

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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9

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THE KINGDOM, THE CHURCH

Jim Stauffer

False teaching is evil and one of the great evils of our time is the Dispensational Theory that produces the doctrine of Premillennialism. This view of the Kingdom of God has attached itself to many of those we would consider to be subscribers of *standard* denominationalism.

The fundamental presentation of this theory rests in either a failure to understand prophecy or a willful desire to distort it. All those who subscribe to such false theories must realize the day comes when the former ceases to be the case and the latter becomes true.

Books promoting it are *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey, *Jesus is Coming* by W.E. Blackstone and *The Kingdom of God* by R.H. Boll. If you desire offsets for the errors promulgated by these men, look to *God's Prophetic Word* by Foy E. Wallace Jr. It would serve well anyone studying this subject to consider some sound commentaries on the book of Revelation such as; *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary* by Homer Hailey or *Truth Commentaries: Revelation* by Robert Harkrider.

In this brief article we would like to focus on two major failures of the premillennial concept as set forth by men today. The first major mistake or misunderstanding is that Jesus failed in His attempt to establish His Kingdom. The prophecies of the kingdom coming and the time of its coming are very clear. **Is. 2:2** *And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.* We are told it will come in the last days and that the word of the Lord will go forth out of Zion from Jerusalem. These would be the same last days spoken of in **Joel 2:28-32** that are quoted by Peter on Pentecost in **Acts 2** when the church Jesus promised in **Mat. 16:18** was established. But I am rushing ahead. Let us continue to consider the Kingdom. Daniel tells us it will come during the Roman Empire. **Dan. 2:44** *And in the days of those kings shall*

the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

During the days of the Roman Empire Mark records for us the Lord's statement that the Kingdom is at hand or nearby. **Mark 1:14** *Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.* Further it was connected to the preaching of the gospel by our Lord. Later Mark records another statement of the Lord. **Mark 9:1** *And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.* There can be no misunderstanding the promise of God through His prophets and His Son Jesus Christ. The Kingdom was to be established during the days of the Roman Empire.

That the Kingdom of God was established at this time cannot be denied. It was at this time that Jesus ascended into the heaven before the eyes of His Apostles. **(Acts 1:9-11)** Peter tells us on Pentecost He 'poured forth the Spirit', ascended into the heavens to, 'sit on the right hand of God', and was made 'both Lord and Christ' at that time. **(Acts 2:33-36)** We later learn from the epistles those who were born again of the water and the Spirit, were translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. **(John 3:3-5; Col. 1:13)** The Hebrew writer says they were *receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken*, present tense. John reveals to us those purchased of God **(Titus 2:14)** were made unto God a kingdom and priests and they reign upon the earth. **(Rev. 5:9,10)**

The second point we will establish briefly but just as clearly taught in scripture is the church is indeed the Kingdom of God. The saints of God make up the church as Paul tells the Corinthians. **(2 Cor. 1:1)** Saints were also described as members of the Kingdom. **(Col. 1:13)** Saints made up the household of God. **(Eph. 2:19-22)** The house of God is the church. **(1 Tim. 3:15)**

When Jesus was elevated to the right hand of God, He ascended to the throne of David. **Luke 1:31** *And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth*

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a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. He became both Lord and Christ to reign over this Kingdom until His enemies were made to be the footstool of His feet. **(Acts 2:35)** The following text describes the exact same position and action concerning the church that was initiated at exactly the same time as His rule over His Kingdom. **Eph.1:20** *which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

To claim Jesus failed in His attempt to establish His Kingdom/Church is to doubt His own claim to all authority. **Matt. 28:18** *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.* One who has all authority does not shed His own blood willingly in failure. **Acts 20:28** *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

Now we, as the Apostles did also have the choice to make. Do we accept the word of men or God? **Acts 5:29** *But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men.*

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST **Randy Harshbarger**

It is popular these days to laugh at and ridicule the idea of a Bible pattern. There are those who refer to themselves as New Testament Christians, who repudiate the concept of a pattern concerning our work and service to the Lord. This mind-set is simply a reflection of modern man's desire to express himself as he sees fit. Man has become his own god; and as such, no one has the right to tell him what he will or will not do regarding his life, or in this case, regarding his service to the Lord. I doubt that many would be so blatant in their expression of this attitude, but the result is the same.

Hermeneutics is a word that refers to the science of Bible interpretation, or simply put, to the rules of Bible study. You don't have to know about that word in order to go to heaven, but consider the fact that you have been using hermeneutical principles in Bible study for a long time. For example, what do you say when someone asks you: "Why do you folks in the church of Christ partake of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week?" You refer them to the EXAMPLE of **Acts 20:7**, don't you? You believe that the Bible teaches by example (**cf. Phil. 3: 17; 4:9**). Someone asks: "Why do you take the Lord's Supper EVERY Lord's Day?" You

answer that it is NECESSARILY IMPLIED from **Acts 20:7**, that you should engage in this act of worship unto the Lord AS OFTEN AS THERE IS A FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. Likewise, you recognize that there are many DIRECT STATEMENTS that express the Lord's will for your life. You are engaging in the science of hermeneutics. These simple ways of recognizing how the Bible teaches are not contrived; rather, they simply take into account how the Lord revealed His will to us.

Pattern theology is nothing to be ashamed of. The Lord has consistently delivered a pattern to His people in all ages. His pattern governed Moses and the children of Israel in building the tabernacle (**Heb. 8:1-5**). The same was true when Solomon built the temple. The same is true in regard to the Lord's spiritual temple, His church. To deny that there is a binding pattern or norm for God's people today is to effectively say: Let every man do that which is right in his own eyes (**Judges 21:25**).

In our ongoing quest to simply be Christians, there is the need to continually examine God's word and the place it occupies in our hearts and lives. Yet, the sufficiency of modern man gets in the way of recognizing the great need to simply listen to the Lord as He speaks through His word. Man's inflated ego refuses to allow him to listen to anyone or anything but himself. Again, it is a matter of authority. Will we recognize the claim God makes over our lives, or will we turn away trusting solely in self?

Could it be that when we speak about hermeneutics and Bible study and even the matter of authority, we turn something that is simple into something that is hard and seemingly unattainable? For example, the religious lawyer in the story of the Good Samaritan completely missed the point about eternal life. Yet, a most unlikely candidate for spiritual service, a Samaritan, understood his duty and simply went about the business of helping the wounded man. No debate. No questioning. No glance over his shoulder to make sure someone was watching. He simply did what he was supposed to do. We are the church of Christ! If so, the next question is: Will we "Go, and do likewise?"

IS ANYTHING SINFUL?

For several decades America has been fed a steady diet of moral relativity, going back beyond Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics (1966). The teaching is that there are no moral absolutes. The theory contradicts itself in its opening statement, because one must absolutely accept that there are no moral absolutes. But, aside from its self-contradiction, the ethical philosophy asserts that morals are personal and individual. What is right for one person may not be right for another and what is sinful to one person may not be sinful to another. Each person becomes a moral law to himself and one cannot make absolute moral judgments.

Despite assertions that one believes in moral relativity, no one practices it consistently. Try applying

moral relativity to such politically charged issues as racism. Does anyone believe that our media would tolerate moral relativity on racism? Is racism sinful for some individuals but acceptable for others? Is each individual allowed to decide for himself whether or not he will be racist and then everyone told not to judge (condemn) each other? Are we taught to be tolerant of racists or that racists should be tolerant of those of us who choose not to be racists? In an era of moral relativity, the consistent application of the moral dictum would be acceptance and tolerance of racists and racism. But, the fact is that no one can practice moral relativity consistently. There are always some things that the moral relativist wants to say are always wrong -- whether it be racism or homophobia.

What moral relativism is reacting to is the Christian moral standard that teaches that ethics are determined by the revelation of God's Will. The moral relativist cannot accept that God revealed Himself and gave absolute moral laws to govern human conduct. Nowhere is the conflict between moral relativity and Christianity more in conflict than in sexual ethics. The New Testament condemns as sinful fornication (**1 Cor. 6:12-20**), adultery (**Rom. 13:9**), homosexuality (**1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:9,10**), lustful leering (**Matt. 5:27,28**), etc. Modern ethics in America treat fornication as a rite of passage for those who enter puberty. Monogamy is thought to be its own punishment (because one does not "enjoy" sexual experiences with whomever he wishes). Homosexuality is the natural sexual expression of a segment of the population which is "programed" differently than the majority of humanity. One is to be concerned, not about homosexuality, but homophobia. Pornography is protected under the first amendment rights and men are expected to look lustfully upon naked women. The Christian and moral relativism are two world views with conflicting ethics.

The result of modern relativity is that nothing is right or wrong. Who can unequivocally say that murdering a human being is wrong (think about abortion)? Who can say that stealing is always wrong? Who can say that adultery is sinful? Who can say drinking alcoholic beverages or experimenting with marijuana is wrong? On the other hand, who can say that loving one's neighbor is right and good, that helping the needy is a moral virtue, that honesty and marital fidelity are good? Are they not also just one's personal choice? The problem of moral relativity is that the philosophy blurs the lines between good and evil.

This blurring of moral standards has weakened society. Abortion on demand has led to disrespect for human life. Our society is actually arguing about whether or not partial birth abortions should be legal! In this reprehensible act, a doctor pulls a late-term baby out of the womb feet first until little but the head is inside the mother. Then he pokes forceps through the baby's skull and uses an instrument to suck out the brains and crush the skull. And our enlightened society cannot see anything wrong with the practice! The same moral relativity that introduced abortion on demand is now fighting for legalized euthanasia. Disrespect for life on both ends -- at birth and at the end of life -- has led to

disrespect for life in the middle. We live in a society of drive-by shootings and almost nightly murders in major cities because a drug deal went bad or two people living together got in a fight. Our society is breeding pedophiles and child abusers.

Not until men become convinced that something is broken will they look for its cure. At the present, the majority seem to think that the moral relativity approach to ethics is better than the ethics of Christianity. But, men do not have to learn to be content in the society which is. There can be a better society.

The good news of the gospel is that society can be changed through the influence of the preaching of the gospel. Men and women can be taught moral responsibility to their Creator and given the revelation from God that reveals what is right and wrong. Men can be held accountable for their disobedience to God's Word with reference to "thou shalt not kill" (even with respect to abortion) the same as they are held accountable for their disobedience to the command, "Thou shalt not steal."

Those of us who were raised in an America that was deeply influenced by Christian ethics can remember the days when we left home without locking our doors, parked our car with the windows down because of how hot it was, thought that one who was unfaithful to his mate in marriage was guilty of immorality, and expected children to be reared by both of their natural parents. What was can become what is, if one will reject the world view of our age with its relative ethics and return to the Christian world view with its ethical teachings. What kind of society do you wish for your children and grandchildren?

By Mike Willis in Truth Magazine, Vol. 51, No. 3, March 2007.

No contractive insurance will be in heaven
No government-mandated plan
For all the celestial dwellers
Will surely have been born again

There'll be no death panels in heaven
Where no end-of-life counselor will try
To determine whose life is worth living
And who should be sent home to die

by Grant Clothier

Rev. 21:3 *And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: 4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. 5 And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true.*

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

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Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: GRANT CLOTHIER, J.R. DANIEL, MARY CZIRR, JAN PATRICK AND SUZANNE WIMP. LORETTA TAPP HAS BEEN HOSPITALIZED AND WILL SOON MOVE TO REHAB.

IT WAS SO GOOD TO SEE DARRIN RAWSON IN WORSHIP LAST SUNDAY, BACK FROM AFGHANISTAN.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING: GIVING ANSWERS TO DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS AND WEDNESDAY: THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10