

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.

December

27

2020

IS MY WEALTH A TOOL OR AN IDOL?

Jim Stauffer

In our daily Bible reading, Roberta and I came across this text which seems so appropriate to every age of man from the beginning. **“What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, Or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork When he fashions speechless idols.**

“Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, ‘Awake!’ To a mute stone, ‘Arise!’ And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it.

“But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.” (Habakkuk 2:18–20)

While the current season is manufactured in the hearts of men, it is not without value. Most of us devote our thoughts to others at this time of year. We try to watch ourselves to be especially kind and considerate of our friends, loved ones and even our enemies. In that sense it often serves as clarion call to be exactly what we are called to be as disciples of the Lord (**1 Pet. 2:21ff**).

This text, however, deals with a different issue with Judah, that we suffer from today as well. It is the subject of idolatry. Now we are quick to deny being idolaters, but let us actually consider our lifestyles and see if there is a tinge of it or even a considerable amount of idolatry in the planning and conduct of our lives here on earth.

Our wealth

There is no denying we are wealthier than any generation of people who have ever inhabited the earth. While a million dollars does not go as far as it once did, there are more millionaires in this world today than ever before. And just so we don't point the finger at others, many brethren have been this successful financially. There is nothing inherently wrong with wealth as we will illustrate later. But it clearly presents temptations that alternative conditions

do not (**Mat. 6:19-21**). It is more challenging to meet the Lord's expectations on laying up treasures in heaven for the wealthy than the poor.

The comfort our wealth brings

Many of the worries and concerns men have here on earth are of a material nature. This is natural since we are fleshly beings located here temporarily. We seek to improve the conditions of our existence and, again there is nothing wrong with that. The issue spiritually is when that takes precedence over living our lives in view of eternity. Thus the admonition of the Lord again (**Mat. 6:25-34**). This does not preclude one securing a better home or clothing, but it does teach us not to trust in the material things in this life and to be distracted from the greater value in trusting in the Lord first and caring for these things secondarily. When we fail to put the Lord ahead of these material matters we are following the footsteps of those being warned by the prophet Habakkuk. We are not to be taught by wealth, for it teaches falsehood. We cannot communicate with our wealth and receive appropriate instruction from it. And when we try we are failing to listen to the **Lord in His holy temple...**, and we then are not silent before Him. Much like when Peter was reprimanded by God (**Mat. 17:5**).

Do we depend upon wealth or use it?

As we continue to pursue the point of wealth becoming an idol, let us try to honestly determine if we depend on our wealth for comfort and security or if we use it to do the good things God has in mind for the wealthy. The well known verse in **1 Tim. 6:10** teaches us **the love of money is the root of all evil....** That text is not speaking to wealthy people in particular. It is speaking to those greedy for the benefits of more money than they have. As a result he gives the following admonition to those who are wealthy, **“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to**

be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.” (1 Timothy 6:17–19)

The wealthy person can be just as faithful to the Lord without being an idolater as the poor. He may have more obstacles, but trusting in the Lord who blessed him with wealth and using that wealth to serve the Lord’s wishes is exactly the reason he has it.

The Son of God

Jesus answered and said to him, ...*“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel” (John 1:48,49).* John’s gospel will build faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God; He alone can provide life to all who will believe **(John 20:30-31)**. These early encounters with Jesus show curiosity; they also show faith—embryonic faith—but faith nonetheless. Consider Nathanael’s recognition and declaration about Jesus.

“Rabbi, you are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.” Nathanael is recognizing exactly who Jesus is. The earlier declaration of the same truth by John the Baptist becomes clearer; there was testimony; now there is evidence. Jesus said: “I am indeed the Son of God. I know about you, about your character, about your whereabouts.” As Jacob the Supplanter **(John 1:51)** changed his way of thinking after being in God’s presence, Nathanael knows now that something good can come out of Nazareth. Who could act in such a way except Deity? No wonder the disciples believed that they had found the Messiah!

The Son of God is the title used characteristically in John’s gospel. The Son’s relationship with the Father is unique. God gave His *only begotten* Son for the sins of the world. While there is a sense in which God has many sons, Jesus bears a relationship to the Father that is not shared by anyone else. How could it be otherwise? Jesus was in the bosom of the Father. He and the Father are one. Apart from the Father, Jesus could do nothing. In Jesus’ death, we see His love; we also see the love of the Father.

Nathanael also said of Jesus: *“You are the King of Israel.”* Jews would be familiar with kings—their own kings who ruled over Israel—and Roman kings who then dominated the world. Now, there is another king with a different kind of kingdom. Here is Nathanael, an Israelite, who gets the point. Here is Jesus, fulfilling

the hopes and dreams of God’s chosen people. Jews could come to Jesus, not as Jews, but as believers **(John 1:12)**. The title *The Son of God* is loaded with Messianic implications. *“I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men” (2 Samuel 7:14).* *“I will declare: The Lord has said to Me, you are My Son, Today I have begotten You” (Psalm 2:7).* *“I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him” (Daniel 7:13).* OT background helps us understand the claims Jesus makes. Can we agree with Peter? *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:69).*

John chapter one begins and ends with the Deity of Christ. All need to see Jesus for who He is—the Son of God. This is what Nathanael saw. In fact, he saw far more than he expected to see when he first came to Jesus. He now sees the Son of Man, God in the flesh. Whatever Nathanael might have been doing under the fig tree, he now begins his walk with Jesus.

Randy Harshbarger

“Built!” Not “Found!”

I often hear people talking, especially on television, about “finding love”. The rom-coms on TV act as though love were some animal lurking about in the shadows and we have to look for it and discover it before it slips away perhaps never to be seen again and leaving one forever in a lurch without hope. They also portray love as though it can disappear at a moment’s notice once it’s been discovered and, well, it’s just gone!

I’m sorry but that’s just hogwash! It’s a lie perpetrated by the devil who is the *“Father of Lies” (John 8:44)*. It’s a lie because it contradicts what we see in the scriptures. Case in point: **Ephesians 5:25** says *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her”*. That, my friends, is a command! It is not an option and it has no qualifications. You can’t say, “But she doesn’t...!” because it doesn’t change the command for you to love her. Case in point: **Titus 2:3f** says *“that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor....that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children”*. Love is taught and learned.

Look at it this way. Did the Romans find Rome and move in? Or did they build it over time as the result of choosing to build it and making sacrifices and

investing labor and sweat and tears and blood? The answer is obvious! They chose to build. And true love is done in the same way: by making millions of tiny choices over time to build and edify and encourage over the years God gives you to spend together.

Satan gives us his lie so that we'll cheat ourselves out of everything that true love has to offer! Don't fall for it!

Cleveland Reddinger

Obituary for Jon E. Coones

Jon E. Coones, 57, of Shawnee, KS passed away Sunday, December 20, 2020 at his home. Jon was born December 2, 1963 in Kansas City, KS the son of Joe and Joann Coones. He worked as a courtesy clerk for Price Chopper. He loved to go on walks with his mom and loved dogs. He is preceded in death by his grandparents and a sibling, David Coones. He is survived by his parents, Joe and Joann; and two siblings, Timothy Coones and Pamela Beneke (Lane). Private funeral services will be held Tuesday, December 29, 2020 at Maple Hill Funeral Home. Services will be live streamed on Facebook at <https://fb.me/e/1Ok416Mxl> beginning at 10:00 AM. All are invited to the graveside service beginning around 11:00 AM Tuesday at Maple Hill Cemetery.

Editor's note:

The following article most accurately describes the life of Jon Coones and the legacy he left for us all.

Be Ye Kind

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted. forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has forgiven you"
(Ephesians 4:32)

Being kind to others is a sign of a heart of compassion, care and concern for others. It shows a disposition on our part to do good to others, being willing to help and encourage them along life's pathway. I wonder how much pain, and heartache would be eliminated in all of our lives if everyone adhered to this divine injunction? If plain, everyday kindness ruled the day, how many of the problems that arise between individuals, within families and even among brethren would be solved almost immediately?

Kindness is one of the most beautiful qualities of life and it is an unfailing mark of the child of God. I once read of a bible class teacher who was teaching some young children about the *"loving kindness of the*

Lord" (Psalms 25:6). He asked them if they knew the meaning of loving kindness. Several thoughts were spoken but one little boy just summed it all up when he said, "If I was real hungry and you gave me a peanut butter sandwich, that would be kindness but if you put jelly on it too, that would be loving kindness" I truly believe that loving kindness as defined by that little boy simply means going the second mile, doing more than what is expected. All of us would do well to cultivate loving kindness into our everyday lives.

The next time you have a warm hearted impulse to say or do something nice to someone, do it. How many times have we failed to say or do something that would have sent a ray of sunshine into their life lifting their spirit and then later said to our self, "I should have. . . ." Good intentions not acted on avail nothing.

As I thought about being kind, I came across these words from Ralph Waldo Emerson, "You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late". Food for thought, isn't it?

Kindness has the power to open doors, remove obstacles and tear down walls. Kindness will often conquer when knowledge, wisdom and even truth will not soften a heart that is in error or in need of help and encouragement. Kindness and especially loving kindness, has the power to drive away the dark clouds of sorrow, heaviness and discouragement that so often strike the human frame. May we ever be kind and tenderhearted because even the smallest act of kindness may change someone's life forever.

One last thought, when we are kind and tenderhearted toward others, it will always fill our hearts with joy. lift our spirits and be pleasing to the Lord. To God be the glory!

Charles Hicks, White House Tennessee
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"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:4-7)

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

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:" (Philippians 1:1)

NEWS AND NOTES:

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

Pat Gaines; Surgery scheduled for 1/21
Tracy Richardson is scheduled for surgery 1/11

The brother of Judy Root has Covid-19
Jim Ratliff, husband of Rene has Covid-19
Remember Joe and Joann Coones as they mourn the death of their son Jon.

Sunday AM Bible Class - Evidences
Bill Miller
Wednesday PM Bible Class - Parables
Brethren of the Congregation

Sunday Sermon - I Must Be Like Abraham
All classes and worship are carried on zoom.



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