is not necessary, it is not an “inference.” There is a vast difference between “inference” and “assumption.” Many things are called inference which are not inferences. Acts 16:15 states that Lydia and her household were baptized. It is often said that therefore, Lydia was married, and that she had children, and that at least some of these children were infants, and that—therefore—it is scriptural to baptize infants. There is a great amount of **assumption** here, but no **inference**!

We teach the truth when we say that Lot went down into Egypt, even though the Bible does not specifically so state. It does state that he went with Abraham “up out of Egypt.” We teach by “inference” that he went into Egypt. We teach the truth when we say that Crispus (Acts 18:8) **heard** the gospel, though the record of his conversion does not specifically so state. The record does state that he “believed.” And, the record does teach that “faith cometh by hearing...the word of God.” We teach by “inference” that Crispus heard the Word.

When an action, fact, or teaching is **absolutely demanded** by the biblical information at hand—without being specifically stated—then that action, fact, or teaching is inference. If Saul of Tarsus became a Christian, and if one cannot become a Christian without repenting, then we boldly declare that he repented. That he repented is a matter of “inference.” Everything the Bible teaches it teaches either (1) explicitly, or (2) implicitly. And, whatever it teaches implicitly is just as true, factual, binding, authoritative as is that which is taught explicitly. When geometry sets forth **explicitly** the axiom that the “whole of anything is the sum of its parts,” then geometry sets forth **implicitly**, that the whole of anything is larger than any of its parts, and that the part of anything is smaller than the whole to which it relates. And, that which is here taught **implicitly** is just as true as is that which is taught **explicitly**. Just so with the Word of God. In dealing with “inference” we are dealing with **implicit** teaching.

## VI. Authority Is Established by Direct Statement

It is tremendously inaccurate for one to say: “approved example, necessary inference, and **command**.” We are concerned at this point about the word “command.” It is not sufficient to cover the situation.

In studying the matter of establishing Bible authority it is necessary that attention be given to the area of **direct statements**. Some direct statements may be classified on the basis of **mood** and on the basis of their **nature**. This classification is not arbitrarily made—rather, it is made in the light of the Greek New Testament. It is simply a matter of **recognizing** what we actually have in the Greek. The Grammar of the Greek New Testament has four moods: indicative, imperative, the subjunctive, and the optative. Basically, mood means: the relationship of the action in the verb to the realm of **reality**. There are only two basic possibilities: either the action is **real**, or the action is only **potential**. If the action is real, then the mood is indicative. If the action is potential, then the mood is either subjunctive, or imperative, or optative.

A statement in the **indicative** mood may be: (1) **declarative**, as Mark 16:16; (2) **interrogative**, as in Romans 6:1. A statement in the **subjunctive** mood may be: (1) **hortatory**, as in Hebrews 6:1; (2) **conditional**, as in Colossians 3:1. There are several different kinds of conditions. The subjunctive is also used in statements which are **prohibitory**. A statement in the **imperative** mood may be: (1) mandatory (command), as in Acts 16:31; (2) **mandatory-permissive**, as in Acts 2:38 (Repent ye...and let each one of you be baptized.”). A statement in the **optative** mood simply expresses desire or wish, as in Romans 6:2 (God forbid. Literally, “May it not be so.”) This statement in the optative mood authorizes me to teach that we are not to continue to sin that grace may abound.

When one says that God authorizes by example, inference, and **command**, the word “command” relates to the area of direct statements (everything not included in example and inference). The word “command” is, therefore, too restrictive. It doesn’t even begin to cover the situation. The word “command” relates to an area in which there are (as to nature) **eight** different kinds of statements, and it covers only **one out of the eight**.

It is certainly true that there are many “direct statements” in the Bible which we do not use in seeking to establish Bible authority in re-

lationship to our obligations. But, the fact remains that there **are** “direct statements” in the Bible which may be used to establish Bible authority. Certainly, I am not authorized to teach that one is born in sin just because the Jews said so in John 9:34.

### VII. Authority Is Established by Expediency

In the carrying out of our obligations there is an area of expediency. Every obligation which God ever gave involved expediency. In connection with every obligation which God ever gave it may be truly said that (with regard to carrying out that obligation) God **did** say **how**, and yet that He **did not** say **how**.

Expediency involves human judgment. So far as concerns church obligations elders of the congregation are authority in the realm of expediency.

Expediency is that which expedites. There is no expediency where there is no advantage. So far as concerns congregational obligations, an expedient is that which is deemed by the authority of the elders to be advantageous in carrying out any the church—that obligation growing out of that for which there is an approved example, a true inference, or a direct statement.

We should keep in mind also that there is **no expediency where there is no obligation**. I cannot justify thus and so by arbitrarily calling it an “expediency.” There is no expediency where there is no obligation. The failure to recognize this fact created serious problems in the early Restoration Movement. It was argued by many that the Missionary Society was simply an expedient in connection with the functioning of the universal church. This, in fact, was the attitude of Alexander Campbell. But, no one took the time or made the effort to prove that God placed upon the universal church the **obligation** to function as an **organized entity**.

It should be pointed out also that when we prove that a thing is expedient—according to a scriptural definition of expediency—we thereby prove that thing to be divinely authorized, and, hence, coming within the realm of faith.

Perhaps some attention should be given to the matter of “optionals” in relationship to “expedients.” What, if any, is the difference? In carrying out obligations placed upon us there are “optionals” and there are “expedients.” Consider our obligation to assemble. This obligation makes **necessary** an assembling **place**. An assembling place is **essential**. With regard to an assembling place there would be at least four

options: buy a building, rent a building, build a building, meet in a private home. The **expedient** thing to do might be to **build** a building. Under different circumstances the expedient thing might be to **rent** a building. It is clear therefore, that the same thing could be (might be) **optional** and **expedient** at the same time. Not all optionals are expedients, but all expedients are optionals. In “expedient” there is the inherent idea of **advantage**.

A word should be said about the difference between an “expedient” (an aid) and an “addition.” Anything which is not authorized by Scripture is an addition. A true aid, an expedient, is authorized by the Scriptures. God has given us the obligation to “go.” We can go by **walking** and we can go by **riding**. Walking and riding are different ways of going. They have a distinct relationship to the obligation to go. They have no particular relationship to each other. Walking is not an aid—is not an expedient—to riding, and riding is not an expedient to walking. A walking stick, used in connection with the walking, would be an expedient, an aid. Relative to the area of perception—we perceive by **hearing** and we perceive by **seeing**. Hearing is not an expedient to seeing, and seeing is not an expedient to hearing. These are definite, distinct ways of perceiving. They are “co-ordinates.” Glasses would be an expedient to seeing, and a hearing aid would be an expedient to hearing. In the area of making music: this can be done by singing; it can be done by the use of mechanical instruments. Singing and using mechanical instruments (playing) are two definite ways of making music; these are co-ordinates. Either singing or playing can be done without the other. Singing is not an “aid” to playing, and playing is not an “aid” to singing. The songbook is an “aid,” an “expedient,” to singing. Having someone stand before the congregation to lead the singing is an “aid”—an “expedient.” When we use the songbook in our singing we are **just** singing, not singing and doing something else.

### CONCLUSION

Brethren, we have sought to consider the matter of how God authorizes—the matter of establishing Bible authority. In this study we are working in the highly important and tremendously complicated field of Biblical Hermeneutics. It is necessary that we respect and be governed by divine authority. Our actions and our attitudes—to be right—must be authorized by the Scriptures.

May God help us to think seriously and prayerfully about these matters, and to determine to be governed by a “thus saith the Lord.”

# MATTHEW 24-25

## THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

*Roy Deaver*

### **The Background**

It was Tuesday in the very week in which the Lord would “be crucified. After two days would come the Passover, and the Son of man would be delivered up to be crucified (Mat. 26:2). Hear the end of this great day in the Passion Week the Lord and His disciples left the temple. For the Lord, this meant leaving it forever. The Lord and His disciples left the city through the eastern gate. They crossed the Kidron Valley, and began their climb of Mount Olivet. They were on their way to Bethany. Somewhere along the way, and in response to the disciples’ questions, the Lord spoke the great sermon which we have recorded for us in Matthew 24 and 25.

Throughout His public ministry the Lord had been in conflict with the Jewish leaders. And, from time to time he had denounced them severely and had spoken about the end of the Jewish nation. Understanding the **larger context**, is essential to our understanding of the Olivet Discourse.

(1) When John the baptizer had seen many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism he said to them:

Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire (**Mat. 3:7-10**).

When John spoke these words the axe was lying at the root of the trees. In the Olivet Discourse the Lord explained when, why, and how the axe would fall.

(2) In Matthew 8, based upon the Gentile centurion’s great faith, the Lord spoke of the conversion of Gentiles and the cutting off of the Jewish nation. The Lord said,

I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth (Mat. 8:10-12).

(3) In John 4 the Lord explained that the time would come when Jerusalem would not be the place of worship. The Lord said, “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father” (v. 21).

(4) In the Perea ministry the Lord had spoken the parable of “The Barren Fig Tree.”

A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. And he said unto the vinedresser, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground? And he answering saith unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit thenceforth, *well*; but if not, thou shalt cut it down (Luke 13:6-9).

The Barren Fig Tree was fleshly Israel, the Jewish nation. It would be cut down.

(5) Matthew 21 records three times the Lord’s teaching with regard to the end of the Jewish nation. It was Monday, in the week of the crucifixion—the day before the Olivet Discourse. While on the way to Jerusalem, the Lord denounced a barren fig tree. It had an abundance of leaves, but no fruit. The Lord said, “Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever” (v. 19). And “immediately the fig tree withered away” (v. 19). Mark says it “withered away from the roots” (Mark 11:20). It will not sprout out again! In the parable of “The Two Sons” the Lord severely condemned the Jews. He said, “Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you” (**Mat. 21:31**). Then, in “The Parable of the Wicked Husbandman” the Lord drove home the point. He said,

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust (**vv. 43-44**).

The chief priests and the Pharisees rightly perceived that He spake of them.

(6) The Lord's final debate with the Jewish leaders is recorded in **Matthew 22**. The Pharisees with the Herodians had asked him about paying tribute to Caesar. When they heard the Lord's answer, "they marvelled" (v. 22). On the same day the Sadducees came. They asked Him a question pertaining to the resurrection. Those who heard His answer "were astonished" (v. 33). Then, the Pharisees sent a lawyer to try to entrap the Lord. The lawyer recognized that the Lord had answered well. Then, Jesus asked the Pharisees a question that really put them on the spot. Matthew says "neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions" (v. 46).

(7) In **Matthew 23** we have the Lord's severe denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees. Like a skilled attorney, He sums up their crimes. Like a strict judge, He pronounces the sentence and pre scribes the punishment. About these religious leaders the Lord says: they say and do not; they bind burdens but they won't carry burdens; they do their works to be seen of men; they love religious titles; they refuse to lay hold upon God's blessings, and they keep others from doing so; they are zealous to make proselytes, but the one thus influenced is worse off than before; they have worked out a foolish and hypocritical system of swearing; they major on minors and minor on majors; they are concerned about outward appearances, but not about inward purity; they **appear** to be righteous, but are full of hypocrisy and iniquity; they try to cover up their unrighteousness by being considerate of the righteous dead; they would continue to persecute the righteous—those whom the Lord would later send; they would "**fill up**" the **cup of iniquity**; they would receive just punishment. It should be noted here that the Lord said, "All these things shall come upon this generation" (v. 36).

(8) Then we have the Lord's great "Lamentation over Jerusalem." This lamentation is made up as follows: the **address** ("O Jerusalem, Jerusalem"—v. 37); the **charges** ("that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her!"—v. 37); the **compassion** ("how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings"—v. 37); the **response** ("and ye would not!"—v. 37); the **sentence** ("Behold, your house is left unto you desolate"—v. 38); the **promise**, ("Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"—v. 39).

The Lord called these Jewish leaders: hypocrites, blind guides, fools and blind, serpents, offspring of vipers. It is significant that in verse 38 the Lord calls the temple "your house"—it is no longer His

house. We should note carefully that the Lord said, “**Your house** is left unto you desolate.”

In the closing portion of chapter 23 the Lord speaks of **divine judgment upon the Jewish nation**; (1) the **reason** for it is indicated in verse 32 (“Fill ye up then the measure of your Fathers”). (2) the **fact** of it is shown in verses 35 and 38 (“that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel...Behold, your house is left unto you desolate”); (3) the **time** of it is set forth in verse 36 (“All these things shall come upon this generation”).

This is the background out of which comes the great Olivet Discourse.

### The Disciples' Questions

In order for us to understand the Olivet Discourse we must understand the disciples' **question** or **questions**. Jesus went out from the temple. He was going on His way. His disciples came to Him. They came to “point out” to Him (and to call His attention to) the temple buildings. Likely, this was in view of the Lord's statement in 23:38—“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” The Lord “answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Mat. 24:2). Not a single stone would be left in place! The Lord's statements about Jerusalem and the temple buildings were enough to astound the disciples.

The Lord sat somewhere on the western slope of Olivet. The disciples came to Him to ask Him privately about “**these things**.”

**Matthew** records that the disciples asked:

When shall these things be?

What shall be the sign of thy coming?

What shall be the sign of the end of the world? (Mat. 24:3)

**Mark** says that the disciples asked the Lord—

When shall these things be?

What shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished? (Mark 13:4).

**Luke** says that the disciples asked the Lord—

When therefore shall these things be?

What shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass? (Luke 21:7).

Matthew's account, at least on the surface, **seems** to indicate three questions. However, it **has to be recognized** that the disciples **might** have been thinking of one event. Then, when we consider the parallel accounts it becomes obvious that even in Matthew's account the disciples were **indeed** thinking of one stupendous event. They associated the overthrow of the stones with the end of the world. They associated the end of the world with the Lord's final coming. **It is the conviction of this writer that the three accounts of the disciples questions are identical in meaning.** They were thinking of the final coming and of the end of the world. They **assumed** that the "these things" which the Lord talked about would take place at the end of the world. However, it does not follow necessarily that they were correct in their assumption. In thinking about the Lord's final coming, the end of the world, and the destruction of the beautiful temple buildings the disciples really asked **two questions**: (1) **When** shall these things be? and (2) What shall be the **sign** when these things are about to come to pass. The time and the sign. In answering the disciples the Lord discusses **two** comings and **two** ends of **two** worlds. He discusses His coming in judgment upon Jerusalem (to mark the end of Judaism and the Jewish nation); and He discusses His coming for final judgment (to mark the end of the world). In dealing with each of these matters the Lord kept in mind the disciples' questions: the **time** and the **sign**.

### The Jerusalem Coming

The mere fact of reference to the Lord's coming does not prove that reference is made to His final coming. The Scriptures refer to: (1) the Lord's first coming—to live among men; (2) His coming on Pentecost of Acts 2 (Mat. 16:28); (3) His coming in human experiences (Rev. 2:16; 3:20); (4) His final coming (1 The. 4:16); and (5) His coming in judgment upon Jerusalem (Mat. 24:30; 26:74; Zec. 14:1-2). The Providential destruction of Jerusalem is definitely called a coming of the Lord. This coming was spoken of frequently in the Old Testament prophecies. It is this coming which our Lord discusses in verses 4 through 35.

Perhaps this is the proper point at which to stress the significance of the words "**these things**" in this context. The Lord had used these words in **Matthew 23:36**—"all these things shall come upon this generation." In **Matthew 24:3** the disciples asked: "when shall **these things** be?" The Lord had just said, "See ye not all **these things**? verily

I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (v. 2). In verse 8 the Lord said, “But **all these things** are the beginning of travail.” In verse 33 the Lord says, “even so ye also, when ye see **all these things**, know ye that he is nigh, *even* at the doors.” Then, in verse 34 the Lord continues: “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till **all these things** be accomplished.” Clearly in **all these verses** the words “**these things**” refer to the **same** thing and definitely relate to the destruction of Jerusalem—not to the Lord’s final coining.

In relationship to the destruction of Jerusalem, and especially in connection with **signs that might mislead**—the Lord issued a **warning**: “Take heed that no man lead you astray.” He then sets forth the reasons, for this warning: “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray” (Mat. 24:4). Historians (Justin, Jerome, Irenaeus, Origen, Josephus) record the fact that immediately prior to the destruction of Jerusalem there were many deceivers and many false christs. The Lord said further: “And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for *these things* must needs come to pass; **but the end is not yet**” (v. 6). Wars and rumors of wars would come. But these things did not constitute **the end** which the Lord had in mind and about which He was speaking. The Lord continued: “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places” (v. 7). This is an amazing statement from our Lord. At the time He made it there was **peace** within the Roman Empire. Shortly after the Olivet prophecy Palestine and other parts of the Roman Empire were engulfed in strife, insurrections, and wars. Even extra-biblical history records the earthquakes and famines characteristic of the years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. During this time the Jews themselves suffered indescribable persecution. Thousands were put to death. And again the Lord stressed that these things **were not the end**. Rather, “these things are the beginning of travail” (v. 8). The Lord continued:

Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold (vv. 9-12).

**False christs, wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, tribulation, hatred, persecution, false prophets, iniquity, spiritual coldness—these things would come**, but these things would **not be the end**. Then the Lord said, “But he that endureth to the end the same shall be saved” (v. 13). This is a wonderful **promise**. The “end” considered in this section is the destruction of Jerusalem. Those persons who would endure the sufferings and the agonies which would be inherent in the times preceding the end are promised deliverance when that **end** would come. The Lord continues to think about the **end**. The Lord says, “and the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the **end** come” (v. 14). We seek to emphasize that the Lord is not speaking here of the final end—the end of the world—but of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish nation. Before the “end” the gospel of the kingdom would be preached to the whole world. And, the New Testament declares that this was literally the case. The faith of the saints in Rome was spoken of “throughout the whole world” (**Rom. 1:8**). By the time of Paul’s letter to the brethren at Colossae the gospel was “bearing fruit and increasing” in “all the world” (**Col. 1:6**). Further, Paul plainly declares that at the time of the Colossian letter the gospel had been “preached in all creation under heaven” (**Col. 1:23**).

With regard to “the end” which the Lord contemplates throughout this section may we note: (1) it is not identical with wars and rumors of wars; (2) it is not identical with the troublesome times described; (3) the terrible circumstances preceding it **could** be endured; (4) salvation (deliverance) is promised those who did endure; and (5) it would come **after** the gospel had been preached to the whole world. What about the **time** of the destruction of Jerusalem? It would not come before the gospel had been preached to the whole world.

**Thus the Lord warns with regard to possible misleading signs.**

Having considered many signs which **would not** indicate the end, but which could be misleading; and having stressed that Jerusalem would not be destroyed until **after** the gospel had been preached to the whole world—the Lord then discussed the **real sign**. He keeps in mind the **time** and the **sign** of the destruction of Jerusalem.

What would be the **real sign** in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem? The “abomination of desolation...standing in the holy place” (v. 15). The Lord said,

When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains: let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out things that are in his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak (vv. 15-13).

That the Lord refers to a **local** (not a universal) event is evident from this reading. If reference is to the final coming and judgment and the end of the world there would be no point in one's fleeing to the mountains. With regard to the impending destruction discussed here haste would be essential, but there will be no need for one to make haste in trying to escape the final events.

**Daniel, in chapter 9**, spoke of the "abomination of desolation." God, through Gabriel, told Daniel: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city." The 70 weeks are divided into 3 sections: 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 1 week. The 70 weeks were determined with a view to six things: (1) to finish the transgression, (2) to make an end of sins, (3) to make reconciliation for iniquity, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal up the vision and prophecy, and (6) to anoint or consecrate the Holy of Holies. **These six things obviously relate to the Christ**—His being, His mission, and His church. He came to deal with the problem of sin, to make possible God's plan for man's righteousness, to establish His church. The 70 weeks would bring to a completion the development of the Scheme of redemption. Likely, the "anointing of the Holy of Holies" refers to the establishment of the church. The **7 weeks** span the time from the decree of Cyrus to the end of Nehemiah's work. The **62 weeks** span the time from the end of Nehemiah's work to the coming of the Messiah. The **1 week** clearly is the personal ministry of the Christ. The 62 weeks come after the 7 weeks, and the 1 week comes **after** the 62 weeks (thus after 69 weeks). During the final week the Messiah would confirm the covenant with many. In the midst of the week He would cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. In the midst of the week the Messiah would be cut off. In this connection the prophecy stresses that

the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined (v. 26).

The Record further says, “and upon the wing of abominations *shall come* one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall *wrath* be poured out upon the desolate” (v. 27—ASV). It should be pointed out that the prophecy does not say that the city would be destroyed within the span of the one week, Rather, it says that within that week the destruction of the city was **determined**. One could hardly read verses 26 and 27 without recalling our Lord’s words: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Mat. 23:38).

The word “abominations” in the Old Testament has an association with idolatry. In the present reading it likely retains this significance, and has a direct reference to those things which the Roman soldiers brought into the Temple. The “abomination of desolation” means the presence of the Roman army. In the parallel account Luke says, “But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand” (**Luke 21:20**). Josephus says:

And now the Romans, upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, brought their ensigns to the Temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifice to them.

What was to be done when the **real sign** was evident? The Lord said:

then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains: let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out things that are in his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak (Mat. 24:16).

The Lord said further:

But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath: for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be (Mat. 24:19-21).

The Lord said, “And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Mat. 24:22). Again it is obvious that the Lord was discussing a **local** event and one that related specifically to the **Jews**. Because of His concern for the faithful God would shorten the days of war (the period of war). It is a fact of history that in the siege of Jerusalem not a Christian perished. The Lord had given them the **sign**. They knew the sign, and when they saw the sign they fled as He had instructed them.

Even during this time of terrible tribulation there would be false teachers and deceivers. The Lord says,

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe *it* not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand. If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe *it* not (Mat. 24:23-26).

This means simply that **“If at that time anybody shall try to make you, think that all this means that the Lord has come in the sense of His final coining, don’t believe it! Because when the Lord comes, finally—everybody will know about it.”** “For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man” (Mat. 24:27). The Lord says further: “Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Mat. 24:28). The Lord thus declared that the Jewish nation was a dead carcass. The vultures—the Roman army—under General Titus, would gather for its complete destruction.

The Lord has referred to the “tribulation” of “those days” immediately preceding the actual destruction of Jerusalem (verses 21 and 23). Now, He says:

But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Mat. 24:29-30).

There would be the appearance of the Son of man. This would not be a literal presence of the Christ, but His coining in judgment upon Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. **This “appearance” in judgment would be the *sign*. The Son of man is “in heaven”—not the *sign*.** The **sign** would be on earth, in Jerusalem. The destruction of Jerusalem would be the **sign** of the coming of the Lord, and would be conclusive evidence that He was reigning **in heaven**.

It is commonly assumed that the vivid descriptives used in verses 29 and 30 relate to the Lord’s final coming and the end of the world. However, such an assumption is entirely without warrant. The Lord employs apocalyptic terminology with which the disciples would be

completely familiar. It is imperative that we be familiar with the same kind of terminology which is employed in the Old Testament. In **Isaiah 13**, and with regard to the destruction of **Babylon**, the Record says:

the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle...the day of the LORD *is* at hand;...Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine...I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity;...I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place,...And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 4-19).

In **Isaiah 34** the Record speaks about the overthrow of **Idumea**;

And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment (vv. 4-5).

In **Ezekiel 32** God speaks about the downfall of Egypt. God says,

I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land (vv. 7-8).

The same terminology which God used in discussing the overthrow of Babylon, Idumea, and Egypt is that which the Lord used in discussing the overthrow of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. This reading simply says—vividly, emphatically, apocalyptically—that **immediately; after the tribulation of those days** Jerusalem would be destroyed, and that this destruction of Jerusalem would be the **sign** (the evidence) of **the Lord's coming (His presence in judgment)**. The fact of the destruction would be conclusive evidence that He was involved and that He was reigning in heaven. The statement “and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Mat. 24:30) does not refer to the Lord's final coming. **Rather as already stressed, it refers to the Lord's coming in powerful judgment.** In Isaiah 19:1, and with regard to Egypt, the Record says: “Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into

Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.” This, the same kind of language we have in Matthew 24.

After this coining of the Lord in judgment upon Jerusalem and the Jewish nation the gospel message would go forth with greater force and effectiveness. “And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Mat. 24:31). The “he” refers to the Lord Himself. The word “angel” means “message” or “messenger,” and it is our studied conviction that reference is here made to those teachers and preachers of the gospel who would be involved in getting the whole gospel to the whole world. The fall of Jerusalem and of the Jewish nation would contribute mightily (in the providence of God) to the spread of the gospel of Christ. The “great sound of a trumpet” is the sound of the gospel of the Christ, God’s only saving power. This beautiful terminology is likely a reference to **Old Testament Jubilee**. The year of Jubilee (Lev. 25) prefigured the wonderful redemption, freedom, and salvation to be had in the Christ, and upon the terms of the gospel.

In verses **32 and 33** the Lord spake the beautiful parable of **the fig tree**. He says,

Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, *even* at the doors.

Just as the tender branch and the leaves of the fig tree would indicate the nearness of summer, just so “these things” which have been discussed—including the destruction of Jerusalem—would indicate the nearness of the Lord Himself.

If further proof is needed that in verses 4 through 33 the Lord has been discussing one thing—the destruction of Jerusalem—we have that proof in **verses 34 and 35**. Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished.” Then, for emphasis, he adds: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” The word “generation” in this reading means exactly the same thing that it means in chapter 23, verse 36, where the Lord said “All these things shall come upon this generation.” Some would contend that the word “generation” here means “race of people,” and that the Lord was referring to the Jewish race. This would

have the Lord saying, “These things are going to happen to this race, and this race will not pass away until these things happen to it.” Such redundancy would not have been characteristic of our Lord. It would be interesting (and indeed, profitable) for one to study the word “generation” used elsewhere in Matthew. In Matthew **12:41** the Lord said, “The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it” In verse **42** he says, “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it” Men have no trouble understanding the meaning of “generation” in these verses—they should have no trouble understanding it in Matthew 24:34. There would be no escape, and no change of plans. The Lord’s words would be fulfilled.

### **The Final Corning**

**Verges 4 through 35 relate to the Lord’s coining in judgment upon Jerusalem and the Jewish nation.** “All these things” were fulfilled when Titus destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Roman General Titus saw to it that the walls of the city were completely destroyed, and that the temple and its buildings were thoroughly demolished. They even plowed the ground upon which had stood the great city. Josephus states that “...there was left nothing to make those who had come thither believe it had ever been inhabited.” Verily, not one stone was left standing upon another.

**With verse 36 the Lord begins discussing: the final coming, the final judgment, and the end of the world.** It seems obvious that the Lord was using the destruction of Jerusalem, as a type; of the end of the world. Whereas the Lord has been discussing “those days,” he now makes reference to **“that day.”** The Greek says, “that the day.” Obviously, this is a **transition text**. The Lord says, “But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.” With regard to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem the Lord had explained that He had knowledge, and that by listening to what He had to say, others could have knowledge. But, so far as concerned the Lord’s final coming—and judgment, and end of the world—He had no knowledge, and men had no knowledge. Not even the angels know of the time of this matter—only the Father knows.

In verses 37 through 40 the Lord explained that preceding the final coming men would be acting in **normal** fashion. Whereas, the days

preceding the destruction of Jerusalem would be days of turmoil and tribulation, the days preceding the final coming would be days characterized by normal activities and conduct upon the part of men. Note carefully the reading:

And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women *shall be* grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left (vv. 37-41).

Because no one knows the time of the Lord's final coming, and because the days preceding it will be characterized by normal activities and conduct, and because there are no signs—it will be necessary for the concerned to “**watch**” and to “**be ready**.”

Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh (vv. 42-44).

The Lord thus set forth (1) the fact of His coming, (2) the importance of watching, (3) the unexpectedness of His coming, (4) the suddenness of His coming, (5) the fact that proper preparation can be made, and (6) the necessity of being ready.

The Lord next stresses the importance of our being **faithful servants**, and declares that the faithful servants shall be rewarded.

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath (vv. 45-47).

The Lord teaches that the wicked servant shall be punished:

But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth (vv. 48-51).

In these verses—and with regard to the final coming—the Lord thus taught: (1) the fact of it, (2) the necessity of faithfulness, (3) the faithful servant shall be rewarded, (4) the wicked servant shall be punished, (5) the possibility that the Lord may **tarry**, and (6) the unexpectedness of His coming.

Next, the Lord set forth the parable of the **ten virgins**. This is verses 1-13 of chapter 25. The Lord likened the kingdom of heaven to ten virgins. These ten virgins took their torches and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five of these virgins were foolish, and five were wise. The foolish, when they took their torches took no oil with them. The wise “took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (v. 4). While the bridegroom **tarried** all ten of these virgins “slumbered and slept” (v. 5). “But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him” (v. 6). It should be observed here that even though the virgins knew that the bridegroom was coming, they did not know when he was coming. The cry and the summons came at a time when they were not expecting it. There was nothing to forewarn them. There was no sign. Upon hearing the summons, the virgins—all of them—arose, and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said unto the wise, “Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out” (v. 8). The wise refused saying, “Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves” (v. 9). While these foolish virgins (who had failed to make proper preparation, and who were now trying to make adequate preparation) were gone away to buy oil, “the bridegroom came.” Those who were ready went in with the bridegroom to the marriage feast: and the door was shut. Afterward came the foolish virgins, saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us” (v. 11). The bridegroom answered, “Verily I say unto you, I know you not” (v. 12). The Lord stressed the lesson: “Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour” (v. 13). Beautifully and emphatically the Lord thus declared: (1) the fact of His coming, (2) the necessity of our preparing for His coming, (3) the foolishness of failing to prepare, (4) the possibility that the bridegroom would **tarry**, (5) the suddenness and unexpectedness of His coming—there will be no sign, and (6) at His coming it will be too late to make preparation, and all the pleading will be to no avail.

In verses **14-30** (of chapter **25**) the Lord spake the **parable of the talents**. The Lord likened the kingdom unto a man going into another country. The man called unto him his servants, and delivered unto them his goods. Unto one man the master gave five talents, and to another

two talents, and to another one talent. These were given “according to” the ability of each servant. The master of the household went on his journey. The servants began their work with the talents with which they had been entrusted. The servant with the five talents gained an additional five talents. The man who had the two talents gained two more. The man with the one talent was obligated to gain one more, but he failed. He “went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money” (v. 18). “Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them” (v. 19). The master was well-pleased with the man who had gained five talents more, and highly complimented him. He was highly pleased with and generously complimented the servant who had gained the additional two talents.

And he also that *received* the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth (vv. 23-30).

With regard to this great parable, let us observe; (1) It is a fact that the Lord is coming. (2) The Lord may tarry for “a long time.” (3) What we have is from the Lord—we are stewards, and we are responsible for that which has been entrusted to us. (4) The Judgment will be a day of “reckoning.” (5) Whatever we have we must use it to the accomplishing of the Lord’s will. (6) The faithful servant will be rewarded. (7) The unfaithful servant will be punished. (8) The time of the coming is not known, and no sign is given. (9) The servant who fails to use what he has is wicked, slothful, and unprofitable.

Verses **31 through 46** record the final portion of the great “Olivet Discourse.” In this section the Lord discusses **His coming, the Judgment**, and thus—**the end of the world**. The Son of man shall come. He shall come in His glory. All the angels shall come with Him. “Then shall he sit on the throne of his glory” (v. 31). Before Him shall be gathered all the nations. The Judgment will be a day of **separation**: “and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep **on his right hand**, but the goats on the left” (vv. 32-33). The Judgment will not be a day for determining who is a sheep and who is a goat. This is determined when a person dies. As he dies, so shall he stand in judgment. But in the Judgment there will be “separation.” Further, the Judgment will be a day of explanation.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me (vv. 34-40).

Then the King shall say to those **on His left hand**:

Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life (vv. 41-46).

Finally, the Lord speaks with regard to the eternal destiny of all: “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me” (v. 45).

Thus, in these verses—the Judgment scene—the Lord teaches: (1) the fact of His coming, (2) the judgment of all mankind when He does come, (3) some things about the nature of the judgment, (4) the fact that in this life we are to prepare to face the Lord in judgment, (5) that the righteous will be rewarded, and the wicked will be punished, and (6) the fact that there will be no sign.

### **A Summary on Evidences for the Two Comings**

#### The Lord's Coming in the Destruction of Jerusalem

1. In this, there would be benefit by fleeing to the mountains.
2. This was local—Judaea and Palestine.
3. This would require haste in escaping.
4. This would be while the sabbath was still binding.
5. The “elect” involved in this would be helped by the shortening of the days.
6. In this, it could be claimed by false teachers that Christ was in the wilderness, or in the inner chamber.
7. This would be preceded by “tribulations.”
8. Related to this there were definite signs.
9. The time of this was known to the Lord.

#### The Lord's Final Coming

1. In this, there would be no benefit in fleeing to the mountains.
2. This will be universal.
3. In this, haste will accomplish nothing.
4. This will be long after the sabbath law ended.
5. In this, the shortening of the days would help no one.
6. In this, His whereabouts will be known to all persons.
7. There is no Scripture reference to “tribulation” in connection with this.
8. Related to this, there is no sign.
9. The time of this was not known to the Lord.

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|--|---|
| 10. Following this the gospel would be preached.   | 10. Following this, there will be no gospel preaching.  |
| 11. The time of this was definite.   | 11. The time of this is indefinite.   |
| 12. Preceding this things would not be normal (wars, famines, earthquakes).                                  | 12. Preceding this things will be normal.   |
| 13. In connection with this some would have time to escape.  | 13. In connection with this no one will have time to escape.  |
| 14. This is illustrated by the parable of the fig tree (the fig tree indicates that summer is nigh).         | 14. This is illustrated by the parable of the thief (the thief gives no indication of his coming).                                  |
| 15. With regard to this the Lord emphasized that it would be within the lifetime of <b>that generation</b> . | 15. With regard to this, the emphasis is upon long delay (“my lord tarrieth,” “while the bridegroom tarried,” “after a long time.”) |
| 16. This is definitely a <b>local</b> judgment upon <b>one</b> nation.                                       | 16. This is universal, involving all nations.   |
| 17. This takes place upon the earth.   | 17. This takes place in heaven.   |
| 18. This is referred to by “those days.”   | 18. This is referred to by “that day.”  |

In connection with the Lord’s **coming in judgment** to put an **end** to Jerusalem and the Jewish nation—

1. So far as concerned the **time**—it would be within that contemporary generation.
2. So far as concerned the **signs**—there would be—
  - a. Possible misleading signs;
  - b. The sign by which the righteous would know to flee;
  - c. The sign of the Lord’s presence in judgment, and of His reigning in heaven—the destruction of Jerusalem.

In connection with the Lord's final **coming** in **judgment** to mark the end of the world—

1. So far as concerns the **time**—only the Father knows;
2. So far as concerns **signs**—there will be none!

### CONCLUSION

1. Brethren, we have sought to set before us our Lord's great "Olivet Discourse" as recorded in Matthew 24 and 25.
2. Special emphasis has been placed upon chapter 24.
3. We have considered—
  - a. The Background;
  - b. The Disciples' Question;
  - c. The Jerusalem Coming;
  - d. The Final Coming;
  - e. A Summary on Evidences for the Two Comings.
4. We should think of the destruction of Jerusalem as being a **type** of the Lord's final coming. As we contemplate the final coming we must: (1) watch and pray, (2) be ready, (3) be faithful, (4) make proper preparation, (5) use what we have, (6) serve God by serving others. We must understand, (1) that nobody knows the **time** of the Lord's final coming, and (2) there will be **no signs!**

# REVELATION TWENTY

*Roy Deaver*

## CHAPTER ANALYSIS

In this chapter we have—

### I. Angel

- A. John saw an angel.
  - 1. The angel was coming down out of heaven;
  - 2. The angel had the key to the Abyss;
  - 3. The angel had a great chain upon his hand;
  - 4. The angel **seized** the dragon.

### II. Dragon

- A. John discusses the dragon.
  - 1. The dragon was **seized** by the angel;
  - 2. The dragon was the “ancient serpent”;
  - 3. The dragon is the dragon (or Satan);
  - 4. The angel **bound** the dragon.

### III. Angel

- A. John further discusses the angel.
  - 1. The angel **bound** the dragon;
  - 2. The angel **bound** the dragon **for a thousand years**;
  - 3. The angel **threw** the dragon into the Abyss;
  - 4. The angel locked the Abyss and **sealed** the Abyss over the dragon.

### IV. Dragon

- A. John further discusses the dragon.
  - 1. The angel **seized** the dragon, **bound** the dragon, **threw** the dragon into the Abyss and **sealed** the Abyss over the dragon;
  - 2. All this was done in order to keep the dragon from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended;
  - 3. After the thousand years the dragon “must be loosed for a little time” (v. 3).

### V. Thrones

- A. John saw thrones.

1. On these thrones certain ones were seated;
2. These seated on the thrones were those to whom had been given authority to judge.

## VI. Souls

### A. John saw souls.

1. These were the souls of those who had been beheaded—
  - a. Because of their testimony for Jesus;
  - b. Because of the Word of God;
2. These were the souls of those—
  - a. Who had not worshiped the beast;
  - b. Who had riot worshiped the image of the beast;
  - c. Who had not received the mark of the beast upon their foreheads or upon their hands;
3. These souls “lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (v. 4);
4. The enthroned souls—who “lived, and reigned with Christ”—is called “this the resurrection the first.”

## VII. Best

### A. John speaks of “the rest.”

1. This is the rest of the dead;
2. These—the rest of the dead—lived not until the thousand years were ended.

## VIII. Souls

### A. John continues to talk about the “souls.”

1. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection;
2. Over these who have part in the first resurrection the second death has no power;
3. Those who have part in the first resurrection will be priests of God and of Christ;
4. Those (souls) who have part in the first resurrection will reign with the Christ for a thousand years.

## IX. Satan

### A. John proceeds to discuss Satan.

1. The angel seized Satan, bound him for a thousand years, threw him into the Abyss, locked and sealed the Abyss over him—so that he could deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were ended. After the thousand years Satan would be set free for a short time (vv. 1-3).

2. When the thousand years are over Satan will be released from his prison (the Abyss).
3. Upon being released, he will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—
  - a. These deceived nations are symbolized by “Gog and Magog” (v. 8);
  - b. Satan will gather these deceived nations for battle—to make war against God’s people;
  - c. In number, these deceived nations are like the sand on the seashore;
  - d. These nations sought to destroy God’s people—
    - (1) They marched across the breadth of the earth;
    - (2) They surrounded the camp of God’s people (the city He loves);
  - e. But God destroyed these deceived nations—
    - (1) Fire came down from heaven;
    - (2) This fire devoured the deceived nations.
4. And the devil, who deceived them, was destroyed;
  - a. He was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur (where the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown);
  - b. These—the devil, together with the beast and the false prophet—will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

## X. JUDGMENT

- A. John speaks of judgment.
  1. John saw a throne—
    - a. This was a great throne;
    - b. This great throne was white;
  2. John saw Him who was seated upon the throne;
  3. John saw the earth and the sky—
    - a. The earth and the sky **fled away** from the presence of the one who was seated upon the throne;
    - b. There was no place found for the earth and the sky;
  4. John saw “the dead”—
    - a. This is all “the dead”—both great and small;
    - b. The sea gave up the dead that were in it;
    - c. Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them;

- d. These—"the dead" (v. 12)—were standing before the throne;
  - e. The "books" were opened;
  - f. "Another book was opened"—this book was "*the book of life*" (v. 12);
  - g. The dead—all the dead—were **judged** according to what they had done, as recorded in the **books**.
  - h. Each person was judged according to what he had done;
5. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire—this "the second death, *even* the lake of fire" (v. 14);
  6. All persons whose names were not found written in the book of life were thrown into the lake of fire.
- B. John saw
1. An angel
  2. Thrones
  3. Souls
  4. A great white throne
  5. The dead
- C. The thousand years
1. The angel bound the devil for a thousand years;
  2. The devil was prevented from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended;
  3. The devil—to be set free for a short time after the thousand years;
  4. John saw souls which lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years;
  5. The rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were ended;
  6. Those who have part in the first resurrection—
    - a. Are exempt from the second death;
    - b. Will be priests of God and of Christ;
    - c. Will reign with Christ for a thousand years;
  7. When the thousand years are over—
    - a. Satan will be released from his prison;
    - b. Satan will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth.

## D. Satan

1. Is identified as being “the old serpent, which is the Devil” (v. 2);
2. Was seized by the angel, and was bound by the angel for a thousand years;
3. Was thrown by the angel into the Abyss; the Abyss was locked and sealed over Satan to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended;
4. Must be set free for a short time, after the thousand years—“and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations” (vv. 2-3);
5. Was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown;
6. Shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

## E. The second death

1. Those who have part in the first resurrection are exempt from the second death;
2. The lake of fire is the second death (v. 15).

### The Nature of the Book

Based upon the reading in chapter 1, verses 1 and 2, we make the following observations: (1) This book is the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ—it came from Him; (2) The Christ received it from God; (3) God gave it to Christ so that He (the Christ) could “show unto his servants” (Rev. 22:6) the things which were to come to pass; (4) Those things would come to pass shortly; (5) Christ **sent** and **signified** this message unto His servant John; (6) Christ sent and signified it by His angel; (7) John—upon receiving this material from the angel—“bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* of all things that he saw” (Rev. 1:2). Thus, God, Christ, Angel, John, servants.

It should be observed carefully that this message from the Christ was “signified”—it was given by **sign**. This basic fact stressed the “symbolism” of the book. A **sign** does not signify itself. The Revelation is made up of many **visions** which were given to John, and which visions involved many symbols.

The first readers of this message from God would have no trouble understanding the message. They would have no difficulty in understanding the symbols. They were close enough to the time, the places,

and the circumstances to know the meaning of the symbols. Further, there were in the early church the spiritual gifts which might have contributed to understanding the significance of the symbols.

That the early readers would understand (and that we **can** understand) is clearly shown in 1:3—“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein.” The pronoun “he” refers to the public reader who would stand before the congregation to read the message. The pronoun “they” refers to the hearers. The hearers are expected to “keep” the things which they hear. (Perhaps it should be pointed out that this is *akouo* with the accusative—hearing plus perception.)

It should be noted that verse 1 (of chapter 1) says that the Revelation concerns “things which must **shortly** come to pass.” Verse 3 says, “for the time is at hand.” In 2:10 we have, “Fear not the things which thou art **about** to suffer.” In 22:6-7 we have: “And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angels to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. And behold, I come **quickly**. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.” Verse 12 (of chapter 22) says: “Behold, I come quickly.” Then, verse 20 says: “Yea: I come quickly.”

The fundamental message of the book is simple and clear. It was written to encourage the persecuted Christians of Asia Minor. These brethren were in the midst of persecutions indescribable. The devil with all his agents and powers was seeking to destroy the church of our Lord. Things would get worse before they would get better. The brethren needed assurance—they needed encouragement. The Lord sent them this special message: (1) to emphasize the fact that He knew what was going on; (2) to stress that He was standing in the midst of the churches—caring, loving, protecting; (3) to declare that Christ and the church would be victorious. Satan and all his forces could not destroy the church.

The purpose and basic message of the book make it clear that the Revelation had a distinct message for the churches addressed for the churches of that day. It had a direct relationship **to the churches addressed**. The circumstances and the events discussed in the book would take place in the days of **those** churches. Why conceal the message if the things talked about would not take place or exist until thousands of years later? We should study the Revelation as we study First Corinthians: (1) What did it say to the church in Corinth? (2) What are the sacred principles set forth which are applicable now? Likewise,

we ask: (1) What did the Revelation say to the Christians of Asia Minor? (2) What are the eternal, sacred principles which apply to us?

Why is the book written in apocalyptic symbols? The simple answer is: to **reveal** and to **conceal**. There came the time in the Lord's personal ministry when he spake in parables. The parables were often spoken in public, but later explained to the disciples in private. Great hostility to the Lord and His work was developing. By speaking in parables He was able to continue to **teach** those who really wanted to learn, but to **conceal** His message from those who opposed Him.

A similar situation obtains in the Revelation. God's people were in the midst of severe, terrible persecution. The situation would get worse. The Lord wanted to encourage the Christians—to comfort them, and to let them know that He knew what was going on and that He would be with them. He wanted them to know that the persecutions would not destroy the church, that the persecutors would be defeated, and that the Cause of righteousness would prevail. In discussing the persecutions and the persecutors it was necessary that the message be **concealed** from them, but—at the same time—be **clear** to the Christians. This is the reason the message of the book is couched in apocalyptic symbols. It **conceals** and at the same time **reveals**.

It should be kept in mind that this book is “prophecy” (1:3), and that it sets forth the drama of persecution before these events are carried out in the world of reality.

An appropriate title for the book is suggested in chapter 1, verses 19 and 20. The Lord told John to write “the things which thou **sawest**, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass **hereafter**.” But, the Lord told John to write “the mystery of the seven stars...and the seven golden candlesticks.” The “things which thou **sawest**” and the things which “**are**” and the things “which shall come to pass **hereafter**” obviously encompass the contents of the Revelation. The Lord calls all this “The Mystery of the Seven Stars and the Seven Golden Candlesticks.”

The things which John “saw” were the visions. The things which “are” were the existing circumstances. The “things which shall come to pass hereafter” (qualified by “shortly” and “the time is at hand”) is the message which comes from the combination of the things seen and the existing circumstances.

With regard to the nature of the book may we add here two pertinent comments from brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr. These comments come from his book on the *Revelation*, pages 26 and 41.

...it is time to turn to the solid internal evidences—the proof within the book—that it was written during the reign of Nero, before the siege and destruction of Jerusalem; that it was an apocalypse of the overthrow of apostate Jerusalem, the obliteration of the Jewish theocracy with the demolition of the temple, the calamitous downfall of Judaism and the catastrophic end of the Jewish state; that in apocalyptic imagery it describes the tribulations of persecution that engulfed the early church and overwhelmed its members in suffering; that the conflict with the persecuting powers ended in the victory of the Cause for which Christians suffered and martyrs died, symbolized in the triumphant scenes of a figurative resurrection and enthronement—and, all in all, that the visions of the **Book of Revelation** were fulfilled in the experiences of churches of that period, and that the apocalypse does not extend beyond the era of the Roman persecution of the church.

There is no truth so evident, when the facts are brought into proper focus and perspective, as that of the present thesis—that the **Book of Revelation** was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and its visions fulfilled in the experiences of the early church.

### **Pertinent Hermeneutical Principles**

There are many things about the Revelation which we will never know in this life. Many years ago I received a question in the “question box” about the beast of chapter 13. The beast had 7 heads and 10 horns. The question was: How many horns on each head? Such things we will never know, but such things we don’t have to know in order to understand the basic message. We insist that the fundamental message is clear and plain. It stresses God’s concern for His people, and is a tremendous source of comfort and consolation. It declares so beautifully, so emphatically, and in so many ways—“I will be with you always.”

In studying the Revelation there are certain basic hermeneutical principles which we must keep in mind.

1. Truth is always consistent with itself. Any interpretation of any passage which is out of harmony with or contradictory to the plain, simple, clear teaching of the Bible is an erroneous interpretation.
2. We must interpret in the light of the nature of the book. The Revelation is made up of signs and symbols. It would be completely erroneous to consider words and descriptives which come in the midst of apocalyptic symbolism as being literal. We must understand what the symbols symbolize. We must remember that “...he sent and **signified** it by his angel unto his servant John.

3. The symbols must be understood consistently. What the symbol means in an **earlier** chapter is what it means in a **later** chapter.
4. Many of the apocalyptic symbols in the Revelation are drawn from the Old Testament. In striving to grasp their meaning we must give careful consideration to these same symbols in the Old Testament.

### Apocalyptic Numerology

The symbolism employed in the Revelation includes numbers. One's knowing the significance of the numbers is essential to his understanding the message. In this system number "1" means unity, or independent existence. "2" means added strength, increased courage, additional energy. "3" means that which is divine—even completeness related to the divine. "4" means the world of man—completeness related to the human. "5" would mean something less than complete or perfect, and would take on the notion of completeness when doubled to "10." It should be noted that multiples of "10" are frequent in the Revelation. "6" indicates something hated, something detestable, something to be avoided (very much like our #13). "7" is the number for perfection. This number takes "3"—perfection with regard to the divine—and adds "4"—perfection with regard to man and his world. "7" was a good number to the Jews. The 7 divided by 2 would give 3½ which would be something bad, something terrible. The "7" plus "3" would give "10" which would indicate something very good—something strong, powerful. The "10" X "10" X "10" would symbolize absolute completeness. The "4" multiplied by the "3" would give the "12" which meant to the Jews—organized religion. This number multiplied by itself, times 1000 gives the "144,000"—the number for the martyred saints. We stress here that "7" does not mean "7" and that "10" does not mean "10," and that "1000" does not mean "1000." These numbers are symbols of something else.

### The Context

In order for us to understand chapter 20 we must understand the context—the **immediate** context, and the **larger** context.

The book is a vivid and beautiful visional symbolic dramatization of the conflict of the early church with the persecuting powers of Judaism, Romanism, and heathenism. It is the story of conflict between the church and the world; it is the story of the conflict between Christ and Satan. I want us to read together two key sections of Scripture in the Revelation: **6:9-11** and **20:4-6**. In **6:9-11** we have:

And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and

for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled *their course*.

Then, in **20:4-6** the Record says:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Now, between these readings is the presentation of the great and terrible conflict between the forces of evil and the forces of righteousness; between the church and the world, between Christ and Satan. **The sacred story of how the Lord would take these souls from underneath the altar and put them on thrones, is the story given us in the Revelation.**

The forces of evil are symbolized by “the beast” and the “false prophet.” These received their authority and power from the “dragon.” The Rider of the white horse—together with His army—met the forces of evil in war. The beast and the false prophet were taken, and were “cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone” (**19: 20**). This left the dragon to be dealt with, and this brings us to chapter 20.

### In This Chapter We Have—

I. John saw an angel. The angel was coming down out of heaven. The angel had the key to the Abyss. The angel had a great chain upon his hand. The angel **seized the dragon**.

The angel is probably the Christ Himself. The angel possessed the power over death. The chain must be the gospel of the Christ, the purpose of which is to save men, to keep them from being deceived by Satan, to destroy the power and influence of Satan. “Seized the dragon” means the victory of righteousness over evil.

II. John discusses the dragon. The dragon was **seized** by the angel. The dragon is identified as being “the ancient serpent.” The dragon is identified as being **Satan**. The angel bound the dragon. “Seized” and “bound”! Again the symbolism means victory of righteousness over all the forces of evil and persecution that have been considered in chapters preceding.

III. John further discusses the angel. The angel **bound** the dragon, The angel bound the dragon “for a thousand years.” The angel threw the dragon into the Abyss. The angel **locked** the Abyss and **sealed** the Abyss over the dragon.

The binding of the dragon emphasizes (1) the influence of the gospel of Christ, and (2) the power and providence of God and the Lamb. The words “seized,” “bound,” “threw,” “locked,” and “sealed” emphatically declare **completeness**. Likewise, the “thousand years” emphasizes **completeness**. All the efforts of Satan to lead God’s people into idolatry (through Emperor worship) would be completely defeated. We stress again that the “thousand years” does not mean time. “Angel” does not symbolize “angel,” and “key” does not symbolize “key,” and “chain” does not symbolize “chain,” and “dragon” does not symbolize “dragon,” and “binding” does not mean a literal binding with a literal chain, and the “thousand years” does not mean a literal thousand years. In fact, it does not mean time at all. It means **completeness**. In **Deuteronomy 7:9** Moses said that God keeps His covenant with those that love Him and keep His commandments—“to a thousand generations.” “Thousand” here does not mean “thousand.” It means completeness. There is no literal “thousand years” in Revelation 20. The millennialists **cannot** literalize “angel,” “key,” “chain,” “dragon,” “binding.” How then could they—with any degree of plausibility—literalize the “thousand years”?

IV. John further discusses the dragon. The angel **seized** the dragon, **bound** the dragon, **threw** the dragon into the Abyss, and **sealed** the Abyss over the dragon. All this was done in order to keep the dragon from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After the thousand years the dragon “must be loosed for a little time” (v. 2). We take this to mean that God and the Lamb, in their matchless power and providence, would end—completely end—Satan’s **persecution** against the saints of Asia Minor in connection with the matter of emperor worship. Once this persecution was, ended, the devil would go forth exercising his influence in another way. This time—for

a short time—he would work to deceive. Whereas he had formerly employed the weapons of persecution **and** deception, now he would proceed in efforts to **deceive**.

V. John saw thrones. On these thrones certain ones were seated. These seated on the thrones were ones to whom had been given authority to judge. The “thrones” would symbolize authority, position, exaltation. The throne occupants are in an exalted position.

VI. John saw souls. Not bodies, but souls. These were the souls of those who had been **beheaded** because of their “testimony of Jesus” and “because of the word of God.” These were the souls of those (1) who had not worshiped **the beast**; (2) who had not worshiped the **image** of the beast; (3) who had not received the **mark** of the beast upon their foreheads or upon their hands. These **souls lived and reigned with Christ, a thousand years**. The enthroned souls—who lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years—is called “this the resurrection the first.”

This beautiful and powerful imagery is that of Victory—complete Victory. “Souls” symbolizes the persecuted Christians of Asia Minor—especially those who were persecuted unto death. “Beheaded” would emphasize the magnitude of the severity of the persecution. But these persecuted saints remained **faithful**. They would not—in any way—involve themselves in idolatry. They steadfastly refused to worship the emperor or his statue.

These are the same “souls” discussed in chapter 6, verses 9-11. There, the souls are “underneath the altar.” These were “souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” There, they were crying with a great voice, “How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” “Them that dwell on the earth” refers to their persecutors. All this is a scene of defeat—the souls underneath the altar. From that point the Revelation describes Satan and His forces in opposition to the Lamb and His forces. The Rider of the white horse defeats the beast, the false prophet, and the dragon. Satan is bound and is cast into the Abyss. Now, in the visional symbolism these same souls are on thrones. Beautiful Victory! Complete Victory! Taking these souls out from under the altar and putting them upon thrones is called “the first resurrection.” This is certainly—and obviously—not a literal resurrection. There is nothing here about a **bodily** resurrection. This is

the resurrection of the **Cause** of righteousness, for which thousands of persecuted saints gave their lives.

This symbolism of the resurrection of a cause is rooted in the Old Testament. In **Ezekiel 37:1-14** God, through Ezekiel, made known Israel's deliverance from bondage and return to her home-land. God called this a resurrection. In **Isaiah 26:13-19** the prophet talked about the Babylonian captivity. The wicked "lords" would be over God's people. But, the wicked "lords" would be overthrown—"They are dead, they shall not live again." But, God's people **would live**. The earth would "cast out" its dead. This would be a resurrection.

Again we stress that there is no literal, bodily resurrection in this passage. The fact that John explains "This is the first resurrection" is proof that the word is being used in an unusual manner. Furthermore, the total symbolism has to be considered. If the "resurrection" is literal, then the "beheading" is literal, and only the literally beheaded would have part in this literal resurrection. If the "beheaded" is figurative, then the "resurrection" is figurative. These souls "lived" and "reigned" with Christ a "thousand years." The millennialists insist that the "resurrection" is literal and that the "thousand years" is literal. If so, then the "lived" would be literal, and the "reigned" would be literal. The **living** and the reigning would extend over a thousand years, but would **end** when the thousand years ended. The living would be over when the thousand years was over. John is discussing a spiritual resurrection.

In this connection it should be stressed that there is nothing here about the reign of Christ. John is not discussing the reign of Christ. He is discussing the reign of **these souls**. These **souls**, which John saw **on thrones, lived and reigned with Christ** a thousand years. The "thousand years" is not a matter of time, but a matter of **completeness**. These victorious ones would come completely within the confines of the love and fellowship and protection and work of the Christ. Their Cause would continue. If the "thousand years" is literal, then the "living" is literal, and the "beheading" is literal. If the "beheading" is symbol, then the "thousand years" is symbol. Their victory was complete.

VII. John next speaks of "the rest." This is the "rest of the dead." It seems to me that "the rest of the dead" refers to the persecutors who—in the imagery—were defeated with Satan from whom they had received their power. We have already mentioned **Isaiah 26:13-14** where—with regard to the persecutors of God's people—it is said, "*They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not*

rise.” These persons were yet living, but so far as concerned their dominion over God’s people they were “dead.” God would **completely** stop the persecution,

but Satan would continue his work of deceiving. These “dead” workers of iniquity could continue to work with Satan.

VIII. John continues to talk about the “souls.” Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. Over these who have part in the first resurrection the **second death** has no power. Those who have part in the first resurrection will be **priests** of God and of Christ. Those (souls) who have part in the first resurrection will reign with Christ a thousand years.

The “first resurrection” is simply **victory** over the persecutions brought against the early Christians—the victory of the Cause of righteousness. All the faithful—who share in this victory—are blessed of God. Over these the “second death” will have no power, because it is reserved for the wicked. In verse 14 the “second death” is identified as being “the lake of fire.” We note that all who have part in the first resurrection shall not be hurt of the second death. We note also that all who “overcome” the tribulation (of 2:10) would not be hurt of the second death. By **overcoming** the persecuted saints would gain the Victory (have part in the first resurrection) and would need have no fear of the second death.

It is a fact of New Testament teaching that Christians are priests, “a royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9). Christ is our High Priest, and every Christian is a priest before God. These “souls” under consideration are priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. At the same time they are **priests** they reign. They **reign** with Christ. They are priests and they reign while Christ reigns. The only reign of the Christ in Scripture is the present reign. All Christians are priests and reign with Christ while He reigns. We must keep in mind that John is discussing the “souls.” These souls “lived” and “reigned” “with Christ” “a thousand years.” The “shall reign” of verse 6 is the same reign as that seen in verse 4. The “shall reign” does not mean that it is something yet in the future.

IX. John proceeds to discuss Satan. The angel seized Satan, bound him completely, threw him into the Abyss, locked and sealed the Abyss over him—so that he could deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were ended. After the thousand years Satan would be set free for a short time (vv. 1-3). When the thousand years were over Satan would

be released from his prison (the Abyss). Upon being released he would go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth. Those deceived nations are symbolized by “Gog” and “Magog.” This particular symbolism is drawn from Ezekiel 38. “Gog” is the leader and “Magog” is the land. There is particular reference here to **the forces of heathenism** in opposition to the church. Satan would gather these deceived nations for battle—to make war against God’s people. In number, these deceived nations would be like the sand on the seashore. In the vision, these nations sought to destroy God’s people. They marched across the breadth of the earth. They surrounded the camp of God’s people (the city He loves). This beloved city is the church. But God destroyed these deceived nations. Fire came down from heaven and devoured the deceived nations. And the devil who deceived them was destroyed. He was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur (where the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown). These—the devil, the beast, and the false prophet—would be tormented day and night for ever and ever. This fascinating symbolism emphatically declares that Satan and his forces (heathenism) would be defeated in their efforts to destroy the church of our Lord. With particular reference to efforts made to deceive God’s people Paul says in **Romans 16:20**—“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

X. John speaks of Judgment. John saw a throne. This was a **great** throne; this great throne was white. “White” in the Revelation means holiness, purity, justice. John saw Him who was seated upon the throne. John saw the earth and the sky. The earth and the sky **fled away** from the presence of the one seated upon the throne. There was no place for “earth and sky” to go—“there was no place found” for them. They simply disappeared. “Earth and sky” simply means the wicked powers of persecution and opposition. The “throne” and the throne occupant emphasizes the authority and power of the Lamb. “Pled away” means the defeat of the powers of Satan—the same as the binding of Satan. It is the judgment of this writer that when the Lord said (in Mat. 24:35) “Heaven and earth shall pass away” that he was discussing the fall of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the opposing forces of Judaism. This would be the fall of “heaven and earth”—the end of the Jewish nation.

John saw “the dead.” This is likely the same “dead” as that mentioned in verse 5 and, therefore, refers to the wicked powers of persecution, opposition, deception. This is all the forces of opposition—great and small. The “sea gave up the dead (the wicked) that were

in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead (the wicked) that were in then. Thus, all the wicked forces of opposition were called upon to appear before the Lord, the Judge. These “dead” were standing before the throne. The “books” were opened. “Another book” was opened. This book—the “another book”—is called “the” book of life.” The dead—all the dead before the throne—were **judged** according to what they had done, what they had done having been recorded in the **books**. Each person was judged according to what he had done “and they were judged every man according to their works” (Rev. 20:13). All persons whose names were not found written in the book of life—which would be all “the dead” discussed in this section—were cast into the lake of fire.” Death and Hades, which had been holding the dead, having given up the dead—were cast into the lake of fire. The “lake of fire” is identified as being the “second death.”

Consideration of context further strengthens the view that “the dead” in this judgment are all wicked. In **19:11-19** we have **battle**—war between the forces of righteousness and the forces of wickedness. In **19:20-20:3** we have **defeat**—the defeat of the dragon. Then, in 20:4-6 we have **victory**—the victory of righteousness. All these matters are related to the cessation of persecution. Then, the devil begins his work of deceiving for “a little season.” The cycle starts over. In 20:7-9 we have **battle**—war between righteousness and wickedness. In 20:9-15 we have **defeat**—defeat of Satan (vv. 9-10), then defeat of Satan’s forces (vv. 11-15). In chapters **21 and 22** we have **victory**—the great and marvelous victory of the Christ and His church.

May we stress that in verses 11-15 we are not dealing with the final judgment of all mankind. Doubtless many of the statements made are drawn from the Bible teaching regarding that final judgment, but **this** is not **that** judgment. We must keep in mind the symbolism. “White” does not mean “white,” “throne” does not mean “throne,” “earth and heaven” do not mean earth and heaven, “fled away” does not mean fled away, “the dead” does not mean “the dead,” “the books” does not mean books, the “another book” does not mean “another book,” “sea” does not mean “sea,” “death and Hades” does not mean death and Hades, “lake of fire” does not mean lake of fire, and “judged” does not mean judged. The symbolism means the complete defeat of the forces of Satan in their determined efforts to destroy the church.

This completes our analysis of chapter 20.

### **Additional Notes on Verses 4-6**

These verses constitute the main “proof text” (?) of the millennialists. From these verses, fraught with symbolism, they build a complete, complex, eschatological system—a system which contradicts plain Bible teaching. With due credit to brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., I want us to note some things which are not found in Revelation 20.

1. There is no reference to the second coming of Christ.
2. There is no reference to a bodily resurrection of the dead.
3. There is nothing about “us.” The text says “they lived and reigned.”
4. There is nothing about a future reign. The text says “they lived and reigned.”
5. There is no reference to the final judgment of all mankind.
6. There is no reference to the Lord’s final coming before a millennium.
7. There is no reference to a literal thousand years.
8. There is nothing about the reign of Christ.
9. There is no reference to a reign of Christ on earth.
10. There is no reference to a reign of saints on earth.
11. There is no mention of the throne of David or of anybody reigning on the throne of David.
12. There is no reference to Jerusalem or to Palestine.

### **CONCLUSION**

From this study of Revelation twenty what are some of the lessons we can learn?

1. Like the early Christian martyrs we must be determined to be faithful, to endure, even unto death (Rev. 2:10).
2. The church may be persecuted and Christians may be killed, but such does not mean that the church has been destroyed.
3. The Lord stands in the midst of His churches. He knows what is going on. He loves us, cares for us, provides for us, and will see to it that the church of our Lord shall not perish from the earth.
4. We must strive to develop the spirit of the martyrs. They were willing to die for the Cause of Christ. Countless thousands gave their lives.
5. We are a part of a kingdom which cannot be shaken—it will not be destroyed (Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28).

6. How grateful we ought to be that we live in a time and in a land where we do not experience such persecutions as was experienced by the church in the first century. However, we need to remember always: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). The Lord said, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you—John 15:20).

# THE BIBLE—GOD’S FINAL REVELATION TO MAN

*Hugh Fulford*

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Bible is! Where did it come from? It purports to be a revelation from God.
  - a. If this claim is true (and we believe with all of our heart that it is) then the Bible cannot be regarded as Just another book.
  - b. It must be esteemed more highly than any other piece of literature in the possession of the human race.
2. A proper attitude toward the Bible as God’s inspired Word and final revelation to man is absolutely essential to pleasing God and being saved eternally.
  - a. If we view the Bible as a collection of ancient human wisdom intermingled with myth and error, we will then be disposed to accept only that part of the Bible (if any) which seems reasonable to us and will reject the rest.
  - b. The Bible in no sense will be absolutely authoritative as a standard of doctrine and practice until we reverence it as a document from God—as his final revelation to man (cf., 1 The. 2:13).
3. Text: Hebrews 1:1-2.

## DISCUSSION

- I. **God Is.**
  - A. In all lessons taught it is necessary to begin some where; in this one we commence upon the premise that God is (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 90:2; Heb. 11:6).
  - B. We will not, in this lesson, present reasons why we believe in God; we accept the fact that he does.
  - C. The questions to be answered in this lecture are these:
    1. Has God made a special revelation of himself to man (over and above that which we find in nature)?
    2. If he has, is the book which we call the Bible that special revelation?

3. If it is, is it God's **final** revelation to man, or "look we for another?"

## II. **Why I Believe That God Has Made a Special Revelation to Man.**

- A. Such a revelation is possible. If we grant that God exists and is infinite in power, in knowledge, in wisdom, in goodness and love, in justice and righteousness, then we must concede that it is possible for him to have revealed himself to man by means of a special revelation.
- B. Such a revelation is reasonable. In fact, it would be highly unreasonable to think that God has not communicated with man, his creature, and revealed his will to him.
- C. Such a revelation is necessary. Man cannot know his origin or destiny, his duty or his privileges, without a special revelation from God. Nature tells man there is a God, but nature does not tell man what his responsibility to God is.
- D. The Bible says that God has made such a revelation of himself unto man (Heb. 1:1-2).
  1. God hath spoken!
  2. He hath spoken through his Son! (Mat. 17:5).
  3. All that we know about Christ is found in the Bible! (John 5:39).

## III. **Is the Bible God's Special Revelation to Man?**

- A. The Bible claims to be such a revelation.
  1. No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Note: Over and over again, the prophets of the Old Testament attributed their message—not to themselves—but to the Spirit of God (cf., David —2 Sam. 23:2).
  2. Christ promised the apostles that they would be guided by the Holy Spirit in what they taught (John 14:26; 16:13).
  3. Paul said that the gospel which he preached was not after man, but came to him through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12).
  4. He also stated that the mystery (the gospel) was made known to him by revelation (Eph. 3:1-5).

5. Paul further claimed that his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and power (1 Cor. 2:1-5).
  6. He likewise emphasized that the Spirit of God revealed to him the things in the mind of God and that he spoke these things in words which the Spirit taught him (1 Cor. 2:10-13).
  7. So complete in fact was the inspiration by which the holy apostles and prophets spoke and wrote that Paul could say, "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
  8. Challenge: Let the person who denies the verbal inspiration of the Bible and its claim to be a special revelation from God be put on the defensive and show that which the Bible claims for itself is not true!
- B. Internal and external evidences corroborate the Bible's claim of divine inspiration.
1. Its marvelous unity.
  2. Its fulfilled prophecies of the Christ, the Hebrew people, and the nations of the earth (Egypt, Babylon, etc.)
  3. Its wonderful influence.
  4. Its harmony with the known facts of science.
  5. Its agreement with archaeological discoveries.
  6. Its high ethical standard.
  7. Its inexhaustibility.
  8. Its endurance (Mat. 24:35).
- IV. **But, Is the Bible God's Final Revelation to Man?**
- A. Christ is God's final spokesman; Christ has no successor (Heb. 1:1-2; Mat. 28:18).
  - B. Christ promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into **all** truth (John 16:13). Note; If one keeps talking after he has told all the truth on a subject he either repeats himself or tells something that is not the truth!
  - C. To teach or to believe anything other than what is contained in the doctrine of Christ results in one having not God (2 John 9).
  - D. God's divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).
  - E. The Bible is perfect and complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Psa. 19:7).

- F. God's Word is not to be added to nor subtracted from (Rev. 22:18-19).
  - G. No gospel other than the one revealed in the scriptures is to be preached (Gal. 1:6-9).
  - H. That one gospel is to be preached to every creature in every nation to the end of the world (Mat. 28:19-20).
  - I. "The faith" (there is but one—Eph. 4:5) has been "once for all" delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).
  - J. The word of Christ alone will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).
- V. **Some Necessary Conclusions.**
- A. We are not to be guided in religion by the doctrine and commandments and traditions of men. Neither the pope, the councils of men, nor the creed books and church manuals of men are to govern us in spiritual matters (Mat. 15:6-9).
  - B. We are not to expect any so-called "latter day" revelations from God such as claimed by the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Christian Scientists, etc.
  - C. We are not to look for or expect the Holy Spirit to continue to guide men today separate and apart from the revelation which he has already given in the scriptures (John 16:13).
  - D. We are not to substitute our own thinking, the dictates of our own conscience, or our own subjective feelings for what the Bible says (1 Pet. 4:11).

## CONCLUSION

### A TRIBUTE TO THE BIBLE

This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories true, and its decisions immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to supply you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven is opened, and the gates of Hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will

be opened at the judgment, and remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents.

# “SENSATIONALISM”

*Roger Jackson*

## INTRODUCTION

The subject assigned to me for this evening is “Sensationalism. “ The first thing that we must do is make a distinction between a heart stirring appeal and “sensationalism” as I will be using it in the course of the lesson. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not against gifted speakers or the use of a strong appeal in a sermon. The Bible certainly teaches that one must put his heart into his religion (John 4:24). A gospel preacher must be as convincing as he can be for too much is at stake to be won or lost. The message he preaches is worthy of the very best vessel (2 Cor. 4:7). We must recognize the difference between a talented and energetic gospel preacher who is capable of delivering a stirring discourse because of his hard work and dedication and “sensationalism.” Webster defines sensationalism as: “using effects intended to startle, shock, thrill or arouse intense excitement” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*, s.v. “Sensational,” 1966). Such a procedure appeals solely to the fleshly inclinations of the individual and produce the same type of excitement one can get at a ball game.

On Mount Carmel, Elijah met a group of people who worshiped their god in a sensational way. First Kings 18:26-29 relates that Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to sacrificial contest. He allowed them to demonstrate the power of their god first. They cried aloud, leaped on the altar, cut themselves and prophesied sensationalism! It was not totally different from some Pentecostal meetings of our day. In fact, some of our brethren would have worshiped with them! You can refine it and put it in the most elaborate cathedral in Europe, but sensationalism began around the altar of Baal and not the Bible.

One preacher became extremely excited in his sensational appeal and in his excitement forgot what to say. He would charge down from the pulpit stand toward the audience stating, “Behold, I come..,” but each time words failed him and he could think of nothing more to say. One rather large lady sat on the front bench by herself. The third time he charged toward her crying, “Behold, I come..,” and tripped over a guitar cord and fell right into her. As he picked her up off of the floor

with unending apologies she exclaimed, "Don't worry about it preacher, you warned me three times." That's sensationalism.

Some preachers have been known to turn out the lights and burn sulfur as they preached on the doctrine of hell. That's sensationalism. Other people like encounter groups which major in the "art" of touch. We frown upon such encounters and then see no likeness between that and youth meetings in which the lights are turned out and teenagers hold hands in chain prayer groups. It's sensationalism.

The given items of worship we practice each first day of the week are designed to release the Christian's emotions. Do you feel the need to talk to God? The avenue of prayer is provided that you may do so (1 The. 5:17). Do you need to be instructed in righteousness? Do you feel the need of God's speaking to you? God has provided the preaching of His Word to satisfy that need (2 Tim. 4:2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Do you have a heart that is overflowing with gratitude to God for all His marvelous gifts He has given you? You need not have a convulsion. He has provided the means of giving to allow us to show Him how grateful we are (2 Cor. 9:7). Should you feel that the joy of salvation and the love of God is more than will allow you to restrain yourself, the Bible says to sing (Jam. 5:13). When you need a nearness to God and strength to carry you through another week what better way than to observe the Lord's Supper and remember His death and promise to return again (1 Cor. 10:16). There is not an emotional need that these acts of worship do not fulfill. God allows us to release our emotions in a decent and fulfilling way.

### BODY OF THE LESSON

There are several methods that are used to excite the frenzy which we have styled "**sensationalism.**" We come now to the discussion of the outstanding ones.

#### SENSATIONAL EXPERIENCES

One may display sensationalism and excite it in a gathering by claiming a personal encounter with God. Whether admitted or not, the one giving the "testimony" is using it to give authority to the doctrine (faith) of which he is a member. He tells his listeners that the supernatural event actually happened. What proof do we have? We have only His Word. Is it not better to show a "thus saith the Lord" as authority and have the backing of God's Word rather than the mere word of men? In addition to that, one may relate a "testimony" as proof that his doctrinal

teaching is sound and another man across town will relate his experience as proof that his doctrinal teaching is sound and their doctrines be in conflict with each other. Whose experience shall we use as genuine? I heard of a “bumper sticker which said, “My vote cancels your vote.” I need one that says, “My experience cancels your experience.” because that’s what they all do.

The Bible is not silent on experiences. Proverbs 14:12 warns us that we may feel that a thing is right when it is wrong. There is no way to know whether a warm glow in the heart is the work of the Lord to assure us we are saved or the devil’s counterfeit. The Bible is the only safe guide.

In 1 Kings 13, we are familiar with the fact that the old lying prophet told the young prophet of God that an angel had spoken to him and used that as his authority. The Bible says, “but he lied.” Are we so naive as to believe that no one would ever claim a supernatural experience and lie about it? Jesus said that if we reject Him and His words the same will judge us (John 12:48). We will not be judged by supposed human experiences, but by the “words” of Jesus. To rest our soul upon such a sure foundation is reasonable. It is not legalism, it is faith (Rom. 10:17). While it may be exciting and spectacular to listen to honest and sincere people relate the supernatural experiences they think they have had, it is nothing but sensationalism. When a man gives his favorite “testimony” and is finished, I can logically and successfully negate all he has said by stating, “It is all a lie.” Is not my word as good as his? If I state it is all a lie, have I not availed myself of the same authority as he used, i.e., my word? If you take his word that it is all true, then why should you not take my word that it is all a lie?

### **SENSATIONAL DOCTRINES**

The Bible says Satan has a great appeal in 2 Corinthians 11:3. The same passage says the gospel is simple. Habakkuk 2:2 states that inspired men were to write so plain that one could read it and understand it while he is running. Isaiah said the way of salvation is so simple a “fool” can understand it (35:8). It seems that sectarians have learned a long time ago that complicated systems of theology have a great appeal to the masses. People will throw Christianity away for a shockingly complicated system of theological jargon. Please allow me to demonstrate.

Adventism is sensationalism. What I am going to say now I received in a five-hour conference with the Witnesses, who are of the adventist stripe. Here is their system relative to the kingdom: The system begins with Daniq1 4:25. The kingdom would be passed over for seven times. So God would establish the kingdom after seven times. Now we must determine how long "seven times" is. Revelation 12:6 stated that the woman was nourished 1,260 days which is 3½ times (v. 14). But, we want seven "times." By doubling 3½ we get our "seven times" and arrive at 2,520 days. One prophetic day equals one solar year so we have 2,520 years that God would pass over the kingdom and then establish it. We are told this is dated from the end of Israel in 606 B.C. October was the month. From October, 606 B.C. to A.D. 1914—allowing 1 year for A.D. 0 or B.C., we know not which it would be and neither do they; the theory's fruition is realized in the establishment of the kingdom in October 1914. It's sensational and has a great appeal. The only problem is that there isn't a word of truth in it. The basic assumption is erroneous. Daniel 4:25's kingdom is **Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon** and the Witnesses arbitrarily start with Israel. That puts a fly in the soup. I even had to help them work this thing out. They came out with October 1913. Does this look like a doctrine a fool can decipher? It takes a well taught Witness and then they have to have help.

In like manner, the doctrine of Dispensational Premillennialism is a "sensational" doctrine. It is a system of hope within itself. People believe it because of its tremendous appeal to sensationalism. It is not believed because its many phases coincide naturally with prophecy, but because it's clever and appeals to the one who loves this world. In fact, much of premillennialism's application of prophecy is forced and fantastic to say the least. One could not understand it sitting for weeks let alone running. Its many facets are matters of college courses and are anything but simple.

The dispensational premillennialist believe God has wound the earth up like a giant clock and that time is advancing toward the end in successive stages called "dispensations." That these stages are predicted in prophecy and that six of the seven stages are past. These stages are: (1) Innocence. From the creation to the fall. (2) Conscience. From the fall to the flood. (3) Human Government. From the flood to the promise to Abraham. (4) Promise. From the promise to Abraham to the giving of the law to Moses. (5) Law. From the giving of the law to Calvary. (6) Grace. The present dispensation. (7) Kingdom. The one yet to come.

We are told that the next event in order according to the prophetic clock is the “rapture.” Bumper stickers announce, “If the driver of this car disappears he is in the rapture.” “I’ll see you in the rapture.” They believe Jesus will come again and rapture His saints (take them into the heavens somewhere with Him) and during that time a great tribulation period will begin on the earth to last seven years. After this, Jesus will come with His saints and save the world from annihilation just in time. He will set up His kingdom in Jerusalem and rule a thousand years. Daniel 9:24-27 is supposed to give all this in detail. But we are told the entire thing was to be fulfilled in the first century, but because the Jews rejected Jesus, the fulfillment of the passage was “postponed” and the church established until the kingdom is allowed of the Jews, (1) There is no such things as “postponement” of a prophecy. If it didn’t happen when God said, it is false, Deuteronomy 18:22. (2) Daniel’s prophecy was completely fulfilled by A.D. 70, Matthew 24:15. (3) When Jesus comes again the world will end, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17. (4) Jesus will never set foot on this earth again.

Another sensational doctrine is that of the Moslems. Muhammad lived from A.D. 570 to 632 No one took him seriously outside of his immediate family when he told of his talk with “Allah”; It was after his death that people began to believe he really had communicated with Allah and received a divine commission. They believed he really had flown with Him to Hijara. Their Bible is the Koran and in our country they are divided into black and white Moslems. Galatians 1:6-9 defeats the entire system.

Roman Catholicism, is the most complicated system of religion in the world. It is so difficult, a book of “sacraments” is printed to explain it. The priests have “prayer books” to know what to say in certain situations. One must learn the Latin language to be a priest and then serve many years as an apprentice, Surely this is not what the Saviour had in mind when He wrote of the simplicity of the Faith!

### **SENSATIONAL ATMOSPHERES**

Another way to arouse the sensational appeal is by creating an atmosphere that appeals to the flesh. The way that our minds react to such atmospheres is nothing short of amazing.

The use of instrumental music in worship to God is a sensational appeal. There isn’t a musical instrument in the world that was not designed solely to entertain. There isn’t a passage in the Bible which

authorizes our entertaining each other in worship, or as an act of worship to God. I like live entertainment and get a great deal of enjoyment out of it, but it has no part in the worship services. John 4:24 tells us to worship in spirit (the right attitude) and in truth (the right acts). When men depart from that in the very least the flood gates are opened. I preached just ahead of the Pentecostals on the radio in Mississippi. One day I stayed around after my broadcast and sat in the control room with the announcer who was a Baptist. He ridiculed them for their circus atmosphere created by their multiple instruments, but could not see his own error in the use of one. The passage that permits one permits a hundred and the passage which forbids a hundred forbids one.

The use of special lightings is a sensational appeal. The Bible says there were "many lights" in the meeting place of the first century (Acts 20:8). The brethren wanted people to know they were worshipping. Dim lighting covers up things people don't want seen. I know of no reason for turning out the lights except to hide. What is it that is practiced in worship to God in the dark that cannot be done in the light? John 3-18-21 summarizes it rather well. Men abide in darkness because their deeds are evil. You check your Bible. It constantly contrasts God who is light, with the devil and his darkness (Gen. 1:1-3; John 1:1-5; John 8:12; 1 The. 5:5; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 6:16; Jam. 1:17; 1 John 1:5). With the devil there is darkness which indicates wickedness and ignorance, some spiritual and others actual (Mat. 25:30; Eph. 5:11; Luke 1:79; 1 Pet. 2:9). The atmosphere created by special or low lightings is identified best with the devil and not God.

Physical contact is another means of conveying sensationalism. In 1 Corinthians 7:1 Paul said for the men to keep their hands off the women. There is something to excite us in physical contact. God has put it there and blessed it in the marital relationship. When boys and girls are thrown together in a dimly lit room and hold hands, this sensation is excited and it ought to be severely criticized. My best advice to those who would live a more spiritual life is to keep your hands to yourselves.

When we view these methods objectively, we are constrained to admit that the same emotions they gender may be excited at a ball game. There is nothing "spiritual" about them for they all appeal to the flesh.

## **SENSATIONAL PERFORMANCES**

Let me again point out, so that there be no misunderstanding, that I am in favor of an evangelist being as persuasive and good as he can be. However, in view of the definition of our topic, we do not mean he should use sensationalism. In short, some preachers are fanatics. This hides the simple gospel behind a performance which will be remembered far more than the message. I believe I can demonstrate what I am talking about.

Billy Graham, Oral Roberts and some few others are sensationalists. Many, if not most, of my brethren are better speakers than they are. What is the difference and why do people want to hear them instead of my brethren? It is because of their showmanship which we have styled "sensationalism." They hit the "sawdust trail" in Elmer Gantry style and when they are through the people who listen to them would have received more nourishment if they had eaten the saw dust.

One preacher was frantically waving his hands as he spoke on a sensational topic while a little girl sat stunned and bewildered. The pulpit was caged in and there seemed to be no way to descend its lofty height. After a while the little girl leaned over and said to her mother, "what will we do if he gets out?" That's sensationalism.

In Memphis, about 1969, the local Presbyterian Church, and I can take you to the location, advertised in the local paper that on a given Sunday they would have a "hot pants" service. They encouraged all young ladies to come and wear hot pants and advertised the whole deal with a picture of the "pastor" doing a rock dance in the aisle with a lady (?) in hot pants. And we wonder why we can't keep up with the attendance of the Protestants. That's sensationalism.

One preacher decided to be sensational and preach on the judgment initiated by the final trumpet. He engaged the services of a trumpet player and hid him behind the curtain of the baptism. He told him to blast away with the trumpet just as he came to the final point in his lesson. You can imagine the effects at that point of the lesson. It would, indeed, have awoken a lot of sleeping saints. If he played the piece most appropriate at that point of the sermon he might have played taps. That's sensationalism.

## **CONCLUSION**

Brethren, we simply do not need sensationalism in the Lord's Church today. When those who are thusly converted experience the

fading away of the sensation, they will fall away like the seed which fell on stony ground (Luke 8). We need to preach the pure and simple gospel of Christ and ground people in the faith. When we do that, we build for the future and lay up treasures in heaven.

# GOD HAS SPOKEN

*Archie W. Luper*

## INTRODUCTION

It was David who labored to express his trust, hope, faith, and confidence in God by stating in Psalms 62 beginning with verse 5 when he said,

My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him. He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved. In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God. Trust in him at all times; *ye* people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah..

The Bible continues by saying in verse 11—“God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God.”

Now the question. What were the two things David had heard? First, that God is the origin of power, and secondly, He is the fountain of mercy.

God has spoken again, in Matthew 17:5, when He said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

Then again God has spoken through the Apostle John in all of us in Rev. 2:10, when He has said “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

## BE THOU FAITHFUL

1. Converted
  - a. Matthew 18:3
  - b. Ecclesea (Adlib)
2. Totally Committed
  - a. Isaiah 30:18-31
  - b. Jeremiah 6:16
  - c. 2 Corinthians 8:5
3. Bible-believing People
  - a. Hosea 4:1-2 (v. 2)
  - b. 2 Timothy 2:15
  - c. Isaiah 11:9
4. Learn To Pray
  - a. James 5:16

- b. 1 Thessalonians 5:17
  - c. Mark 11:24
  - d. New Pews
  - e. AAA
5. Time
- a. Psalms 90:12
  - b. Hosea 10:12
  - c. Romans 13:11
  - d. Colossians 4:5
6. Zealous People
- a. Adlib (Zeal)
  - b. Romans 10:1-3
  - c. Titus 2:14
7. Faithful Stewards
- a. 2 Corinthians 9:7
  - b. Malachi 3:8-10
  - c. Matthew 6:33
  - d. Ecclesiastes 5:10-11
  - e. Henry Van Dyke
8. Purity Of Life
- a. Adlib
  - b. 1 John 3:3
  - c. Keeper of the Springs
9. Sharing Christ
- a. Adlib
  - b. Banners
  - c. Important Statement
10. Urgency of the Message—(Jesus)
- a. God has spoken. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).
  - b. It was Cline Paden who said, “If God’s people can be motivated to not only have the will to do but also the will to act—the Gospel will be preached to every creature—in every nation—in this decade.”
  - c. It was the apostle Paul who said in 2 Corinthians 8:11, “Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance.”
  - d. It was Jesus who said in Mark 16:15 **“Go!”** Not 1976—Not next year—Not next month—Not next week—But—**Today**—Today

is the accepted time—Today is the Day of Salvation—For millions of souls without Christ (2 Cor. 6:2).

# THE ESSENCE OF TIME

*Frankie Luper*

Sister Frankie Luper's lessons on "The Essence Of Time" was published in 1975 by Roberts and Son, Birmingham, Alabama. If you so desire, you may secure a copy of her material by writing to her at the following address:

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# GREAT CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE: PAUL

*Ray Peters*

It is a distinct privilege to be on this lectureship. I appreciate the invitation to be a part of this program. The Bellview congregation is in my estimation one of the great congregations in the brotherhood with a great leadership and I commend them in having this lectureship and the director of the fine preacher training school conducted here, Bill Cline. As I stand here this morning, I feel like a thorn between two roses. Having followed Franklin Camp, whom I consider a great Bible scholar, Christian, and friend for some ten years or more. Then to precede his nephew, Winfred Clark, who likewise is a great student of God's Word and even though I have not known him as long as brother Camp, I have grown to love and appreciate him for his works sake.

It thrills me deeply to be assigned the subject of "Paul," whom I consider to be one of the great characters of the Bible. He is a personage that should be rightly discussed and tribute paid to in a very high and noble way. Truly, he was a great Gospel preacher. Preachers, and rightly should if they don't, model themselves after him; he is one of the most quoted writers of the Bible; he is loved and respected by all, and God chose him to have more epistles in the New Testament than any other writer, 14. In our discussion it will be our purpose to explore the elements that made Paul the great Gospel preacher he was, and though dead, "yet he speaketh."

## **PAUL'S HOME LIFE**

Paul, who before his conversion, was called Saul. Not much is known of his parents other than the fact that he came from a home that was of the sect of the Pharisees (Acts 26:5; Phi. 3:4-5). The Pharisees were known as the "straitest" or "strictest" sects. That is they were most exacting in their formalism. From this, we deduce that Paul was nurtured in the Old Testament stories, introduced to all of the great characters of the Old Testament such as Saul, from whom he may have

been named, Abraham, Moses, etc.; the fact of angels and prophetic visions were literally true, and no doubt at an early time in his life, while home, he would hear debates and discussions between those of the Pharisees and the liberal sect, the Sadducees. This attitude in the home went a long way in shaping Paul's character and love for the truth and his zeal for it. As he would later pen, through inspiration, to the young preacher Timothy, "that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15), or as he made reference to Timothy's mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, in 2 Timothy 1:5, Paul no doubt could reflect on his own home life. It is very important that we have homes that love the truth and who want it to be observed "strictly" and preached "strictly," because it will be from these homes that we will get young men who will stand for the truth "regardless of the cost" as the apostle Paul did. Although we don't know much about Paul's mother or father, we can be assured that they revered God's Word and those who taught and preached it in the synagogues and they did not have, "boiled doctor of the law" one night for a meal and "fried priest" the next night! Truly, Paul's home life was very vital in molding him into the kind of individual God would choose to be an "apostle to the Gentiles" and one of the greatest preachers the world has ever known.

### THE EDUCATIONAL TRAINING OF PAUL

Part of his education, although not formal, was in the home, or if he went to school, it probably wasn't a Greek school, but probably some room adjacent to the synagogue (Conybeare and Howson 41). Paul may have attended school in Jerusalem between the ages of ten and thirteen, because as the Jews would say,

at five years of age, let the children begin the scriptures; at ten the Mishna, (the code of Jewish laws arranged about the year A.D. 200 or 220 at Tiberias in Palestine, by R. Jehudah, surnamed Hakkadosh); at thirteen, let them be subjects of the law (Conybeare and Howson 41).

Paul is sent to Jerusalem to attend school. He attended the school of Hillel, one of the two PharaSaical schools. The other was the school of Shaminai. The main difference was that of jurisprudence and discipline not of dogma (Cyclopedia 257). Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel, (Acts 22:3) and was thoroughly entrenched in the teaching of the Old Testament and Greek Bible, almost knowing them by heart (Schaff 268). Gamaliel was one of the most famous Rabbis, according to the Talmud, and is one of seven to have the title Rabban given to them. Rabbah is equivalent to "Rabboni" as used by Mary Magdalene for

Jesus. The school of Hillel was very intense and memory work and oral discussion were the procedures used. The student was allowed to enter into a discussion with the instructor and question him quite vigorously. Paul was an exceptional student and as a youth he had risen to a place of eminence. It has been suggested if he had remained a Jew, that he would have become a great Rabbi, greater than Hillel and Gamaliel, as he had surpassed them in “original genius and fertility of thought (Schaff 288). It has been supposed that the teaching and example of Gamaliel had a threefold effect on the great apostle Paul: 1.) Candor and honesty of judgment; 2.) a willingness to study and make use of Greek authors, and 3.) a keen and watchful enthusiasm for the Jewish law. The apostle from Tarsus in Cilicia was a scholar in the truest sense of the Word, but he never displayed his learning, considering it of no account as compared with the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things” (Phi. 3:8-10; 1 Cor. 2:1-2).

### **THE ZEAL AND ENTHUSIASM OF PAUL**

One of the important elements that went into the greatness of Paul was his zeal. While a Pharisee, he was of the good kind who sought after the truth and were honest, not of the hypercritical type, he was very fanatic because of his intense zeal for his religion. With his Pharasaic education he regarded Jesus of Nazareth, like his teachers, as a false Messiah, a rebel, a blasphemmer, who was justly condemned to die. He was very enthusiastic to seek out and arrest and put to death the followers of Jesus. He took a leading part in the stoning of Stephen and delighted in his death (Acts 7:58-8:1). The Lord no doubt saw in Paul the characteristics, upon being converted, that would make a tremendous worker for His cause. After Paul was converted, he went from the persecutor to being the persecuted. The reason for this was the fact that he showed the same zeal and enthusiasm, if not more, for the cause of Christ as he did under Judaism. He channeled his zeal in a different direction. This can be equally true of those who are zealous for denominational error or who enthusiastically espouse some cause, once they see the truth and obey it, Paul no doubt remembered his persecution of the church and the remembrance of it kept him humble and intensified his zeal and devotion, (1 Tim. 1:13; 1 Cor. 15:9-10; Eph. 3:8). We will look further at Paul’s zeal and devotion as we consider: Paul’s Life As A Preacher.

### PAUL'S LIFE AS A GOSPEL PREACHER

Not much will be said about the conversion of Paul, in order that we may spend more time on the topic of his life as a preacher. His conversion, contrary to the faith only espousers, was in full compliance with the teachings of God's Word and which he later set forth in his writings (Rom. 6:3; Acts 22:16). W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson in their book, *The Life And Epistles of St. Paul*, place Paul's conversion around the year A.D. 41, "All that we can say with certainty is that St. Paul was converted more than three years before the year 44" (93). Philip Schaff places it about A.D. 37 (322). Immediately after he obeyed the Gospel, he went into Arabia. What he did in Arabia while there is left open to speculation, in which we will not indulge. How long did he stay in Arabia? Again, this is not certain. Some have suggested it was only for a short period of time (McGarvey and Pendleton 254). Paul returns to Damascus and stays there three years and then he went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, his home region (cf., Gal. 1:17-24). Paul's point in discussing this in the book of Galatians was to assure the Galatians that he was a "full-fledged" apostle and for them not to listen to the Judaizing teachers who were trying to undermine him and his teachings.

Well, we get a glimpse already of the validity of the statement that, "his whole public career was a continuous warfare" (Schaff 328-329). This sums up Paul's life as a Gospel preacher and he stated, "I have fought a good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7). This great man of God was a "Four-barrel" preacher. You hear of preachers being referred to as, "Triple-threats," "double-barrel" in their talents. Well, Paul was fourfold in his talents: A missionary, teacher, preacher, and debater.

Shortly after being converted, Paul was busy about the Lord's business of "spreading the Gospel." In the year A.D. 45 to 50 he conducted the first missionary journey with Barnabas and Mark. In this first journey we can see the greatness and dedication of Paul. The conversion of Sergius Paulus at Paphos and the rebuke of the Jewish sorcerer, Elymas; show Paul's tenderness for a soul and at the same time his firmness against those that would oppose its workings. Further on this trip we see Mark "turn back"; the success of the Gospel in Pisidia. If time and space permitted a discussion of the terrain of Pisidia and the treachery of the topography would make us further appreciate Paul's efforts in this area (Conybeare and Howson 131-134). This journey is fully discussed in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> chapters of Acts. In the

13<sup>th</sup> chapter there is the first sermon recorded of the apostle Paul, as he addressed the people in Antioch of Pisidia. He first went to the Jews (Rom. 1:16) in the synagogue. One characteristic of Paul's preaching was the fact it was **filled with scripture!** Another aspect of his delivery was that it was "bold" (Acts 13:46). Paul asked for the prayers of the brethren in Ephesus that he might be bold in his speech (Eph. 6:19). He stated of himself that he was bold: 1 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 10:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:21. His dedication is seen in the fact that though he was stoned and left for dead he continued at a great pace (Acts 14:19).

The council or conference came before the second missionary trip, but we will give special attention to that later. A.D. 51-54 were the years for the second trip. He took the Gospel into Asia Minor and Greece. This trip was highlighted by the call to Troas. Although he and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi they were not afraid but could sing hymns (Acts 16:25). During this trip he wrote the two epistles to the Thessalonians, which are among the earliest writings in the New Testament. In A.D. 54 he used Ephesus as his center to work from for three years (Acts 20:31). He revisited the congregations in Macedonia and Achaia and then spent three more months in Corinth. He wrote Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans during this time.

In A.D. 58 he returned to Jerusalem for the fifth and last time. There, on Pentecost, some fanatical Jews who hated him charged him with profaning the Temple because he had taken Trophimus, an uncircumcised, into the Temple. This marked the beginning of Paul's defense and trials.

Let us look at **Paul the debater**. Because of Paul's intense love for the Lord and the Truth when there were any efforts to pervert, add to, or subtract from its precepts, he was at the forefront of the battle. One such time was when the Judaizers tried to enforce, circumcision and keeping of the Law of Moses as obligatory to salvation. In Acts 15 we find that, "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them" (v. 2), referring to the false teachers. Here we find Paul as representative of the First Century church as being militant and aggressive against any inroads and attacks against truth. It is not that Paul, or any other preacher, loves an argument or fuss, but because of a sincere dedication to "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Paul was not willing to give an inch to the false doctrine of any kind (Gal. 2:3-5). A faith not worth

fighting for is not worth having!! Paul could not stand hypocrisy and he withstood Peter to the face because, “they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:11-14). Oh, how we need more preachers after the mold of the apostle Paul! When a person claims to be a Gospel preacher he naturally climbs into the polemic arena. A preacher is to seek truth, and consider both sides of an issue, and that is the meaning of the word “debate” and the meaning of the word “disputation” used in Acts 15:2, therefore, every preacher is a debater in one sense of the word. One ingredient that Paul had an abundance of and every preacher must have, is courage. His writings reflect what he showed in his life, and that is the “backbone” to stand up for the truth.

### CONCLUSION

Whatever happened to Paul? Tradition has it that he was acquitted of the charge by the Sanhedrin, and that he probably traveled to Spain and was imprisoned in Rome the second time and sentenced to death. It is also suggested that because he was a Roman citizen, he was not crucified, like Peter, but put to death by the sword (Schaff 328-329). Nevertheless, a great soldier left this earth when Paul died. He faced death just as he faced life, with courage and faith in God (2 Tim. 4:6-8; 2 Tim. 1:12). In his writings he left us the charge which was his and which he kept with all of his being, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine...But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:2, 5).

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# “THE SEVEN PARABLES OF MATTHEW 13”

*Ira Y. Rice, Jr.*

We all know, of course, that the purpose of parables is to lay a familiar illustration alongside something more obscure in order to make the obscure more understandable.

Each of the seven parables of Matthew 13 does this in its own right without in any wise being dependent upon the other parables either before or after.

On the other hand, as an older preacher pointed out to me nigh on to 40 years ago, the peculiar arrangement of the seven parables in this chapter is such that a sequential unfolding of things pertaining to “the kingdom of God” would seem to be apparent. I say this with no thought whatever of encouraging brethren to “speculate.” We have too much speculation going on for the health of sound doctrine even as it is. Nevertheless, as something which I think may prove fascinating to most students of the Scriptures, I now direct your attention to the extraordinary arrangement as to the **order** of these seven parables.

## PARABLE NO. 1

In the **first** parable, please notice, “Behold, a sower went forth to sow” (v. 3). Normally, when we teach the parable of the sower, we take it up in its parts, showing the different kinds of hearts into which God’s Word can fall—the **wayside** heart, the **stony** heart, the **thorny** heart, and the **honest and good** heart—concluding that the fourth and last type of heart is the only type that can bring forth fruit—“some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold” And that is a good lesson—a marvelous lesson—to be sure” (v. 8).

But take a look at what the disciples asked after Jesus had spoken this first parable upon this occasion. They said unto Him, “Why speakest thou unto them in parables?” Note Jesus’ answer: “Because it is given unto you to know the **mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**” (v. 11). I conclude, therefore, that in setting forth these parables, Jesus

was intentionally unfolding "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" for those who could understand what He was saying.

Think with me for a moment. When you think of a sower going forth to sow, what do you normally think of? Is it not the beginning of something? Of course. Well, in addition to the **specifics** of the parable itself, let us now think of the parable in its overall relationship to "the kingdom of God" and the other six parables that are to follow. Let us think of this **first** parable in the light of the **beginning of the kingdom of God**.

### PARABLE NO. 2

Which leads us now to the **second** parable. Starting with verse 24, Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a man who had sowed "good seed in his field" (re: Parable No. 1), but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed "tares among the wheat," and went his way.

As we think of the **first** parable in connection with the beginning of the kingdom of God on Pentecost (Acts 2), what is there in the overall history of the kingdom to which this **second** parable could refer? Would it not be to the gradual apostasy of the church which set in soon after the beginning of the church?

Think, for instance, of the apostle Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-38. Note particularly what he said in verses 29 through 31: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking **perverse** things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Again, consider his teaching to the Thessalonians as recorded in 2 Thessalonians 2. In verse 3, he puts them on their guard against any man **deceiving** them, against "a falling away." He warns them against "that man of sin...the son of perdition" who would oppose God and exalt himself. Then, in verses 9 through 12, he describes how "that Wicked" would exert "all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Those familiar with church history easily can see how this parable fits in with the process of apostasy, which led brethren and churches into Roman Catholicism by the 4th century A.D.

### PARABLE NO. 3

And speaking of this apostate church—the Roman Catholic Church—that came out of the corrupting of the churches of Christ through false teaching and practice during the first 300 years of Christianity, think how huge it grew the farther and farther it got away from the truth. Does this remind you of the third parable concerning the “when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree” (v. 32)?

### PARABLE NO. 4

But even though, that church indeed became great, as men count greatness, this does not mean that it remained faithful to the truth. Indeed not. The larger it grew the more corrupt it became. So much so, in fact, that by the time of the naming of the first Pope, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the so-called “Dark Ages” had set in, not to be relieved, religiously speaking, until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, more than 1,200 years later.

In this connection, think of Jesus’ **fourth** parable in this chapter—the kingdom of heaven being likened unto “leaven” which a woman took and “hid in three measures of meal” (v. 33). If the “leaven” here refers to “the truth of the gospel.” surely it requires no stretch of the imagination to think of it as being “hidden” during all those 1,200—plus years that the truth of the gospel remained untaught upon the earth.

### PARABLE NO. 5

Dropping on down now to verse 44, we come to Jesus’ **fifth** parable upon this occasion. In this parable He likens the kingdom of heaven to “treasure hid in a field,” the which when a man had found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and “sellet all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

The mind leaps immediately to the story of Martin Luther, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, studying in the library at Erfurt, Germany, finding at least 95 discrepancies between what **the Bible** teaches and what the apostate **Roman Catholic Church** had been led to teach by **his day**. We see him finally writing out these discrepancies into the historical “95 Theses” which he nailed to the door of the Catholic Church at Wittenburg, Germany, challenging the entire Roman Catholic world to debate.

Thereafter, we see him being summoned by the Pope to come to the Vatican, at Rome, to give an account of himself. We see him actually **going** to Rome, where he remembered what the apostle Paul had said about "the just" living "by faith." Shouting his defiance at the Pope, he sold all he had and bought the field. Angrily retracing his steps to Germany, he vowed to make the German plow-boy know more about the Bible than the Pope at Rome.

### PARABLE NO. 6

But although Martin Luther, in ushering the so-called **Protestant Reformation** into full bloom, made good his boast to do just that, so blinded was he himself by the notion that justification was by "faith only" that the connection of **obedience to the gospel** and man's **salvation** escaped his understanding until he died.

It was not until a Methodist preacher named James O'Kelly, in the Carolinas, right here in the United States, finally stumbled onto this truth about 1793 that the **Restoration Movement** (as distinguished from Luther's Reformation Movement) finally got underway. It was like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found "one pearl of great price," went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (See Jesus' **sixth** parable, verses 45 and 46.)

After O'Kelly, history records how Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, the Campbells (both Thomas and Alexander), Tolbert Fanning, P. S. Fall and countless others gave up all that they had, religiously speaking, and "bought" that same "pearl of great price." So much so, in fact, that ever since 1793? we have had an enormous effort both in this country and around the world to **restore** Christianity to its **original faith and practice** as it was when originally revealed to and through the apostles in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

### PARABLE NO. 7

Which leads us, finally, to Jesus' **seventh** (and last) parable upon the occasion covered by Chapter 13. In verse 47, He likens the kingdom of heaven "unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

We are left in absolutely no doubt as to the exact meaning of this seventh parable. Jesus went on to explain that it referred to "the end of the world." He said that at that time the angels should come forth and

sever the wicked from among the just, and “shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (v. 50).

If the application that I have made in this lesson is even close to what Jesus was teaching his disciples by the sequence of these seven parables, it would follow that we now are living in the time of the **restoration**—the “pearl of great price”—just before the time of “the net”—the end of the world and the judgment He so vividly described.

Whether **we** understand it or not, at least His immediate disciples did so at the time. Jesus said unto them, “Have ye understood all these things?” (v. 51). They said unto Him, “Yea, Lord.” Then he said unto them, “Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old” (v. 52).

Isn't that beautiful?

# TEACHING ON THE MISSION FIELD

*Vada Rice*

A definite part of getting back to the Bible is placing an emphasis on teaching the gospel in places where it is weak or unknown. This is a command of Jesus to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” We are given an example of this in the book of Acts which shows that Christians “went everywhere preaching the word.”

In 1955, when Ira and I arrived in Singapore with our four small children (ages 2 to 6 years), there was no church in that part of South-east Asia. Therefore, we had to start from “scratch” and it was a most challenging situation. We faced many problems that were new to us, even though we had lived and worked in areas that many would consider “mission fields” in the United States.

In thinking over the different phases of teaching in which I personally was involved, I realize that in each area the situation would be different in some, or perhaps many respects. However, I trust that these experiences and observations will be of interest and help to others who may be planning to do mission work, and to those who support the sending of the gospel.

## **I. Previous Preparation**

While preparing to go to Singapore, we were able to talk with two college students who were in the United States from that city. We learned that we could do much of our teaching in English, since it was, at that time, a British colony with English widely spoken among the educated and business people. We read any information we could find on the background, history and culture of Singapore. I collected a variety of teaching materials, including flannelgraph, Bible class workbooks, handwork pattern books and children’s Bible story books. These were very helpful and I used them often in teaching children’s classes.

Although I had received a very good background in Bible at Freed-Hardeman College and had some experience in teaching children’s classes, I had never taken any education courses, or had the opportunity to attend teacher’s training classes. Such training would have helped me

greatly, and I strongly recommend that women take advantage of these opportunities, whether planning to teach at home, or in a mission field in the United States or foreign country. Always bear in mind, that while it is good to know the ideal teaching situation, it may not always be possible to achieve it, especially in the beginning of a new work. However, it can be a goal to work toward. The most important thing is to have the desire to teach and the willingness to study and improve. God has promised to be with us and bless our labors if we are willing to do our part.

## **II. Beginning on a Mission Field**

Since we had four children of our own, I had a ready-made Bible class when we arrived in Singapore. Actually, the teaching of one's own children is a most important part of a family on a mission field. As we began meetings in our home and other children started to come, I found that I had to be very flexible in the classes. Many times, the visiting children had little or no background in the Bible, and it was necessary to go back to the very fundamental facts of God, Jesus and the Bible. It was a challenge to try to keep the classes interesting for a wide range of ages and backgrounds. This was solved in part by letting our children tell some of the Bible stories or put the flannelgraph figures on the board. Also they studied Bible workbooks suitable for their ages and we had Bible story sessions during the week.

## **III. The Church Begins to Grow**

As people were converted and the congregation increased, we had too many children for one class, and divided into as many age groups as we had space and teachers available. We were living in an old house that had a large living room where the services were held. Before the church was able to get its own building, we were having classes on the front porch, the back patio, the kitchen and one of the bedrooms. Definitely, these were not ideal teaching conditions and many times it was very frustrating, but with the help of some portable blackboards and folding chairs, we made the best of it. It was too expensive to order class workbooks from America, besides which the illustrations were often not suitable for Asian children. For instance, much of our teaching material is planned around the seasons. Since Singapore had a tropical climate, snow-men and falling leaves had little meaning for them.

During this time, we found the mimeograph to be very useful. I got a lot of experience in tracing illustrations onto stencils, and was very

thankful for the pictures that had simple definite outlines that were easy to duplicate. We could also add Chinese subtitles to this material to be used in teaching classes for children who spoke only Chinese.

#### **IV. Moving into a Church Building**

After meeting in our home for 3-2 years, the church acquired an old house which was renovated into a “proper” church building.

This was a very exciting time. No one can really appreciate a good meeting place and class rooms until they have had to “makeshift” for several years. It was wonderful to have tables and chairs suitable for each age, with permanent blackboards, bulletin boards and storage space for supplies. Most of the furniture had to be made to order, and I was involved in much of the planning for the classrooms.

Even before moving into the church building, we held teacher training classes. They included the Basic Bible Course, designed to give teachers a basic knowledge of the Bible as well as teaching methods. I believe this is one of the most important parts of establishing a church that will be able to grow after the missionary leaves. I will be bringing out more concerning the teacher’s training course during the next two lessons.

#### **V. Other Areas of Teaching**

Some other phases of teaching included ladies’ Bible classes, personal visitation, “cottage” meetings (they’re called “bungalows” in Singapore) and teaching by Bible correspondence courses. I could also include speaking to ladies’ classes during lectureships and mission forums after returning to America, since this is a new experience for most of us. I believe that such ladies’ classes are a valuable part of informing and encouraging Christian women and I commend you for including them in this meeting.

Last year (1975), it was our privilege to return to Singapore and see some of the results which God has given to the seed of the kingdom which had been planted 20 years ago and watered through the years by faithful Christian workers. We saw nine congregations with capable and enthusiastic preachers, song leaders, personal workers and Bible teachers. What a joy it has been to be a part of this mission work. It brings to my mind the scripture in 3 John 4, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

# TRAINING TEACHERS

*Vada Rice*

Working in a foreign mission field made us especially aware of the importance of training teachers who could help in the work while we were there, as well as carry on the teaching program after we left. Of course, one of the keys to success in any congregation is having dedicated, capable teachers in the Bible classes. Not only is it impossible for the preacher and his wife to do all the teaching, but each member needs to realize his responsibility to be a part of the teaching program,

A teacher training course is a vital factor in helping develop good teachers. A trained teacher is not only more effective, but also more enthusiastic and willing to accept this responsibility. I have seen many women who felt they simply did not have the ability to be good Bible teachers, but with some training in educational principles, teaching methods and lesson planning, they were delighted to discover how much they enjoyed teaching.

Although we had conducted some teacher training classes while in Singapore the first time, I had felt very inadequate as far as my part was concerned. Therefore, when we returned to the United States in 1964, and I had an opportunity to attend David Lipscomb College to finish my degree, I decided to major in religious education so that I could be better prepared to help train teachers when we returned.

Since that time, I have been working on a series of lessons that would make a well-rounded teachers training course, especially designed for use in mission areas and small congregations. Following are some of the subjects and main points in these lessons. With each lesson, an assignment or project is given for the next session, and during the course each teacher is asked to prepare and present a lesson complete with lesson plan, aims, songs, visual aids and handwork.

## **I. The Importance of Teaching and its Rewards**

- A. Teaching is the means given by which people come to Jesus (John 6:45).

- B. Jesus commanded His disciples to go into all the world teaching, baptizing and teaching some more (Mat. 28:18-20).
- C. As teachers, we are “laborers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:9-10).
- D. In the Old Testament, the importance of teaching is emphasized (Deu. 4:9).
- E. In the New Testament, Jesus said of His commandments, “whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 5:19).
- F. The teacher usually learns the most in any class. Teaching motivates one to study, and gives a definite purpose to study.
- G. Bible classes are an important way to teach children to be Christians. Lessons are taught at the child’s level of understanding. The teacher can give the child individual attention and help him learn by doing projects according to his ability.
- H. Jesus is our example and the ideal teacher. He had a vision of the needs of the whole world and an individual interest in each soul. He knew the Scriptures and used the methods most effective for each situation.

## II. The Qualities of a Good Teacher

- A. A teacher must be a genuine Christian. Teaching techniques and knowledge of content are of no value unless the life of the teacher is an example of that which she would teach.
- B. A teacher should learn the four “Knows” of teaching—Know yourself, know your student, know your lesson, know teaching methods.
- C. A good teacher should know herself, be willing to analyze her strengths and weaknesses, and strive to improve on her shortcomings. One good plan for self-improvement is to use a “Checking Myself as a Teacher” method.
- D. Make a list of the qualities of a good teacher such as:
  - 1. Enthusiastic Christian.
  - 2. Trust God for rewards.
  - 3. Love souls of children.
  - 4. Pray for pupils and for self.
  - 5. On time (early is better).
  - 6. Begin lesson preparation early.
  - 7. Keep pupil information notebook.
  - 8. Not easily discouraged.

9. Follow systematic plan of Bible study.

10. Definite plan to improve teaching.

Each teacher can grade herself on a scale of 1 to 5, being as honest and objective as possible. Then she should choose one of her weakest points, and concentrate on improving on that point for a definite period of time, say, one month. At the end of that time, she can re-evaluate her progress, and either go on to another point or continue with that one. Remember that although there may be many things about our teaching situation that we cannot change or control, we can improve the most important element in any class—the teacher.

### III. Know Your Student

- A. The better we know our students, the better opportunity we have to understand them, and get across the lessons we want them to learn. There are many ways to get to know our students:
- B. Keep a student notebook with a picture of each student and information concerning his family, school, hobbies and other things of interest. Look over this notebook while preparing your lesson to remind you of the specific needs of each student.
- C. Get to know your students outside of class by visiting them at home, inviting them to your home or planning activities together.
- D. Study the characteristics of each age group, realizing that although there are general characteristics for each age, there will be exceptions in each group.
- E. Be aware of the things which can gain the attention of the students, as well as the things that distract them. The “4 Ds” that are the enemies of attention are discomfort, disturbance, distraction and disinterest.
  - 1. Discomfort can be caused by chairs and tables that are too high, temperature of the room too hot, cold or stuffy, bad lighting or lack of storage space for wraps or materials.
  - 2. Disturbance can be caused by latecomers, students misbehaving, persons collecting records or parents or teachers talking to each other.
  - 3. Distraction can be caused by a disordered room, barking dogs or sirens, teachers’ mannerisms or clothes, teaching

- materials not well organized or not being able to see pictures that are too high.
4. Disinterest is primarily the responsibility of the teacher. It is up to her to make the class interesting and improve herself and her techniques. The best solution to gaining attention and holding it is thorough preparation on the part of the teacher.
- F. Some specific ways to keep the attention of the students are:
1. Use gestures in telling stories and vary pitch of voice.
  2. Use ear and eye appeal (audio-visuals).
  3. Relate lesson to interests and needs of students.
  4. Enthusiasm on the part of the teacher.
  5. Gear lesson to attention span of the student.
  6. Call students by name, ask questions and encourage participation.

#### IV. **Know Your Lesson**

- A. One study that I read says that the average teacher spends less than an hour a week in preparing her lesson for Sunday, and that usually on Saturday night. That is hard to believe, but a good teacher must be willing to spend the necessary time in preparing the lesson, as well as learning the ingredients that go into a thorough preparation. Five steps to successful teaching are: Study the lesson, plan the lesson, gather the materials, choose the methods and plan the procedure.
1. In studying the lesson:
    - a. Start early in preparation and keep a file of materials.
    - b. Pray for wisdom, and for the students
    - c. Study from the Bible
    - d. Study from the workbook (if you are using one).
    - e. Study from reference books (such, as concordance, dictionary, maps).
  2. In planning the lesson; keep in mind:
    - a. The problems of your age group and individual students.
    - b. The over-all aim of the lesson (including aims of knowledge, attitude and action).
  3. Some of the materials to be gathered may include pictures, flannelgraph, newspaper clippings or filmstrips.

4. Some methods suitable for different age groups include story-telling, object lessons, projects, pictures or lectures.
5. In planning the procedure, use a Lesson Plan Sheet. Decide how to open the class, how to teach the main part of the lesson, how to get class participation, what assignments are to be given, and how to close the session. This helps to accomplish the aims you are striving for in the short time available. The Lesson Plan Sheet is especially good for the new teacher in giving her confidence in how to conduct the class. Many times the class may not proceed exactly according to the plan, but it is a very good guide in helping the teacher.
6. Since language is the “channel of communication” in teaching, use language that can be understood by the student. Explain the meaning of any words or illustrations that may not be familiar. Use simple words and short sentences. Speak plainly and loudly enough to be understood. Illustrate the lesson with pictures or models.
7. The student should be able to tell the lesson in his own words. Encourage him to ask questions, draw pictures or retell the story to see if he has understood the lesson. You may be surprised at some of the answers you get, but it gives you a chance to clear up any misconceptions or lack of understanding on the part of the student.

## V. Know Teaching Methods

- A. Method means more than asking “what visual aid shall I use in next week’s lesson?” The concerned teacher considers the entire lesson presentation and asks, “how can I best communicate these truths to each student in my class?”
  1. Methods can “be listed in the following categories:
    - a. Telling (explanations, story telling).
    - b. Listening (records, tapes, reports).
    - c. Showing (non-protected and projected visual aids).
    - d. Sharing (discussion, questions and answers, assignments).
    - e. Doing (dramatizing, problem solving by role-playing, memorization, reading, writing).

2. It would be impossible and impractical to include all of these teaching methods in one lesson. Here is a simple formula. In each lesson provide something to **see**, something to **do**, and something to **surprise**.
  - a. “Something to see” includes maps, charts, graphs, pictures, flannelgraph, chalkboard, films, filmstrips, slides, models, puppets, objects, (choose the visual aid for each lesson that best communicates what you want students to learn.).
  - b. “Something to do” includes having students read from God’s Word, write answers and work projects given in their class books, look up word meanings in Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, act out Bible stories, divide into teams for Bible drills and quizzes, answer questions orally, (again, choose one or two of these activities.).
  - c. “Something to surprise” means a slight change of routine in the classroom each week. Begin occasionally with a quiz. Rearrange the room. Cover a visual aid until time for its use. Wrap the questions to review the lesson. Provide the unexpected.
  - d. When the best methods are used, the threefold aim (knowing, feeling, doing) of each lesson will be achieved, Methods should be chosen according to the effectiveness with each age group.
    - (1) Nursery class—storytelling, pictures, peep-box, Bible in hand (use the Bible to read from, rather than reciting the scripture or verse from memory or reading from a lesson workbook. This applies to all ages, even small children. It helps the student to recognize, to respect and believe God’s Word.).
    - (2) Pre-school class—flannelgraph, story-telling, objects.
    - (3) Primary—blackboard, filmstrips, flannelgraph, reading.
    - (4) Juniors—Audio-visuals, map and globe, reading, discussions

- (5) High School—Reading, projects, assignments, charts, blackboard.
- (6) Adults—lecture, maps, reading, blackboard, film- strip, object.

Methods are not an end in themselves, merely an aid to communicate the lessons the teacher wishes to get across from God's Word. Jesus used many methods in teaching, including parables, thought-provoking questions, discussions, demonstrations, stories, objects, picturesque language. He took the familiar things of common life, bird and beast, grain and weed and flower, salt and seed and candle and used them to teach spiritual truths.

Therefore, as teachers, Jesus is our example—in world vision, in knowledge of his learners, in mastery of the subject, in his aims, his methods, his motivation and most of all by his life and death. He not only was a teacher himself, but he trained others to teach. "And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

# PAUL'S SERMON AT ATHENS

*Ernest S. Underwood*

TEXT: Acts 17:22-31

SUBJECT: Chapters

PROPOSITION: To set forth the various lessons found in chapter 17 of the Book of Acts, noting especially the emphasis that God can be known, and because man is able to know God, he is responsible to Him.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage the hearer to study that he might know the God of the Scriptures, and to apply the knowledge gained.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Briefly outline chapter 17 of Acts.
  - a. Paul and Silas come to Thessalonica and “reason with them from the scriptures.”
  - b. Being shamefully treated by some at Thessalonica they go on to Berea.
  - c. The noble Bereans were willing to “search the scriptures” in order to know the truth.
  - d. Paul leaves Timothy and Silas at Berea and travels to Athens alone.
  - e. While in Athens he is surrounded by evidence of idolatry.
  - f. He “reasons” with Jews and devout persons in the synagogue and in the streets.
  - g. He is led to the Areopagus for a hearing by the elite of Athens.
  - h. He preaches the gospel to them.
  - i. The effects of his sermon; some believed, some did not.
2. In this lesson we shall notice the lessons to be learned from text and context of Paul’s sermon/ These lessons are:
  - a. The ability to **know**. God and His truth.
  - b. Deeply religious people are not necessarily right in their religion.

- c. The foolishness of idolatry.
  - d. God: As Creator, Sustainer, Lawgiver, and Judge.
  - e. Man's necessary response to God.
3. Let us notice these lessons.

### DISCUSSION

Concerning Acts Chapter 17 We Notice:

- I. The Ability to **Know** God and His Will Through His Revelation.
  - A. In Thessalonica and Berea Paul used the Scriptures (O.T) to show that they pointed to Christ.
  - B. In both places it took a "reasoning" and "searching" effort on the part of the hearer.
  - C. The result of these efforts was that many believed.
  - D. **Point to Make:** God can be known through what He has revealed unto man (cf., Rom. 1:18-23).
  - E. In Athens Paul told the people, "What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you" (Acts 17:23—ASV)
    1. The Greek for "set forth" is *kataggello*.
    2. Thayer's definition: "To announce, declare, promulgate, **make known** [underscore mine, ESU]; to proclaim publicly, publish."
    3. **Point to Make:** One cannot **make known** that which is unknowable, therefore, it is possible to **know** God, and be assured that we do **know** Him.
- II. Deeply Religious People Are Not Always People Who Are Religiously Right (vv. 22-23).
  - A. The four-hundred and fifty prophets of Baal were religious.
  - B. The scribes and Pharisees of Matthew 23 were religious.
  - C. Those of Matthew 7:21-23 were religious.
  - D. Many today are religious: Heathen religions; Denominations.
  - E. None of these were or are religiously right.
  - F. To the Athenians who were "very religious" Paul commanded a change.
- III. The Foolishness Of Idolatry.
  - A. The law concerning God and worship of idols given.
    1. Exodus 20:3-4.
    2. Mark 12:29-30.
    3. John 4:24.

- B. Examples of idolatry.
  - 1. The golden calf.
  - 2. The altars at Dan and Bethel.
  - 3. **Covetousness** which is idolatry (Col. 3:5).
- C. The foolishness of idolatry.
  - 1. 1 Kings 18—The contest on Mt. Carmel.
  - 2. Isaiah's satirical comment (Isa. 44:9-17).
  - 3. The results of idolatry—**"God gave them up"** (Rom. 1).
- IV. God: As Creator: Sustainer: Lawgiver: Judge
  - A. In contrast to the idols of the Athenians, Paul presents God as Creator, Maker of heaven and earth.
  - B. Rather than being dependent upon man, the God presented by Paul is the Sustainer of all men of all nations. "for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).
  - C. Being the Creator and Sustainer of mankind He knows man's needs. The entire scheme of redemption with its laws and principles is for the benefit of mankind.
  - D. God is the Lawgiver. His laws are righteous, and when obeyed will make a man righteous. Therefore, God will judge man by His righteous laws as given through His Son.
  - E. God as Judge: The surety of the judgment is enforced by the fact that God raised up Christ from the dead. His judgment will be just; His standard will be His Word.
- V. Man's Necessary Response to God.
  - A. Paul's summation is that since God can be known, since He is man's Creator, Sustainer, Lawgiver, and Judge, and since He has revealed all this through His Son, all men are now responsible to Him.
  - B. In times past God overlooked, or did not immediately deal with man's sins.
  - C. Now, He commands all men in every place to repent.
  - D. This repentance involves everything necessary to bring man into a right relationship with God, thus obedience to the gospel.

### CONCLUSION

- 1. In this lesson we have discussed:
  - a. Mankind's ability to know God and His Word.
  - b. The fact that all religious people are not religiously right .

- c. The foolishness of idolatry.
  - d. God, as Creator, Sustainer, Lawgiver, and Judge.
  - e. Man's necessary response to God in order to be right with Him.
2. May we ever continue to learn of, and be thankful to God.

# LIBERALISM AND... HOW TO COMBAT IT

*William Wilder*

## INTRODUCTION

1. Today we live in a psychedelic world of emotionalism, existentialism, private interpretation and individual direction, and we are finding it increasingly hard to communicate with each other. We have a generation who evidently have for gotten the motto: “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent.”
2. As we brace ourselves to stem the tide of liberalism, it is imperative that we know what it is and what it will do to the cause of Christ.
3. Anything different from “the way we have done it” is not necessarily liberalism. I am all for a change provided it will draw me closer to God. The “how” can be changed as long as the command remains the same!

## DEFINITIONS OF LIBERALISM

An attitude which challenges and denies the absolute authority of the Word of God.

The Bible is not completely the Word of God nor is the Word of God completely in the Bible. In other words, the Bible is continuous.

Liberalism holds the Bible as subjective and relative, rather than objective and absolute—truth is not obtainable.

A loose, compromising attitude toward the blessed Bible. With some it is partial rejection, with others a denial of all it teaches.

## AIM AND PURPOSE OP LIBERALISM

- I. **A Desire to Restructure and Revamp the Church.**
  - A. We are too traditional minded
    1. We need a change so they claim.
    2. The change would be away from a distinctive position of the oneness of the church, and not the procedural manner in which worship periods are carried out.

- B. They view the church as instrumental and pragmatic—it is called by them the “establishment.”
  - C. They say its integrity is in its spiritual life and not in its doctrinal structure. So this leads to:
    1. Be loyal to Christ and not the church.
    2. We are afflicted with the disease of Churchanity instead of practicing Christianity.
    3. Jesus yes, church no! organized religion, etc.
  - D. At least one has said it is a sick “denomination.”
- II. Some among Us Who Propose That We Should Preach Christ and Not the Plan.**
- A. It is impossible to do what they are saying we should do.
  - B. If one can preach Christ without preaching His plan, what subject could he use?
  - C. What truth about Christ could one present that would not involve His teachings?
    1. Philip preached Christ and the Eunuch was converted. How did this happen?
  - D. The man and the plan are inseparable according to Act 8.
- III. They Attempt to Make Distinction Between Gospel and Doctrine.**
- A. What is doctrine?
    1. It comes from Greek (*didache*) which means teaching, Thayer remarks, “That which is taught.” Same as the Biblical expression “the faith” (Jude 3).
    2. Paul, before his conversion tried to destroy “the faith” (Gal. 1:23). What was “the faith” of Galatians 1? Whatever it was, Paul was then boldly proclaiming it! Also note **Ephesians 4:8-11**.
  - B. When we cease to preach doctrine, we have quit preaching, period!
- IV. Another Error of Liberalism Is Equating Spirituality with Feelings and Emotions.**
- A. This is an outgrowth of Pentecostalism and false views of the Holy Spirit.
    1. Feelings are substituted for faith
    2. Emotions to logical reasoning
    3. Sentiments to Scriptures
    4. Touching and telling to truth and teaching

- B. Days of miracles are over (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Eph. 4:8-13).
  - C. No need for miracles today because the church is full-grown and we have perfect law.
- V. **Streamline the Bible Because Gospel Is Not Relevant.**
- A. We need an up-to-date Bible, one that is fresh, alive and easily understood.
  - B. This attitude has opened the door for the “so-called” versions.
  - C. They are really “perversions” because the men who produced them openly deny:
    - 1. The Deity of Christ
    - 2. Bible as God’s complete will to man
    - 3. Messages are not unalterable
  - D. You can prove most any error by these “so-called” versions.
    - 1. The RSV strikes at the very heart of Christianity when they changed the word “virgin” for “young women.”
    - 2. The LBP teaches faith only, direct operation of the Holy Spirit, original sin and premillennialism.
    - 3. TEV takes church out of Acts 2:47 and supplies the word “group,” they make a common meal out of the Lord’s Supper—removes the word “blood” and injects the word “death.”
    - 4. Philip’s translation makes Peter the rock in Matthew 16, and uses vulgar language to appeal to the young generation.
    - 5. The Amplified Bible written by a man who states, “no adequate reproduction of the New Testament has been written and never will.” The expression “only begotten” is taken out and the word “unique” is inserted.

#### **HOW WE CAN COMBAT LIBERALISM**

1. God has not left us **defenseless**. The Bible is our weapon, **use it!**
2. If the church is to survive in the drive being made by the liberals among us, we must have elders and leaders of congregations, who **know** the truth and are **willing** to lead in this fight against the inroads of liberalism.
3. We must insist on “sound doctrine” from the pulpits; strong teaching by strong Bible teachers with “sound” lessons and a Bible loving people doing their part to support the stand they take.
4. Paul encouraged Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith” and Jude made clear that we are to “contend earnestly for the faith.”

5. When we begin to **love** the church as Christ did, then we will not stand back and let the liberals have a “heyday.”

### CONCLUSION

1. These are some of the dangers facing the church today and space and time will not permit us to write and speak of all problems.

# PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

*William A. Yuhas*

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-8

- a. The background surrounding the verses.
  - i. Paul is a prisoner in Rome with no hope of release (2 Tim. 1:16-17; 4:6).
  - ii. Deserted, for the most part, by friends and companions Paul soberly writes to his true child in the faith (2 Tim. 1:5; 4:10-11; 1:2).
  - iii. Nero's persecution of Christians had begun, Paul's loneliness and sense of impending death sets the mood for Paul's letter.
  - iv. Paul's mood is reflected in two words; a **challenge** and an **incentive**.
- b. Paul's **challenge** to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-2, 5.
  - i. This challenge is the climax of Paul's sobering letter.
  - ii. He is nearing death and he summons as his witness the awesome and majestic throne of God.
    - (1) Christ is on God's right hand seated on His throne,
    - (2) He is reigning as king of kings awaiting His triumphant return as judge and deliverer of His glorious kingdom to the Father.
  - iii. Timothy feels the intense seriousness of Paul's tone and knows that this challenge ranks among the highest.
  - iv. Timothy is not surprised at Paul's simple statement "preach the word"—for in his previous comments of the importance of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17) it necessarily follows that Timothy take God's Word and preach it as all God's great and faithful prophets had done before.
  - v. The scepter of truth is being transferred from Paul to Timothy and Timothy must transfer it to others (2 Tim. 2:2). Jehovah is the witness.

- vi. Timothy is not surprised at the second challenge to watch, endure afflictions and prove his ministry (2 Tim. 4:5). Which prophet of God did not have this challenge?
- c. Paul's **incentive** to Timothy.
  - i. Conditioned upon Timothy's faithfulness, his endurance, his valor as a soldier of Christ, a reward that is matchless awaits him.
  - ii. Nothing on earth can compare to it, and every affliction will have been worth it.
  - iii. "The crown of righteousness" awaits all who will carry the banner of truth and meet the challenges,
- d. As Paul proceeded to introduce his subject by a solemn witness, we can also present this testimony of God's written testimony against the encroachments of the imposters who call themselves evangelists. They have no part in the challenge or incentive of 2 Timothy 4:1-2, 5.

## DISCUSSION

Preach The Word.

- I. Satan seeks to pervert the preaching of God's Word through imposters, who are not preaching the Word, but are preaching Satan's gospel.
  - A. Paul prepared; Timothy for these imposters in the third chapter of his second letter.
    - 1. "But evil men and seducers [imposters—RSV] shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).
    - 2. Paul wrote elsewhere of these imposters.
  - B. Paul wrote of Satan's attempt to imitate him (an apostle) and those who followed him (ministers of righteousness). (2 Cor. 11:1-15).
    - 1. "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (11:13).
    - 2. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (11:14).
    - 3. "Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (11:15).

- C. Satan is the arch-counterfeiter.
1. He seeks to **prevent** the growth of wheat by planting tares (Mat. 13:24-30).
  2. The tare at first appearance looks exactly like the wheat. Satan is trying to imitate the work of Christ, the good seed, with a clever counterfeit seed.
  3. Satan has enlisted workers to do the planting, much like he enlisted the serpent to do his dirty work in the garden (2 Cor. 11:3-4).
  4. Both the worker and the seed are designed to look like Christ and His good seed!
  5. Paul recognized both counterfeit worker and seed in the Galatian church.
    - a. Those who would pervert the gospel were imitators (imposters) of Paul (Gal. 1:7).
    - b. The gospel they preached was another gospel (counterfeit seed), an imitation of the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6).
- II. The apostles of Satan are not bar-room brawlers or drug pushers, but for the most part are ordained ministers. They preach a counterfeit gospel.
- A. Satan's ministers of righteousness do not preach the Word, nor do they prove their ministry.
1. The success of a counterfeiter depends upon how closely he can come to the original.
    - a. Thus a half lie comes closer to truth than an outright lie.
    - b. Satan's "ordained ministers" do not enter the pulpit and flatly deny fundamental truths of Christianity.
    - c. Satan's "ordained ministers" do not boldly announce a disbelief in a personal God; rather he perverts his character by claiming Him to be too kind to condemn a lost soul.
    - d. Satan's "ordained ministers" would not be so foolish as to ignore the central figure of Christianity in Jesus Christ, rather he emphasized His deeds of compassion and works of mercy while he is skillfully ignoring the virgin birth, vicarious death, resurrection, atoning blood and the inspiration of the Scriptures.
  2. Multitudes of people are under the influence of Satan's "ministers of righteousness."

- a. The whole council of God is not preached. They have forsaken Paul's exhortation in 2 Timothy 4:1-2, 5 and their ministry is of condemnation. Oral Roberts, Billy Graham and Pat Boone are the leaders and men like Jim Reynolds are their followers.
3. The Bible is not expounded in the pulpit and the members who are caught up in this demanding age have little time and less inclination to search for themselves.
- B. Preaching the Word is replaced with Satan's gospel of good works.
  1. Today's religious leaders are in a mad rush to collect members and dollars. Their bait is the good works they are accomplishing or a promise of a care-free life through inner peace implanted directly by the Spirit.
  2. Every temperance or reform movement (such as the Jesus people, etc.) waves basically the same banner, salvation by character (good works). Their motto is "be good and do good."
  3. Social purity through a pledge card or peace group has replaced the work and person of Jesus Christ through His incarnation, vicarious death^atoning blood, and resurrection.
  4. Satan's gospel of good works has replaced the gospel of Jesus Christ.
    - a. Men are going about doing their own righteous ness.
    - b. When the only righteousness that saves is "being totally ignored (Rom. 1:16-17).
  5. Satan's counterfeit workers and seed is choking out those who would truly "preach the word." Many members who can help remain in the sin of neutrality. Approval by silence has become the sin of God's people in the land today.
- III. Preachers need to preach the word in season and out of season.
  - A. Satan's success is largely determined by our failures. His greatest victories are accomplished in a perverted pulpit.
  - B. The trail of that old serpent is clearly seen around the pulpits of preachers.
    1. Little, if any, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting comes from the pulpits of Satan's ministers of righteousness.

2. Preaching the Word directly to the particular sins of the people, as Joel, Amos, Hosea, etc. did is considered “uncouth.”
  - a. If a “prominent” member has a drinking problem the preacher is quietly filled in so as not to embarrass anyone from the pulpit.
  - b. Or the preacher is told that anything that sounds too “harsh” from the pulpit will drive people away, so preach the smooth things. This way, we can ease people into the truth without offending them.
  - c. How far from 2 Timothy 4:1-8 have we strayed? What does “in season and out of season” really mean?
3. The big push today among “mainline” denominationalists is peaceful co-existence in the church of your choice.
  - a. The message on their lips is peace among all men through recognition of the compassion and good works of Jesus.
  - b. Very seldom is Matthew 10:34-35 ever expounded upon: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.”
4. The ways and methods used by Satan’s “ministers of righteousness” to avoid preaching the word are almost never ending.
  - a. Many elders, or congregations have joined Satan in his efforts by offering “preachers” fat contracts with attractive fringe benefits as long as he performs his “pastoral” duties to their liking.
  - b. How does the “trained preacher” live with his conscience? Simply by being deceived them selves. One common brand of salve is to proclaim that “no one has all truth, everyone has some truth, so it is impossible to say one man or one group is totally right. Stop fighting and everyone join in the good works and we will work our way to heaven.”
5. Well did Paul tell Timothy that there would be imposters who are deceived and are deceiving others (2 Tim. 3:13). Just as there are those who speak there are those who are eager to

listen to the attractive lofty statements of these imposters (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

6. Like the followers of the mythical pied piper, many congregations of the Lord's church are beginning to fall in line behind the tune of denominationalism.
  - a. They are recognizable by their mottos. They resemble the already rank and file denominations.
  - b. The number one motto is "we cannot set our selves up as judges of other men" (taken from Mat. 7:1). This is a subtle way of avoiding discipline.
  - c. Followed closely by that old standby: "Show more love and stop the fussing."
  - d. Paul never carried either of these as his sole banner in his campaigns for Christ.
    - (1) Paul wrote to the Corinthians of their problems and how to correct their **error** out of love.
    - (2) Paul wrote to the Corinthians to judge within and correct the source of all division. That source is false teaching by example or outright false instructions.
  - e. A Christian is in a battle, a warfare, and a fight to the finish with the evil one and his accomplices, who are all too often well disguised.
    - (1) Contrast Paul's challenge to Timothy with today's challenges.
    - (2) We hear more and more about Jesus and less and less about His Word, (especially the controversial passages).
    - (3) A person is almost led to believe that Jesus has suffered everything, even sparing us any suffering while we live out this life on earth.
    - (4) The only persecutions to fear are from an armed communist, a drunk with a broken bottle in his hand, or an insane sniper.
  - f. Paul said he fought the fight, he finished the course, he kept the faith and his enemy was the works of darkness, manifested as an angel of light.

IV. Paul's motto "Be prepared to use the word."

- A. The battleground is the whole world, for this is Satan's territory.

- B. The enemy is the works of darkness dressed up in sheep's clothing.
- C. The time of battle is when you least suspect it and the least suspectable is the enemy.
- D. The weapon is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17).
  - 1. Reprove with the sword. This means to convict a person of his error with God's Word without judging his heart.
  - 2. Rebuke with the sword. This means to reprimand, admonish and chide with the Word in meekness and fear, because a soul is in danger.
  - 3. Exhort with the sword. This means to call a person to the side with the Word so that his wandering from it will not lead him to destruction.
- E. Unprepared preachers are easy prey for that "roaring lion."
  - 1. Congregations will pressure a man to "pastor" and thus neglect Paul's challenge to "preach the word."
  - 2. Members will accuse God's faithful proclaimers of being heartless, tempting him to water down the Word.
  - 3. Society will look upon the uncompromising as out casts, tempting them to conformity through compromise.
  - 4. "Preachers" who have compromised will appeal to the sympathy of those who have not.
  - 5. "Church leaders" will encourage men to preach for the wrong reasons, not preparing them for the battle to follow.
  - 6. Each of these results in a failure to "preach the word," a victory for Satan by a deceived soul.

### CONCLUSION

1. We have sought to emphasize 2 Timothy 4:1-8 by:
  - a. The seriousness of Paul's challenge to Timothy.
  - b. Satan's careful and disguised attack on this challenge through his imposters and their imitations of the Word of God.
  - c. Recognizing these imposters (and imitators) through their cowardly compromising overtures from the pulpits across this land.
  - d. Re-emphasizing the purpose and power of the sword of the Spirit in the hands of God's faithful proclaimers.
  - e. Exposing those who have either never met Paul's challenge, or have faced the battle sword in hand, but ? under pressure have turned and ran.

2. It was neither the intent nor purpose of this dissertation to be a destructive criticism of those who have forsaken the truth.
  - a. God has already condemned those who would add to or take away from His Word (Deu. 4:2; 12:32; Pro. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18).
  - b. Paul warned the people in every one of his epistles of the dangers of apostasy. Even to the point of delivering two apostates over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.
  - c. The prophets of old pointed first to the priests who had run amuck among the people and theirs was the greater condemnation.
  - d. To sin yourself and influence a few others is abominable. But to be a leader as were the Chiefs and Pharisees and cause multitudes to be deceived is almost unthinkable. This brought God's unrestrained condemnation (Mat.23) We are ashamed and offended at "preachers" who follow the Pharisees.
  - e. May those who pervert and prevent the word repent. May those who refuse mutilate themselves, that others are not led astray.