

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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HIS KINGDOM, OUR SERVICE

by Jim Stauffer

In **2 Sam. 7:18-29** we observe a conversation, a prayer, from David to His God. This prayer follows the incident where Nathan advises him he will not be the one to build a house for God. This prayer comes after Nathan has recounted unto David, at the behest of God, his pathway to becoming King of Israel.

David had been a shepherd for his father's sheep, the most unlikely son in the eyes of Samuel to be selected as King over God's people. Yet, as Samuel visited the family of Jesse where God had sent him to find one of Jesse's sons to be the King, he went from the oldest to the youngest until he came to David and God said, *Arise and anoint him; for this is he.* (**1 Sam. 16:12**)

Sometime before, following Saul's sin of offering a burnt offering in the place of Samuel, he was told by the prophet that God had rejected him as King and had chosen one, *a man after His own heart* (**1 Sam. 13:14**).

As David prays to God, he acknowledges his unconventional ascension to the throne. He further recalls and accepts God's promise to make his throne eternal in nature. This was revealed to David by Nathan in **2 Sam. 7:13**.

The tenor of David's prayer is to accept whatever role God has chosen for him. He was happy to have been able to provide leadership for the people of God. He would ask nothing more. We learn from the greatest King of Israel that he simply played a role in the plan of God. While being King over God's people, he remained a servant of God.

Isaiah prophesies of a Servant God will bring forth at a future time (**Isa. 42:1-4**). The passage teaches us this Servant is One in whom the soul of God delights. God will put His Spirit upon Him. He will be a Servant of persuasion and not one who rules physically over the people. *He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice.* (**Isa. 42:2,3**)

We know through further study of Scripture that this Servant is Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. **Isaiah 53** details for us the ignominious treatment leading to His death, a death for the sins of a world who was His enemy (**Rom. 5:8-10**).

The apostle Peter describes our service by reminding us of His service, *For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.* (**1 Pet. 2:21-24**) He further describes Christ's sacrifice as, *a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.* (**1 Pet. 1:18**)

Now let us recall, Jesus was the promised son of Mary, of whom it was said prior to His birth, *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.* (**Luke 1:33,34**)

To be clear, reigning over the house of David does not mean literal, physical Israel. We come to understand that from the teaching of Christ concerning His Kingdom. It was to be one He built even to have power beyond the grave; yes a spiritual Kingdom (**Mat. 16:18,19; John 18:36 cf. Rom. 9:6,7**).

We are further told by the prophet that this Kingdom is one of justice and righteousness (**Isa. 9:7**).

Paul then describes the change that comes over mankind when he submits to Christ the King, as a change from slavery to sin to slavery to righteousness (**Rom. 6:17,18**). This, he says, occurs when we are freed from our sins.

Now let us bring this all down to us. All those in His Kingdom are a special possession, purchased by the blood of Christ (**1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:14**). Paul explains it to Titus this way, *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:11-14)*

Now, only one question remains for every man. Do we want to be a servant? Do we want to spend eternity in heaven with God? We must do the service to receive the reward.

MARRIAGE DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE # 2

"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 19:2)

In the very beginning everything God created was good with one exception. Because it was *"not good for man to be alone,"* God filled this need on Adam's part. Adam, as created by God, sought companionship. After seeing and naming the animals, he was still alone. He could not be fruitful and multiply with the animals. Eve was presented to Adam; the man now understood that his need was now filled. This first couple began their life together enjoying God's gift to them. Indeed, marriage is good; it is a good gift from God.

Evidently, the Pharisees were not content with what God did in giving marriage. Why else would they be asking about the possibility of divorce? Jesus' reference to **Deuteronomy 24** pointed to the hardness of heart on the part of God's people. Instead of one man and one woman joined as husband and wife for all time, the Jews were seeking some kind of loophole even in God's word. Jesus had already said (**Matthew 5:31-32**) that divorce was prohibited except in cases of unchastity and if you marry after a divorce, you commit adultery. Do the questions of the Pharisees reveal an underlying attempt to separate marriage from God's original intent? Jesus is quite clear in **Matthew 19:9** that there is only one reason for the dissolving of the marriage relationship; immorality on the part of either the husband or wife allows for divorce and the subsequent remarriage of the innocent party (**see Mark 10:11-12**). Forgiveness can take place; the marriage doesn't necessarily have to end in divorce.

Jesus' teaching as found in Matthew's gospel would certainly be different from the world of the Jews and from the 1st c. context of marriage. Marriage was

valued in the 1st c. primarily for identification; that is, you were married, had children, and those offspring were identified with you and your family; they did not have to go through life as orphans or castoffs. The man was then free to seek other sexual relationships as long as another man's wife was not involved. Homosexual relationships, if so desired, were allowed. Can we see the radical nature of Jesus' teaching? Not only does Jesus seek to correct Jewish misconceptions and outright distortions of the Law of Moses, He also presented a radical correction to the godlessness and immorality that dominated particularly Roman culture.

What Jesus taught did not sit well with many in the 1st c. His teaching was challenged, disagreed with, and often ignored. Sadly, so it is today. Remember that Matthew is telling us about true kingdom living. Remember that this includes what Jesus said in **Matthew 19**.

Randy Harshbarger

If There Is No God: Then NOTHING is Actually Wrong!

Two kids on the corner, arguing: "You can't do that!" "O yeah? Who says?" "My dad says we can't do that!" "Yeah, well, your dad's not my boss, so tough!" We've all heard it before. Maybe we remember having that conversation ourselves not so long ago. Two important things to note are that even youngsters understand, 1. Every law has a lawgiver and, 2. That lawgiver must have authority over those to whom the law applies; otherwise the law is null and void.

The import is simply this: Without an Omnipotent Creator to whom we all are responsible then there is neither natural nor moral law, and therefore, there are no moral wrongs! No Lawgiver, No Law! It's just that simple. For example, the defense at Nuremburg argued that Nazis were simply obeying the laws of their own country, Germany, and that there was no basis for the trial. The prosecution argued successfully that there was a law higher than that of any one nation, the Law prohibiting Murder, the taking of innocent human life. Nazi Germany had redefined that law, which it had respected and enforced prior to becoming socialist, to exclude those of Jewish identity. But they were not the giver of the Law and therefore could not change it. If we accept that the Nazis were wrong, and almost all do, then there MUST be a Lawgiver: God.

If, however, we deny the existence of God then we must also accept that the Nazis, while committing distasteful acts, committed no moral evil in the least! You must also be willing to accept that if YOU were on the receiving end of those acts you would have no reason to complain, as they would have done you no wrong.

Cleveland Reddinger

Rightly Dividing the Word of God

by Joe R. Price

Did you know that the Bible talks about the hole in the ozone layer? Or, that the apostle Paul predicted Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost? Well, neither did I! But, back in 1990 I received a notice from "The Omega-Letter" which set me straight. According to that organization, **Revelation 16:8** tells of the hole in our atmosphere, and **1 Thessalonians 5:3** foretells a speech given by Mikhail Gorbachev in November 1987.

These are but two illustrations of the numerous distortions of the word of God with which we are continually bombarded. No wonder so many people ridicule the Bible and those who would order their lives by it. What can we learn from the foregoing examples of false teaching?

First, rest assured that the Bible can be understood. God has revealed His will to man; it is no longer a mystery (**Eph. 3:3-5**). The Bible can be understood.

When we understand the Bible the way God wants us to, we will understand it alike. This is not a popular view of God's word these days, but the logic is sound – and scriptural: *"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is"* (**Eph. 5:17**); *"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (**1 Cor. 1:10**). Because so many people say so many different things about what the Bible teaches, many are inclined to accept the notion that "you can prove anything by the Bible." While many have tried to prove many things by the Bible, that does not mean they have succeeded.

No, you cannot prove whatever you please by the Bible. Assert and speculate? Yes. But prove? No. The Bible calls such endeavors the twisting of scriptures, and warns that in doing so one loses his soul (**2 Pet. 3:15-16**). Do not let what others say the Bible teaches keep you from personally studying the Bible in order to learn and obey what it really teaches.

How can you be sure that what you are being taught is in fact what the Bible teaches? Be careful to not depend on someone else's study of the Bible as the measure of your faith. While God wants His word to be taught, He certainly does not want us to blindly follow the teacher (**Acts 8:30-35; Matt. 15:14**). Like the ancient Bereans, you must *"search the Scriptures daily to find out whether"* the things you are taught are so (**Acts 17:11**). Because they actually examined the Scriptures, many of them believed the gospel (**Acts 17:12**). So can you.

To properly understand the Bible you need to be reading it. Bible reading and study enables one to be *"rightly dividing the word of truth"* (**2 Tim. 2:15**). You must spend time with God's word if your goal is to use it properly. My friend, if your time with the Bible consists

only of listening to sermons and attending Bible classes a couple of times a week, you are ripe for some false teacher to pick! The apostle John warned Christians that many false prophets are in the world and that we must test their teaching against the apostles' doctrine (**1 Jno. 4:1, 6**). Only by accurate and consistent use of God's word can this be accomplished. To accurately use God's word we must give *"attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine"* (**1 Tim. 4:13**).

Another thing needed in assessing truth is how we approach Bible study. That is, do you study it with your mind already made up about the subject you are studying? An open mind, willing to do God's will, is essential when studying the Bible. *"If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority"* (**Jno. 7:17**). Do you approach Bible study determined to prove what you already believe, or with a willingness to obey whatever you learn from your study (even if it refutes your present belief and practice)? Those who rejected Jesus as the Son of God had this problem, for Jesus rebuked them in **John 5:39**: *"You search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Me."* The Jews had made up their minds that Jesus was not the Savior. They thought they had found eternal life in the Scriptures, but by rejecting Jesus, those very Scriptures, which testified of Him, exposed their spiritual death. As Jesus said, *"for if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me"* (**Jno. 5:46**). They went to the scriptures with a preconceived notion, and set out to uphold their preconception regardless of the evidence to the contrary. What a shame.

We must maintain an *"honest and good heart"* that will hear the word of God, examine it, believe it and then obey it (**Lk. 8:15**). An open mind, an open heart and an open Bible will bring souls to faith and salvation in Jesus (**Rom. 1:16; 10:13-17; Acts 17:11-12; Jas. 1:21-22**).
Taken from the Mary Street Messenger

The great violinist, Niccolo Paganini willed his marvelous violin to city of Genoa on condition that it must never be played. The wood of such an instrument, while used and handled, wears only slightly, but set aside, it begins to decay. Paganini's lovely violin has today become worm-eaten and useless except as a relic. A Christian's unwillingness to serve may soon destroy his capacity for usefulness.

[J.K. Laney, Marching Orders, p. 34.](#)

Matt. 25:30 *And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

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.

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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

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SUNDAY SERMON:
THE CONVERGENCE OF FAITH
AND EVIDENCE



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