

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



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

July 22  
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## The Freedom of Truth

Jim Stauffer

How many times do we see our leaders try to cover an error in speech or judgment by saying something untrue? The expression, "the cover-up is worse than the crime" fits the description of such actions. There have been men convicted of the crime of obstruction of justice because they were trying to cover up some unseemly or even illegal deed and the punishment was greater than it would have been if they had confessed and apologized. All because they chose something other than the truth to accept and follow.

How often did the Kings of Israel reject the spoken word of prophets of God because they chose to pursue selfish interests in lieu of the truth of God? The Kings of Israel who followed in the ways of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, started their rule in opposition to the truth of God. They were idolaters as a result of the division of the Kingdom and the golden calves at Dan and Bethel designed to prevent them from returning to Jerusalem to worship.

In the New Testament, the men in power referred to as the rulers of the Jews were guilty of the same thing. **John** tells us in **12:42** of his gospel account that many of the rulers of the people believed in Jesus but because they feared recrimination from the Pharisees they would not confess Him.

There is a principle we are driving at in these comments and it simply is this as spoken by the Lord, *and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.* **John 8:32**. Now, of course, Jesus was speaking of freedom from the burden of sin. The freedom He promised when He said, *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

When Jesus promised to relieve the burden of sin from all who would come to Him, it is understood by any and all who intend to please Him that we recognize these two things about Him. First, that He and He alone

is the One we must follow to please the God of heaven.

**John 14:6** *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.* Second we must accept His authority and obey Him. **Heb. 5:8** *Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,.* Jesus is the One Who said, *"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. (Mark 16:16)* Baptism for the remission of sins is not something conjured in the mind of man, it is a command of the Lord, Himself.

Jesus is the One who authorized the message revealed by the Holy Spirit to the apostles (**John 16:13-15; 1 Cor. 2:10-13**). In the message of Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit is the clear teaching that Jesus would establish His church (**Mat. 16:18**). His word then demands that we strive to find and become a part of His church. Choosing a church based on family history or social relationships is not seeking His church and the message He gave the Holy Spirit which He identifies as the truth. We have gone onward and are no longer abiding in the doctrine of Christ of which the apostle John spoke (**2 John 9-11**). The apostle Paul spoke concerning the one body, one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all specified in **Eph. 4:1-6**.

The point is we each have a responsibility to the salvation of our own souls to be searching for and insisting on our obedience to the truth. Jesus said, *You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."* (**John 18:37**).

You see, the truth of the message of the gospel will set us free. Free from the burden of sin. Free from the influence of Satan disguising himself as an angel of light (**2 Cor. 11:14,15**).

Have you chosen truth or social comfort?

## THE REWARDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

*"Then Peter answered and said to Him, 'See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?' So Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life'" (Matthew 19:27-29).*

Why do you serve the Lord? Does your faithfulness in the kingdom proceed from the ultimate desire for the great reward of heaven? Do you focus on what you are going to receive in eternity? Or, do you focus on the inherent goodness of Jesus Christ? Does your life of faith proceed, not from what you are going to receive, but from the genuine desire to honor the Lord with little thought for yourself? Is there a contradiction in these two ideas? Can they exist harmoniously? Do they both express Biblical truth?

It seems clear that the disciples of Jesus sought some kind of reward from having forsaken their fishing nets and tax booths. If the rich young ruler could somehow gain treasures in heaven, why couldn't the disciples be rewarded for their perceived sacrifices as they followed the Lord? Peter is not rebuked for asking his question. Jesus responded with the promise of blessings in the life to come. Mark's account says that the hundredfold blessings would be realized in *"this life"* (Mark 10:29-31). While the final, ultimate blessings of Christ reach their pinnacle in heaven, there are blessings that we enjoy in this life.

Are believers always the wealthiest people in the world? Do believers always enjoy greater material benefits and opportunities of this life? Of course not! And even when we are able to enjoy what this life has to offer, it often comes with persecution. *"Who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life"* (Mark 10:30). Yet, when we have a heavenly perspective on life, we can greatly enjoy what God gives, whether much or little. Even the cup of cold water received from the Lord is viewed as a great blessing, especially when our focus is on the one who gives that drink.

And remember, *"But many who are first will be last, and the last first"* (Matthew 19:30). Things may be reversed in this life—you may never get your due or just rewards. Yet, in the life to come your reward will be great. And remember, you may have much in this life but have little in the life to come. Is it wrong to desire a blessing for serving the Lord? No! But do not lose sight of the heavenly in your quest for the earthly.

**Randy Harshbarger**

## The Messiah Will Be Cut Off and Have Nothing

In our continuing coverage of the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks we come to this week's title, *"The Messiah Will Be Cut Off and Have Nothing"*. Without being facetious we must ask, "What does it mean?" and "What does it mean?"

It is said that the Messiah would be cut-off after the 62 weeks. That makes sense since he could hardly be 'cut off' before he arrived on the scene, could he? Sometime in the seventieth week, the seven year period following the arrival of the Messiah, would be 'cut off'. What's that mean, 'cut-off'? As one examines the Old Testament usage of this phrase it is seen to mean one of two very clear and related concepts, a violent physical execution of capital punishment or, possibly, a violent and permanent separation of an individual from the people of God. (Gen. 9:11 and Dt. 19:1) The Gospels tell us this occurred after 3 ½ years of Jesus' ministry. This cutting off occurred on the Cross and was the means of fulfillment of all six of the purposes for the Prophecy.

What does it mean, *"and shall have nothing"*? Well, Dan Brown and "The Da Vinci Code" notwithstanding, Jesus had no wife and children to carry on after him. Neither did Jesus leave an estate of any consequence save the cloak some unnamed Roman legionnaire won by lot. Nor did he leave an earthly kingdom to do him honor through the years, nothing the world considers noteworthy. All he left was a blood-bought group of men who turned the world upside down with their message (Acts 17:6). He left the kingdom of God, promised for so many years by the prophets, and preached by the Apostle Paul and others though it led to prison cells and worse.

**Cleveland Reddinger**

## The Desperate Need of This Generation

I'm in real trouble. I need immediate help. You see, my grandparents and parents trusted in Jesus, and now I do too. My condition may not seem tragic to you, but history tells me I'm in danger.

A disturbing pattern emerges from the chronicles of faith. The conviction that blazes brightly in one generation becomes a torch, then an ember, and then cold ash in following generations.

This generational degeneration happens so repetitively in Biblical history you can set your clock by it. It is called "the third and fourth generation problem." It is written in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:5). It lived out in the dark days of the Judges (Judges 2:10). It led to the violent and immoral history of the Kings (1 Kings 11-12; Neh. 8-9). It triggered the failure of the Hebrew church (Heb. 2:1-4).



Our personal history reveals the presence of generational degeneration today. The sacrificial and passionate faith of the first generation is accepted as an important set of doctrines by the second. The third generation continues the traditions of the faith, but they have little inner conviction or practical expression of it. The fourth generation brings the charade of faith to an end. In four generations faith goes from passionate, to important, to cold, to dead.

Now, do you see my dilemma? Are you in the same boat? What will happen to our generation? Or the next!? Many local churches are made up of third and fourth generation believers. Some are spiritually cold and growing restless. The bold repentance and sacrificial faith of their predecessors, is carefully replaced by spiritual convenience to accommodate a worldly lifestyle. If history holds true, the result won't be pretty.

Yes, "the third and fourth generation problem" is a pattern, but it need not be a prophecy! The fire doesn't have to die, it can be rekindled. Every new generation can make a fresh and authentic commitment to worship the Lord their God and serve only Him (**Luke 4:8**). But how?

Surprising lessons are learned from a generation who failed. Their spiritual failure led to the horrific period of the Judges. Their generation was blessed with more land, power and wealth than any previous generation, and they used them to create a hell on earth. Oh, they didn't plan to destroy their society and ruin their children's future. They just failed to see the desperate need of their generation (and ours!).

### **Know the Lord Personally**

First, they had an urgent need to know the Lord personally. The opening words of Judges diagnose the reason for Israel's collapse. *"7 The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel. ... After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel."* (**Judges 2:7,10**)

Israel had a generational problem. It took three generations to go from courageously faithful to practically forgetful. How could this happen?

Certainly, the parents shoulder some of the responsibility. After all, Moses warned parents that their children didn't see the miracles they saw, or hear the thundering voice of God they heard (**Deut. 11:1-9**). So, it was crucial that they model a wholehearted love and service to God (**Deut. 11:13**), and it was necessary that they personally share the story of God with their children (**Deut. 11:18-21**). The spiritual silence of one generation becomes the spiritual indifference of the next.

However, the children bear some of the blame as well! When **Judges 2:10** says, *"they did not know the Lord"* it does not mean they didn't know who God was. Throughout Judges they call out to Him. It means the Lord didn't matter to them. He had no major influence in their lives. They liked the ways of Canaanites! They loved the idols of the land! They found their security and pleasure from their possessions.

Every generation needs to rediscover a passion to

know the Lord, personally and practically in every area of our lives. But, wherever the social eclipses the spiritual and the superficial is preferred to the transformational, you will find a generation of spiritual failures.

### **Be Different from Your World**

This generation has a pressing need to live differently from the world. "Third and fourth generation" Christians know the world is a spiritual graveyard, and yet they want to dress and act like a corpse! In the same way, Israel knew the Canaanites were under the judgement of God, yet they joined in their lifestyle and admired their idols. God said, *"I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land I swore to give to your ancestors. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, 2 and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this?"* (**Judges 2:1-2**)

God asks our generation the same question! We are rescued from the terrifying destiny of this world. How then can we derive our pleasures from its values? How can we align ourselves with its activities? Are the delights of the Lord and the work of His kingdom not enough?

The way to spiritual life for this generation is not by accommodating our faith to our lifestyles, but by conforming our lifestyles to the faith (**Rom. 12:1-2**)! A generation that whines about how their religion is an intrusion to their happiness, is a generation headed for spiritual failure. But, a generation that revels in the beauty of distinction will know the joy of spiritual life.

### **Serve the Lord's Purposes**

This generation doesn't just need to know something, or refrain from something, it urgently needs to do something! It needs to serve the Lord's purposes, not its own. The divine journalist of Judges identifies this as a defining characteristic of a faithful generation. *"7 The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel. 8 Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten"* (**Judges 2:7-8**)

"They served the Lord" is sung at the beginning of Judges, and it is answered by an opposite refrain at the end of Judges, *"everyone did what was right in their own eyes"* (**Judges. 17:6; 21:25**).

We have a choice. Serve the Lord, or serve ourselves. The pressing need of our generation is to make that choice. At the end of the day are we more concerned with our glory or God's; our kingdom or His, our work or His mission? One path leads to the tragic return to the days of the Judges. The other path leads to the useful life and hopeful death of Joshua.

With one breath God could sweep the Canaanites out of the land. Why did God allow them to remain? God tells us, *"I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the Lord and walk in it as their forefathers did."* (**Judges 2:22; 3:4**)

Each generation must make the choice, "Will I live for my God, or for this world?" What choice are you making?

**Tim Jennings; timj.theway@hotmail.com**

**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**

**Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer**

**Deacons:**

**Bill Miller**

**Brandon Jimison**

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### **NEWS AND NOTES:**

#### **PRAYER LIST:**

PLEASE REMEMBER JAN PATRICK,  
STEPHEN KIMKER, STEVE AND  
SUZANNE WIMP, ALMA  
BAUMGARTNER'S MOTHER, AND  
CHRISTIAN SAPITULA.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS -  
FOLLOWING THE MESSIAH  
RON PECK

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE  
CLASS - THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS  
GOVERNMENT  
JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON:  
THE WARRIORS OF GOD



## ***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