

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.

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ERRORS RESULTING FROM POOR BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Jim Stauffer

Continuing our discussion of errors that result from poor biblical interpretation, let us turn to the work of the church. The mission it was given by its founder, Jesus Christ.

THE SCRIPTURALLY AUTHORIZED WORK OF THE CHURCH

Preaching the gospel:

The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (**1 Tim. 3:15**). Therefore its responsibility is to present and preserve the truth for the world to hear. Its primary method as an organization is to preach this message of truth. The content of which is the word of God (**John 17:17**).

Examples of such are Barnabas being sent from the church in Jerusalem to strengthen and encourage the church in Antioch (**Acts 11:22**). The church in Thessalonica *sounded out the word* (**1 Thess. 1:8**). Local churches often sent and supported men to preach in areas needing the truth who would not otherwise hear it (**Phil. 4:16,16; 1 Cor. 9:14; 2 Cor. 11:8**). We must call attention to the fact the money arrangements were made and conducted directly between the preacher sent and the church sending. There was not church or other organization serving as a go between.

Edification of the saints:

The church was organized in such a way as to the *building up of itself in love* (**Eph. 4:11-16**). The ability to teach both young and old (**Titus 2:2,6**), babes and mature (**1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14**). As leaders of the church, elders are to be apt to teach (**1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Pet. 5:2**). It is imperative we recognize the proper role and qualifications of elders, pastors or bishops, all different titles for the same men. (**1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4**). A subtle point often overlooked in the discussion of elders is the need for plurality. Never in Scripture do we see an example of a single elder, pastor or bishop ruling over a congregation. It is always a plurality. Surely we can see God's wisdom in such matters. Demagoguery is much more likely and tempting when one man is ruling instead of the natural checks and balances of a plurality.

Benevolence toward the saints:

This area of the work of the church has been

abused more often than any other. Many have concluded erroneously that Jesus set the church up to serve communities in social matters such as feeding and housing the homeless, caring for orphans and widows and generally dealing with the concerns of society. It will be surprising for some to learn the church is never commanded or taught by example or necessary inference to deal with temporal social problems of the community. Biblical teaching concerning the benevolent actions of the church is always directed toward the *saints*. When people read passages such as **James 1:27**, they are often unaware this instruction is to the individual and not the church. Notice passages that deal with the church's responsibility for benevolence and how it applies to those who are the children of God by way of baptism into Christ.

1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 8&9 and Rom. 15:25, deal with the needs of saints in Judea. Churches in Asia were sending relief by the hands of Paul and others. There are many other examples of different situations but two factors are consistent when the church is providing the funds. The relief is always sent directly from the church to the individual (not some other church or agency) and it is always for the *saints*. (**Exa. Acts 2:44,45; 4:34,35; 6:1-6; 11:27-30;**)

So, to conclude our thoughts, we learn from Scripture that the local church is an autonomous group and there is no organized effort authorized in Scripture for the church in a universal sense. All work in preaching and edification and benevolence are accomplished by the local church. The local church preaches the truth, teaches its own and cares for its own. In addition local churches are authorized when they have the capability to send support to gospel preachers to work in areas where the truth needs to be spread and to assist in support of the material needs of saints in other areas as they are unable to sustain themselves.

The church and its mission have been perverted by many who think it is a social institution and therefore responsibility for the material needs of society.

The church Jesus died for is to preach the gospel,

Continued on page 2

edify its local membership and care for needy saints whenever and wherever it has the ability. There is a plan by God and Christ that is obvious in the Scripture. The children of God, servants in the kingdom, are not authorized to organize beyond the local church for its work to be done. We are the servants. We are to do the work. We do not pass that responsibility to some human organization because we believe it will reach farther and wider than God's plan. We cannot improve on His plan. It is designed to make us all we can be as His servants. We will deal with the topic of human institutions being used to accomplish God's work in next week's article.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND

After leaving his boyhood home of Nazareth, Jesus moved to Capernaum, a city situated on the NW shore of the Sea of Galilee. The waters of this small lake drove the economy of the region; soon fishers of fish would become fishers of men. Tax collectors and military men lived in the city, suggesting its importance to Rome in the 1st c. Capernaum became Jesus' base of operations. If Josephus, once the governor of Capernaum can be relied on, this area was no back-water, trivial location; rather, with a population numbering near 200,000, the "Galilee of the Gentiles" was ripe for some good news. John was put in prison by Herod. Now, Jesus began preaching the same message as that of the Baptizer: "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matthew 4:17). This area, long ago decimated by the invading Assyrians, would now house the ultimate teacher; darkness would soon give way to light.

The basic meaning of kingdom in a biblical sense is: *kingship, kingly leadership, rule or reign, an exercise of power*. This definition doesn't point to a territory or realm as we commonly think of when we think of kingdom. In biblical times kingdom equated to the exercise of kingly power; a function but not a title. The kingdom of God refers to the rule of God, or the reign of God (there is no difference in preaching about the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven). Consider **1 Kings 2:12**: "*Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.*" Solomon's authority as king was established, not his territories. Students of the Bible readily remember the use of kingdom throughout the book of Daniel. People living in the 1st c. would know something about kings and kingdoms.

"*The kingdom of heaven*" is a dominant theme in Matthew's gospel. With roots in Judaism Matthew pointed his target audience to the anticipations of OT prophecy. Messianic expectations meant the Jews would be looking for a king (John 6:15). Matthew

traces Jesus' genealogy through David (Matthew 1:1). The *Son of David* is used often in Matthew's account. Jesus was "*born king of the Jews*" (Matthew 2:2). Soon before his death, Jesus rode into Jerusalem as a king (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:5). Jesus spoke of the "*keys of the kingdom*" (Matthew 16:19). His *Sermon on the Mount* is seen as a manifesto of kingdom living.

Kingdom is sometimes used to express the sovereignty of God; God is in control over His world. Inherent in *kingdom* is a king; God is our king; we are His subjects and we should serve Him. Kingdom does involve a realm; God wants to rule and reign in our hearts. Kingdom also anticipates the final, ultimate, eternal kingdom. Matthew speaks of the kingdom as having already been realized in the King (Matthew 11:11); he also anticipates a future kingdom (Matthew 24-25).

If you want to be part of the kingdom, what must you do? You must do what Jesus said to do in Matthew's account of the preaching of the kingdom: *REPENT!*

Randy Harshbarger

TONGUES: NEW TESTAMENT USE

by L.A. Stauffer

Religious leaders of the twenty-first century adamantly contend they are filled with the Holy Spirit, possess the powers of first century apostles, and that God daily confirms the power with miraculous signs. They, of course, do not walk on water, multiply food to feed multitudes of people, and raise men from the dead. But, according to their claim, they heal the sick and speak in tongues. Their practice, however, does not match biblical accounts, especially the claim to speak in tongues.

Tongues Were Languages. The "Pentecostal" experience of the Lord's apostles, for example, contrasts markedly with the "pentecostal" phenomena of today. When the Holy Spirit filled the house where the apostles were sitting and then filled the apostles themselves, the twelve began to speak in the languages of the people who were present. Each visitor at Jerusalem, whether from Rome, Cappadocia, or Egypt, "*heard them speaking in his own language*" (Acts 2:6). In contrast modern tongue-speakers are known for speaking "gibberish" which they shrewdly call heavenly languages or tongues of angels.

Tongues Were Interpreted. Along with the practice of tongue-speaking in the first century was the God-given ability to interpret the tongues. When a disciple spoke before a Greek audience in the language of the Mesopotamians, Spirit-gifted brethren were present to translate the message for the assembled audience. And, they were told, "*if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to*

himself, and to God” (1 Cor 14:18). The present practice of speaking publicly in tongues without an interpretation is a direct violation of the Spirit’s order to the Corinthian brethren.

Tongues Were a Sign. Tongues are in today’s context viewed as a sign of one’s belief and conversion to the Lord. It is claimed that if one has faith and is baptized properly, God will bear witness to his salvation by the gift of tongues. Tongues are unquestionably a “sign”—so says God’s Spirit. But they are not a sign for believers: *“Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to unbelievers” (1 Cor 14:22).*

Speaking in tongues was to accompany the apostles who went into the world to preach the gospel to unbelievers; they were designed to confirm the message to unbelieving hearers (**Mark 16:17-20**). This is what happened at Pentecost when the apostles spoke in *“tongues”*—the languages of unbelieving Jews from all parts of the world (**Acts 2:1-13**). About 3000 were brought to belief that day (**Acts 2:40**).

Tongues Were Regulated. The apostle Paul wrote an entire chapter in **1 Corinthians** to regulate the use of spiritual gifts. Included was the orderliness of speaking in turns. When one was exercising a gift of the Spirit and another wanted to speak, the first person was to be silent and let the other person speak (**1 Cor 14:30**). This regulation, which is totally ignored by tongue-speakers today, applied to both prophets and tongue-speakers. To the prophets Paul wrote: *“And let the prophets speak by two or three...for you can all prophesy one by one” 1 Cor 14:29,31*). So it was to those speaking in tongues: *“if any man speaks in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn” (1 Cor 14:27).*

Tongues Were to Cease. When emphasizing the prime importance of love, the apostle Paul contrasted it to speaking in tongues and the use of other spiritual gifts. Love, the apostle noted in contrast to spiritual gifts, shall never fail. He contends that when knowledge is completed by full revelation of truth, tongues will cease (**1 Cor 13:8-10**). Revelation was completed when the Spirit revealed all truth to apostles and prophets in the first century (**John 16:13; Eph 3:3-5; Jude 3**). Tongues, designed to confirm truth to unbelievers, ceased at that time.

This explains why we only have “gibberish” today and no genuine tongue-speakers. Let’s all be content with the power of the gospel to save us and build us up in Christ Jesus (**Rom 1:16; Eph 4:11-16**).

Taken from preachertrainingclasses.com website

The Fifth Commandment

Following the command to remember the Sabbath Day, the final command dealing exclusively with the Israelites’ relationship with God, Moses writes: *“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in*

the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.” (Exodus 20:12) This is the first commandment which deals primarily with our relationship with other people. Not coincidentally, the Apostle Paul points out in **Ephesians 6:2** that this is the first commandment which has a promise attached to its obedience, *“that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” (vs. 3)*

God seemed to think that this was an important lesson for us to learn. Later in the Scriptures we read *“And he that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.” (Exodus 21:17)* and even later, *“Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.” (Proverbs 23:22)* Now of course, God isn’t thinking of putting a two year old throwing a temper tantrum to death. Children are just children, after all. But that same child, reaching maturity, acting that way towards their parents was certainly liable to the death penalty.

Just a bit of thought about this particular commandment leads us to the realization that its burden falls on the parents. Whose job is it to see that the children learn to obey their mother and father? Dad’s and Mom’s, of course! Read **Deuteronomy 21:18-21** and see if the pain of failure in this regard doesn’t fall on the parents just as surely as on the children. What Father or Mother, knowing this command, seeing God’s view of its importance could fail to teach their children diligently to be reverent toward themselves? Only those who hated their children!

Cleveland Reddinger, El Dorado church of Christ

VERIFYING WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT

Acts 17:11 reads *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”* Obviously this is a highly approved example - intended for us to follow (**Hebrews 6:12**).

The gospel is to be preached (**Mark 16:15**) and it is the responsibility of the listener (any listener) to examine what is said, comparing it with the scriptures to verify if it is really so. If it does concur with God’s word, it is our obligation to comply. If it does not concur, we are not to pay it any mind. **Acts 17:11** teaches this verification process on our part is to occur regularly. And we have to possess enough courage to run counter to our parents, friends, anybody around us (**Luke 14:26**) if that is where the truth leads (**John 8:32**).

Are we willing to do such? Are we studying God’s word as we ought?

Patrick Donahue patdonahue@bellsouth.net

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

Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER JAN PATRICK AND J.R.DANIEL IN YOUR PRAYERS AND VISITS THIS WEEK. ALSO J.T. PECK HAS RETURNED HOME BUT CONTINUES IN NEED OF PRAYER. OUR BROTHER IN CHRIST, GRANT CLOTHIER PASSED AWAY AT THE TIME OF PUBLISHING. MORE INFO ON ANY SERVICES LATER.

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?
(AND WHAT DO THEY NEED?)



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