

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.

November
15
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HOW FAR ARE WE FROM THE KINGDOM?

Jim Stauffer

Mark 12:34 *And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.* This was the reply of our Lord to a scribe who appeared to grasp the totality of Jesus' answer to his question. His question was, *What commandment is the first of all?* **Mark 12:29** *Jesus answered, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one Lord: 30 and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31 The second, is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

We have the record of multiple occasions when Jesus attempted to teach the Jews of His generation how committed our hearts must be to God for us to serve Him faithfully. His answer here was to tell this man how close he was to understanding that commitment. That commitment, He says, is necessary to be in the kingdom of God. Matthew records this commitment by equating it with eternal life for the soul. **Matt. 16:24** *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* On another occasion Jesus defines this commitment in comparison to the love we have for our families. **Matt. 10:37** *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.* Again, He says the proper pursuit of Him and His spiritual principles is necessary for eternal life.

Of course Jesus presented a clear distinction between eternal life and death in His concluding statement regarding His final judgment of men. **Matt. 25:46** *And these shall go away into everlasting*

punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Now we attempt to answer the question of how far we are from the kingdom. How close are we to comprehending what the scribe did in **Mark 12**? Jesus did not tell him he was in the kingdom or would soon be. He told him he was not far from it. You see, understanding is step one. Acting on that understanding is step two and will lead one to the kingdom. Jesus explained this to Nicodemus, another Jew, who came to Jesus by night to inquire of Him. **John 3:3** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

We must understand the obstacles of these men Jesus taught. They came from a religious background that was currently resisting His teaching. That meant their families; fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters were unlikely to accept what Jesus was teaching. He was, you see, preparing them for a new covenant that had been prophesied by Jeremiah (**Jer. 31:31-34 cf. Heb. 8:8-13**). This new covenant was the fulfillment of the promise to the seed of Abraham (**Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18 cf. Gal. 3:16**). This new covenant was sealed by the death of a perfect sacrifice for the sins of all mankind both before and after Christ (**Heb. 9:13-15; 1 Pet. 1:18,19**).

In His life on earth Jesus gave all an example of how deep this commitment must be. He gave up His place in heaven with the Father to become a servant, sharing the likeness, that is the flesh and blood of those He came to save (**Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14,15**). He lived a life devoted to the cause of God in heaven, rejecting the pleasures the world could offer (**Luke 9:58**).

Jesus did not accumulate wealth by the purchase of lands, the acquisition of assets so He could enjoy comfort and leisure. He spent Himself to teach by example the true meaning of the words He spoke.

The Apostle Paul then imitated the life of Christ (1

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Cor. 11:1; Gal. 2:20). He calls on us to do the same (**Eph. 5:1,2**).

Are we ready then to not only understand His message as the scribe did but also to make the commitment to live that life? Will we put the pleasures of life aside as we pursue the teachings of Christ? Can we live without the constant entertainment we chase by way of theaters, athletic stadiums, television of such events and whatever else we choose with which to dote on ourselves? Can we put the mission of Christ ahead of family and friends as He did?

If so, we can not only be close to the kingdom, we can as Jesus instructed Nicodemus, enter into the kingdom of God.

Manumission

Robert F. Turner

From **LIGHT FROM THE ANCIENT EAST**, by Adolf Deissmann, P.320-f., we have plucked scattered quotations re. an early social practice, which helps us understand many scriptures. The book (Baker, 1965) may be hard to find.

Inscriptions at Delphi have been the principle means of enlightening us concerning the nature and ritual of manumission with a religious object in ancient times....

Among the various ways in which the manumission of a slave could take place by ancient law we find the solemn rite of fictitious purchase of the slave by some divinity. The owner comes with the slave to the temple, sells him there to the god, and receives the purchase money from the temple treasury, the slave having previously, paid it in there out of his savings. The slave is now the property of the god; not, however, a slave of the temple, but a servant of the god. Against all the world, especially his former master, he is a completely free man; at the utmost a few pious obligations to his old master are imposed upon him.

An inscription of 200-199 B.C. on the polygonal wall at Delphi may serve as an example: Date. Apollo the Pythian bought from Sosibius of Amphissa, for freedom, a female slave, whose name is Nicaea, by race a Roman, with a price of three minae of silver and a half-mina. Former seller according to the law: Eumnastus of Amphissa. The price he hath received. The purchase; however, Nicaea hath committed unto Apollo, for freedom. —Names of witnesses, etc., follow. St. Paul is alluding to the custom referred to in these records when he speaks of our being made free by Christ. By nature we are slaves of sin, of men, of death; the Jew is furthermore a slave of the law, the heathen a slave of his gods. We become free men by the fact that Christ buys us. And He has done so: Yet we are bought with a price, says St. Paul in two places, using the very formula of the records, with a price. Again *For freedom did Christ set us free, . . . ye were called for freedom.* — In these words of St. Paul we have literally the other formula of the record.

Numerous manumissions, again, expressly forbid, sometimes under heavy penalties, that the enfranchised shall ever be made a slave again. We now see how

wicked is the intention of those who. . . *spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into bondage.* And we understand warnings like this in the letters: *For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in yoke of bondage,* and the still more moving exhortation: *Ye were bought with a price, become not slaves of men.*

We omitted scripture citations for want of space, but they are familiar and easily found. Much light is cast upon scriptures by better understanding customs and terminology of the first century. The historic setting forms a part of the context and should be remembered in interpreting current articles as well as those 2,000 years old.

BEFORE DENOMINATIONS

Donald R. Fox

Most Americans love the sport of baseball. I played for the Police Athlete League (PAL) when I was a kid. The Brooklyn Dodgers were my favorite team. I spent many happy afternoons in the left field bleachers at ole Ebbets Field.

Years ago, I attended Winter Bible School classes at Gloster Street church in Tupelo, Mississippi. My teacher, John L. Wheeler was full of stories and illustrations to zero in on non-denominational Christianity. One illustration I remember was one about the game of baseball.

Let's imagine that the game of baseball started to lose its appeal. People just weren't interested in the game any longer. After the passing of some year's people did not play baseball any longer. All ball field stadiums; baseball lots and the like were destroyed.

One, two, three hundred years passed and the memory of baseball was completely forgotten. It reminds me of one of the saddest verses in the whole Bible. ***"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8).*** You see, in the passing of time people; nations forget.

One day, a man went to a large library to just browse around. He notices, high on a shelf a book that appeared very old. Removing this book from the bookshelf, he saw it was a complete rulebook on the game called baseball. "Never heard of such a game," he exclaimed to himself. Fascinated, he checked the book out.

Our friend pored over the book, rules and regulations for the game of baseball. He decided to recapture, bring back this game. Using and following the data, information and rules contained in this book, the game of baseball was re-established.

Question: Do we now have a new game of baseball?

Answer: No, we have a restored game. Such is the concept of pre-denominational Christianity. Going back past denominationalism to the New Testament and obeying this source will produce Christians only. In doing this we will negate, cancel all denominational creeds, doctrines and religious names that are unknown in the Word of God.

Such is the illustration. When honest, true truth seekers obey what the New Testament teaches, it will

make them Christians and Christians only. They are added to the church as revealed in the New Testament. **"...praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."** (Acts 2:47)

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WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT ABORTION?

Sermon after sermon has been preached on the evils of abortion. Yet, this practice continues to blight our nation. What can I do to help eliminate this infant holocaust?

Be Informed. My firm conviction is that abortion continues in our society because the largest number of people are not really aware of what takes place in the abortion process. Abortion is the termination of innocent human life. One of the biggest lies told in this whole controversy is that all that is aborted is a blob of fetal tissue. We are told that there are no human characteristics present in what is aborted. The evidence says otherwise. Anyone who will take the time to look at the pictorial evidence will clearly see that it is human life that is being snuffed out. These pictures are oftentimes graphic and difficult to look at. However, they are just what is needed to jolt some people into awareness of what is really going on in our neighborhood abortion clinics. Pamphlets are available to show the pictures of babies before and after abortion. These pamphlets also document the medical evidence which demonstrates the development of the unborn child.

Tell Others the Facts. It is not enough for you to be informed and to privately grieve over the tragedy of abortion. Tell good friends, neighbors and relatives what you have learned. Give them brochures and pamphlets that show the real truth. Don't underestimate the power of truth. Years ago, I preached a sermon on abortion. One of our members obtained a copy of the tape and gave it to a pregnant teenage girl who was contemplating abortion. Upon listening to the tape, she made the firm decision to have her baby and to tell others what she had learned. She had been duped into believing that all the doctor was going to do was remove some tissue from her womb. In a similar occurrence our own Jodi Gilreath gave a speech in one of her classes recently about this subject. The girl who was supposed to give the opposite view followed and said she couldn't bring herself to endorse abortion after hearing the facts. Spread the word. It does make a difference.

Pray. *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"* (James 5:16). God is still on the throne and the *"most high ruleth in the kingdoms of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will"* (Daniel 4:32). Ask God to work through His providence to bring about a reversal of the present laws in our land. There is not an organization or group of activists on earth who can combat the power of prayer. Be active in prayer.

Write Your Lawmakers. Politicians listen to large blocks of their constituency because they know that the voters have the final say as to whether or not they are elected again. Obtain the addresses of your congressmen and

representatives and write them a letter expressing your wish that abortion be outlawed in this country. Share with them the facts and material you have at your disposal. Be kind in your letter, and yet firm. Let them know that you expect some kind of reply and defense of their position if it is pro-abortion. Write the Supreme Court Justices and seek to influence them as well. Let your voice be heard.

Support Doctors Who Refuse To Do Abortions.

Money talks. Imagine a pro-abortion gynecologist being told by dozens and dozens of patients that they could not in good conscience continue to support a doctor who helped to kill babies. What an impact that could have! This is something that could cause other doctors to think twice about being in the abortion industry. Let us bond together and fight against this menace to our society. Together we can make the world a safer place for children.

Written By: B.J. Clarke Bulletin Date: 6/13/2004
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DISOBEDIENCE

Some Sources of Disobedience

Moral Cowards: Some will halt, wondering what the people will say. They cannot stand criticism or unfavorable opinion. "What will the people think" is more important with them than "What has God said?" These are "stony ground hearers" (Lk. 8:13). Even preachers sometimes fail to teach some much needed lessons, or declare themselves clearly on some point, fearing it might interfere with their popularity. Brethren at times contribute to such cowardice by making it hard on the preacher who on all occasions dares to preach the truth. They do not realize it, but all such brethren prefer a cringing coward to a man who has the courage to preach his convictions. God give us men of courage, and a spirit of crying for the truth.

Worldliness: In the parable of the Sower, Jesus describes it as the cares, riches and pleasures of this life; such chokes out the word. The world has always had its cares - some become overwhelmed with them. They know not that in Jesus they may find rest. That which should impel them to come to Jesus for relief weighs so heavily that their whole thought is given to carrying the load. The greed for riches and craze for pleasure perpetuates the disobedience of countless thousands. Some care for money only as it enables them to have fun and entertainment; others care not for fun and entertainment so greedy are they for money. All these things contribute mightily towards making us a disobedient race.

Sound Doctrine, Vol. 1, C. R. Nichol and R.L. Whiteside

Heb. 5:8 *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

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

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE
FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS:
GRANT CLOTHIER AND J.R.
DANIEL AND JAN PATRICK.

STEVE WIMP IS IN ROOM 610,
TRINITY NURSING, 62ND AND
MASTIN IN SHAWNEE.

JON COONES HAS RETURNED
HOME AND IS DOING WELL.

BIBLE CLASSES: SUNDAY: GOSPEL
OF JOHN - RON PECK -
WEDNESDAY: THE THEME OF THE
BIBLE - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: THE WORK GOD
ASSIGNS TO ELDERS



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