

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.

**January
10
2021**

CURRENT EVENTS

Jim Stauffer

How have the events of the last couple of days affected you personally? Nearly everyone who speaks for any length of time these past days has an opinion of just what they mean, how they will change our lives, etc.

Regardless of your political affiliation or preference, let me encourage you to think beyond these events and how they affect you to a consideration of greater events that should have and will continue to affect you in a more personal and lasting way.

God created the entire universe and that includes you and me. Yet, before He did, His omniscience allowed Him to understand what our response to righteous instruction would be and He therefore, planned a way to redeem us from our unrighteousness and reconcile us to Himself (**Eph. 1:3,4; Rom. 5:6-10**).

We know from Scripture He rules in the nations (**Dan. 4:34,35; 2 Chron. 20:6; Rom. 13:1**). Therefore, I cannot alter what the Lord has chosen for leadership of this nation. I can only trust in His love for the faithful even in the face of evil leaders. Jesus made this point abundantly clear to Pilate who boasted of his authority. *"Jesus answered, 'You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.'"* (**John 19:11**)

We know then, the day will come and maybe in our lifetime, when God will judge this nation as He has others before us. But what we know, that enables us to live with that knowledge without fear, is He has promised to be with us always. *"Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,' so that we confidently say, 'THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?'"* (**Hebrews 13:5-6**)

Our confidence in this promise is secured by the knowledge of such events as those with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. We remember He stood by them even when He was punishing their

nation. We conclude the faithful of today can and shall receive support from the Lord to remain faithful even unto the death (**Rev. 2:10**). And even in death He will be with us for we are precious in His sight (**Rev. 14:13; Psa. 116:15**).

Now it is for us to conduct ourselves with the faith and the courage of those who are now able to *....render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.* (**Mat. 22:21**)

Living in the Shadow of Babel

The amount of information racing through our skies and pouring through our cables is staggering. If each packet of data was the weight of an eye lash there would be over 2,400 tons of data produced every second! There are an estimated 10 billion network devices on the planet capable of communicating with each other in a micro-second. The capacity for communication was never so massive. This interaction has certain advantages, but it also introduces many problems.

For example, this connectedness causes political, social and religious trends to spread more rapidly than ever before. "Hot new trends" dash across the country at the speed of light, and no mountain, stream or ocean can stand in their way. Fit in or be left out! Yet, wisdom is most often born through long hours of careful thought. The world of electronic communication gobbles up our time. Time Magazine reports that Americans check their phones 8 billion times a day. Hours are consumed with trivial tidbits about what someone had for breakfast, or a funny monkey photo.

Much of the communication in our culture is actively damaging. It scars our minds with immoral images, molds our values with human wisdom, and troubles our hearts with constant negative news. In less than one

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generation, the most influential voices in our lives come from far beyond our local communities. We depend upon the electronic network for our sense of security and personal significance.

The Way of Babel

There was another time of vast communication. We find the account in **Genesis 11**. *“The whole earth had one language”* (**Gen. 11:1**). Access to information did not result in utopia, but divine judgment and societal collapse. This is the way of Babel.

The people were commanded to go and fill the earth (**Gen. 9:1**). Instead, they chose to stop and build a city. They did this for two reasons. First, to make a name for themselves (**Gen. 11:4**). They sought significance through their own labors. Secondly, they were searching for security (**Gen. 11:4**, *“lest we be scattered”*). After all, “There is safety in numbers,” so they thought.

The shadow of Babel looms large over our information obsessed culture. We are tempted to find our *security* in being a part of the latest trend. It makes us feel “safe” to be in the crowd; doing what is popular. People are often like birds in a field. One bird gets the idea to take off, and the whole flock takes to the sky. Another bird decides to turn left, and they all turn left. Hunters know the flocking nature of birds and use this to kill vast numbers at one time. Satan knows the flocking mentality of Christians and he uses this to snare great numbers of us at one time! Social media is a perfect weapon for his hunt.

We are also tempted to find our *significance* in how many people know our name and support our cause. Our identity is tied to how many people “friend” and “follow” us online. We seek immortality by putting our mark on the web.

The Way of Abraham

The author of Genesis contrasts the way of Babel with the way of Abraham. Abraham is not called to build a city but to leave one. He spent his life as a stranger in a foreign country. His security came from his Lord, not numbers (**Gen. 14:1-17**; **contrast 11:2-4**).

Abraham’s significance came not from what he made, but from what the Lord made of him. God promised, *“I will make your name great”* (**Gen. 12:2**; **contrast 11:4**). Abraham’s value did not come from his family name or his cultural popularity, but that he belonged to the Lord (**Gen. 15:1,6**). Abraham was happy to live in tents, but when he did set his hand to build something it was an altar to worship the Lord (**Gen. 12:7-8**; **contrast 11:3-4**).

The Way Out of Babel’s Shadow

Abraham provides us a clear path out of Babel’s destined ruin. ***Don’t be too impressed with numbers.***

Your significance, dear believer, does not come from how many people you worship with, the number of people you preach to, or how many respond to your Facebook posts. A fascination with numbers will always lead to Babel (**Matt. 7:13**). You are more valuable than you can imagine because you belong to God (**1 John 3:1**). In addition, there is more security in Abraham’s tents than in Babel’s crowds!

Live local. My grocery store has a slogan on the wall, “Buy Local.” The idea is if you buy from local farms you will help people in your community and eat the healthiest foods. Our information age makes us keenly aware of what “others are doing” around the country, and deeply concerned about what is going on around the world. These global concerns often make us blind to the needs right in front of us. The kingdom of God will flourish and we will be more spiritually healthy if we “serve local!” God is big enough to handle the global concerns. He put you in your spot to help the person in front of you. So, put the phone down and look up and serve.

If you must build, build an altar. Babel was a monument to human achievement, and it ended in dust and confusion (**Gen. 11:7-9**). Abraham’s altar, on the other hand, was a reminder of human sin and divine grace (**Gen. 12:7-8**). Our altar is the cross of Christ. There we see ourselves most clearly—hopeless sinners. There we see the love of God most fully (**Rom. 5:8-10**). We mean something to the God of heaven! So, we gladly live in tents, because He prepared for us an eternal city (**Heb. 11:16**), and anything we do for Him is eternally significant (**1 Cor. 15:58**).

It is time to come out from Babel’s shadow and into Abraham’s way.

Tim Jennings; timj.theway@hotmail.com

JOHN 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (NASV). These words, spoken to Nicodemus, declare Jesus’ love for the Jewish teacher; but also, for the whole world. Think of it: Jesus loves me!

The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star, and reaches to the lowest hell; The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win; His erring child He reconciled, and pardoned from his sin. Refrain: Oh, love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and

strong! It shall forevermore endure—The saints' and angels' song. When hoary time shall pass away, and earthly thrones and kingdoms fall, when men who here refuse to pray, on rocks and hills and mountains call, God's love so sure, shall still endure, All measureless and strong; Redeeming grace to Adam's race—The saints' and angels' song. Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made, Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade; To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry; Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky.

Can the mere words of mere mortals do justice to God's love? The familiar song by Fredrick Lehman rings with beautiful prose. But we still know that tongue and pen are not equal to the task as we try to describe and comprehend the scope, the direction, and the depth of God's love. It may be that if we begin to understand our condition in sin, then we can more readily and seriously reflect about heaven's magnanimous offer. Our accountability before God can be painful: how weak we must be if we need rescuing; to even think that something is wrong with my life is insulting.

Jesus died for the whole world; all *can* come to Him and have life. Yet, coming to Christ is not automatic. We must choose to believe that He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior. This is what John's gospel says (**John 20:30-31**). If our response is unbelief, we perish. To perish is not to go out of existence; to perish is to give up the spiritual well-being that Jesus provides. God does not want us to perish; the cross says otherwise. But the choice is ours to make. Some find life; some find death. Some come to the Light; some walk in darkness. Remember Jesus' illustration from the OT about the fiery serpents: sin is a reality, but so is the remedy.

Everlasting life includes immortality but is there more? To live now on this earth for the glory and honor of God is a blessing. The quality of life that true believers enjoy far exceeds any momentary pleasure this world might offer. To truly believe in Christ is to live with the confident expectation that heaven is real; the joy, happiness, and assurance we have now is realized in full when this life is over. Heaven is possible because God loves us. Jesus suffered horribly for you and me. But who are we? We are the ungodly ones for whom Jesus died. The devil doesn't love us; he didn't die for us. Jesus loves us; Jesus died for us.

So, again, here are a few words that speak of God's love, inadequate though they be. What can we do? I know: Let us sing!

Randy Harshbarger

Don't Make Mountains Out of Molehills

This is an important principle for maintaining a loving and happy marriage. It is a means of stating the necessity of keeping things in perspective. Seeing things as they are is a skill that is learned, usually at some cost, and usually with the passing of time. It is essential for withstanding the bumps and bruises that come daily with living in this world.

Jesus mentioned, albeit in passing, the importance of perspective in **John 19:11**, "*Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.*" Jesus was keeping Pilate's responsibility in the matter at hand in perspective, making it neither greater nor less than it actually was. In marriage and in life this is a needed skill.

Most all of us have borne the curse of needing to deal with someone who has no sense of perspective, where every little misstep or misdeed is an earth-shattering event. If you haven't then consider yourself blessed indeed. A perfect place to look for examples of a lack of this skill is in the current political arena. For the last few Presidential terms every slip of the tongue, from holding a water bottle with two hands to not being able to bowl over 45 is made into something dark and sinister by the opposing party. Please! Cut one another some slack!

In marriage especially these little molehills make for some of the most treasured and comical moments of your life together; something to reflect on with joy in the years to come. Just ask me sometime about crunchy rice or ask my wife about Shadow's "hairball treatment". You'll get a humorous story.

Remember: Don't Make Mountains Out of Molehills!

Cleveland Reddinger

Determining truth with objective reasoning

Truth is universal - that is the reason a person sometimes thinks the speaker is aiming every thing he says at him.

Once, when a stubborn disputer seemed unconvinced, Lincoln said, "Well, let's see how many legs has a cow?" "Four, of course," came the reply disgustedly. "That's right," agreed Lincoln. "Now suppose you call the cow's tail a leg; how many legs would the cow have?" "Why, five, of course," was the confident reply. "Now, that's where you're wrong," said Lincoln. "Calling a cow's tail a leg doesn't make it a leg."

Bits and Pieces, July, 1991.

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 Jamison

Joe Hurd

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Check out the following websites:

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist

lenexachurchofchrist.org

News and Notes:

Alma Baumgartner, Jan Patrick, Trudy Mullen, Rene Ratliff, Denese Goring, Rodney Blount and Brooklyn Boyer.

Tracy Richardson is scheduled for surgery 1/11

Pat Gaines; Surgery scheduled for 1/21

Covid – 19 – Jim Ratliff, Jere Carter, L.A. Stauffer

Sunday Morning Bible Class - Messianic Pathway - OT to NT - Jim Stauffer

Wednesday Evening Bible Class - Home and Family - Ron Peck

Sunday Morning Sermon - The True Value of Recreation



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