

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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JEHOIAKIM'S KIN

PART ONE
by Ted J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION

King Josiah of Judah was a godly king and the father of Jehoiakim. During Josiah's reign the book of the law of God was found in the neglected temple (2 Kings 22 & 23). Josiah's reaction was that **he wanted to hear what the word of God had to say** and he sought for the priests to further inquire as to God's revealed will for Judah. For he noted, "Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according to all that which is written concerning us" (2 Kings 22:13). With this understanding, Josiah launched into the reforms necessary to restore the knowledge of and respect for God's word as it was given through Moses (2 Kings 23:25). This was a tremendous godly example for his children to see and follow.

However, the events leading to Josiah's unnecessary death, show that it could have been avoided if he had consulted God before he acted. The ruler of Egypt, Pharaoh Necho, came up to join Assyria in war against the rising power of Babylon. For some reason not explained in Scripture, Josiah went out to battle against Egypt in this campaign. Necho sent word to Josiah not to impede his advance, "for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, **and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God**, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo" (2 Chronicles 35:20-22). Josiah had been wise enough and concerned enough earlier to ask

about the Lord's will, saying, "Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found . . ." (2 Kings 22:13). It was this attitude that pleased God and He commended Josiah, "Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord" (2 Kings 22:18-20). Josiah could have had a natural death and been "gathered into [his] grave in peace" if he had kept that desire to obey God above all personal desire. His failure to confirm Necho's claim that he was on a mission from God led to a premature death. This was a bad example to leave for one's children.

After Josiah's death, the people anointed one of his sons, Jehoahaz, to be king. However, since Pharaoh Necho had recently established control over Judah, he removed Jehoahaz and enthroned Eliakim, another son of Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:29-37). Jehoiakim reigned for eleven years (ca. 609-598 B. C.), and, contrary to the overall righteous reign of his father, Jehoiakim was a wicked king who cared not for God's word nor God's people (2 Kings 23:29-37). Most of the information about Jehoiakim is found in the prophetic book of Jeremiah.

JEHOIAKIM'S CONTEMPT FOR GOD

A part of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry was during Jehoiakim's reign (Jeremiah 1:1-3). Jeremiah, chapter 36, gives a record of one of Jehoiakim's most blatant acts in defiance of God. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, God spoke to Jeremiah, telling him to take "a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations [Gentiles], from the day I spoke unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day" (Jeremiah

36:1-2). God hoped Judah would fear and repent so that He could forgive them (verse 3). Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, "wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him" (verse 4).

Since Jeremiah had been confined and could not go to the temple, he sent Baruch to read the prophecy to the people (verses 5-10). Some of Jehoiakim's officers became excited and disturbed, summoning Baruch to read Jeremiah's prophecy to a select number of princes and rulers in Judah. "When they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said to Baruch, we will surely tell the king all these words" (verses 11-16).

When Jehoiakim's close advisors told him what they had heard, he sent to have the scroll read to him by Jehudi, one of his court officers. The king was seated in his winter house with a fire in the hearth before him. What followed is spine-chilling to those who love, respect, and fear God's word. After Jehudi had read a few columns of writing from the scroll, king Jehoiakim took a knife and began cutting pieces from the scroll, casting them into the fire before him, repeating the process "until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth" (verses 20-23). The king and his attendants were so hardened against God's word that "they were not afraid, nor rent [tore] their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants" (verse 24). Only two of all those present made any effort to persuade the king not to burn the scroll of God's word, "but he would not hear them" (verse 25). When the king then tried to have Jeremiah and Baruch imprisoned, "God hid them" (verse 26).

Jehoiakim then discovered that, in reality, God's word indestructible. God simply told Jeremiah to write another scroll and Baruch "wrote

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therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words" (verses 27-32). For his sins, Jehoiakim had been promised that he would be buried with "the burial of an ass [donkey, NKJV], dragged out and cast beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 22:19). His dead body would be exposed to the heat of the day and frost of the night, with no one lamenting for him (22:18; 36:30). We do not know precisely how or when Jehoiakim died, but it is believed that after he was taken to Babylon (2 Chronicles 35:5-6), he was later returned to Judah and died in a rebellious act against Nebuchadnezzar, either in a battle outside Jerusalem or that he was assassinated and thrown over the city walls to placate Nebuchadnezzar. Which ever is the case, his attitude against God's word did not change what God had written against him or Judah.

JEHOIAKIM'S KIN

While Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin (also known as Coniah in Jeremiah 22:24-30), was king only three months, he acted much like his father, following in his wicked

footsteps (2 Chronicles 35:8-10). Though we are about 2500 years removed from the time of Jehoiakim, he still has his kin (relatives) who challenge God's word.

Remember that Jesus said that when people acted in the same manner as another person, present or past, one could be said to be the kin of that person because of the likenesses involved. We use the same language today. For example, Christ told the unbelieving Jews who wanted Him dead that they had Satan for a father, for he was a murderer and a liar and they were acting the same way (John 8:39-47). While the Jews claimed Abraham for their father, Jesus pointed out that they did not act as Abraham did. Abraham "saw" the gospel of Christ by faith and rejoiced in it, while the Jews rejected Him (John 8:53-59; Galatians 3:7-9).

One does not have to literally "burn" the Scriptures to be related to Jehoiakim by action. The next article (Part Two) will seek to identify some of Jehoiakim's kin, those who in some significant way are showing contempt for what God's word says to them and us all.

THE ROAD TO DENVER

by Bob Winton

On April 20, 1999, two young high school students, ages seventeen and eighteen, walked into their school building at Denver, Colorado, armed with guns and bombs. When the day was over, thirteen people had been slain and the two culprits had committed suicide. The nation was shocked. What could have led to such a catastrophe? Could it have been foreseen? Could it have been prevented?

That such a scene would take place could have been anticipated because of certain other events and factors. Earlier similar events had occurred in Kentucky, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Oregon. Until such a trend is curtailed, other such events are likely to happen again. There have been other episodes of rampages, in the workplace, by disgruntled employees. What is done at one

place might be done at another. The powerful influence of example is difficult to over-estimate. The power of movies, television programs, and even music, can also motivate misguided minds to all kinds of mischief.

The effect of the judicial decree outlawing biblical morality from public school classrooms may be discerned in the tragic events at Denver. Before the Bible was evicted from the classroom, at least some moral instruction was inculcated in the students. Now, our young people are taught that they are just another species of animal, differing from the other creatures only in intelligence. If people are convinced that they are no better or different from cattle, there will be no moral restraint among them, for there is no morality in a herd of beasts.

Many religionists must accept partial responsibility for what happened at Denver. Centuries ago, many who were called Christians decided to reject God's pattern for being saved from past sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). They likewise adulterated his pattern for acceptable worship (John 4:24; Col. 3:16-17; 2 John 9). They had already changed other aspects of the biblical pattern for the Lord's church, including its organization (cf. Phil. 1:1). It was only natural that they should also make unauthorized changes to God's standard of morality.

The Bible claims to be the inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and complete will of God (Tim. 3:16-17). These assertions are fully vindicated by internal evidence (e.g., fulfilled prophecy; historical and geographic accuracy; scientific fore-knowledge). External evidence offers support (it is still here despite having many powerful foes: 1 Pet. 1:22-25).

Religious leaders have convinced many that God's love overshadows God's law, ignoring the fact that God's grace is expressed through His law (Rom. 5:21; 10:1-3; Acts 10:34-35; Titus 2:11-12; 3:3-5; cf. Psa. 119:172). They have persuaded millions that God's law of marriage-divorce-remarriage no

longer applies (Matt. 19:9; cf. 24:35). Therefore, homes are rent asunder by unscriptural divorces and remarriages, and great harm is wrought within the children. These religionists have induced many to believe that homosexuality is consistent with the gospel, despite the plain affirmations of the sacred text to the contrary (Rom. 1:18,24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). Some of them have even tried to justify lying and stealing. Likewise, some foster the woman's right to choose abortion, thus giving their approval for the murder of unborn babies.

With these facts in evidence, perhaps we ought to be surprised that the Denver incident had not already occurred, or that far worse had not happened. With the removal of the Bible from public schools and many children being deprived of its moral standard, we should not be stunned to hear of such outrages. Since World War II, public morality in America has noticeably declined, especially during the past thirty years. Unless the trend is reversed, we can expect that gross immoral conduct, criminal activity, and even greater outrages, will continue. What else can we expect, when civil rulers flaunt their rejection of biblical morality, when religious leaders repudiate biblical truth, and when the judicial system offers more justification to the criminal than justice for the innocent!

Why do such outrageous incidents as that at Denver occur? There have always been outlaws, thieves, murderers, and aberrant moral conduct. As long as mankind lives in earthly environs, many will choose to do wrong. The individual's spirit might want to do the right thing, but the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41; Rom. 3:23). When the only genuine power to improve human conduct is removed, the moral climate can only be eroded more and more, and horrible crimes and offenses will be increased and intensified.

Mankind's greatest problems are spiritual. The only real solution to the great dilemmas is the gospel. The Arab-Israeli conflict (and all

other such strife) could be resolved if both sides would sincerely believe and obey the gospel (Eph. 2). The single greatest cause of crime and trouble in our world is selfishness, an evil disposition that can be solved by the gospel (Matt. 7:12; Mark 12:29-31; Phil. 2:1-16). The onerous burden of despair, which triggers much of society's ills, can be eased by the hope provided by the gospel (Rom. 8:18, 24-25). The guilt of all past sins can be removed by sincere obedience to the gospel (Rom. 6:1-4,16-18; Heb. 8:12; 1 Tim. 1:13-15), restoring fellowship with the Creator and enlivening the heart with joyful hope (1 Pet. 1:3-5; Acts 20:32).

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever . . . And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you*" (1 Pet. 1:22-25).

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WORSHIP

BIBLE LESSON NUMBER EIGHT

by Richard England, Sr.

"Worship" is a word in our language used to translate a number of different Hebrew and Greek words which mean to bow down, do obeisance, glory, esteem, to be reverential, pious, to serve and to venerate. When one really understands the nature of God and appreciates Him, he will want to pay the proper tribute and service to Him. With this desire to properly worship God, one will search the scriptures to see what it is that pleases Him. Obviously, God does not think like men do. His ways are not as man's.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Knowing this, we become aware that there must be a revelation from God to inform us of His will. According to **1 Corinthians 2:11-13**, there has been such a revelation.

It is possible for people to worship God in a fashion that is not acceptable to God. One must of necessity do "*the will of the Father*" (**Matthew 7:21-23**). To teach and practice that which men have devised makes one's worship vain (**Matthew 15:9**). Worshiping in ignorance is not sufficient. Paul told the idol worshipers at Athens that their ignorant worship, even though they thought they had made adequate provision for any god they might have overlooked, was that from which they should repent (**Acts 17:22-31**).

True worship must be "*in spirit and in truth*" (**John 4:23,24**). The attitude of heart, as well as accuracy of activity, makes a difference in worship (**Matthew 15:8; 1 Corinthians 5:8**). Nevertheless, attitude alone is not sufficient.

"Truth," as used in the Bible, is the word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ (**Colossians 1:5**). To worship "*in truth*" is to worship as directed by the gospel. We are not under the Old Law, the Law of Moses, and are not obligated nor obliged to offer the services it required. For example, we are not to offer animal sacrifices nor burn incense as they did under the Law. We must do only that which we find in the New Testament, the "*will*" by which we are sanctified (**Hebrews 10:10**). When we know what it teaches and understand how the early church under the watchful eyes of the inspired apostles worshiped, then we will know what God would have us do in our worship of Him.

After the people of the day of Pentecost had heard the gospel and had been baptized for the remission of sins "*they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (**Acts 2:42**). They taught and practiced what the apostles told them to teach and practice. If we, from the heart, teach and practice

the same things, we will be continuing "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship."

Jesus, by express statements and personal example, taught His disciples to pray (**Matthew 5:44; 6:6-13; 14:23; Luke 22:39-42**). The early Christians prayed together in their worship, in private, and at all times (**Acts 12:5; 16:25; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17**).

They also sang psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (**Acts 16:25; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16**).

Preaching and teaching was very much a part of their worship and service to God. This was done in their assemblies, in public places and in private (**Acts 2; 3; 18:26; 20:7; 2 Timothy 4:2**).

They were commanded to give of their material possessions to relieve the needs of others (**Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2**).

They ate the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week in remembrance of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, examining themselves and looking forward to His second coming, according to His promise (**Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29**).

These five things they did as acts of worship. This is what we are to do if we want to be like them. Anything less is not enough; anything more is too much. It is our obligation to do only what is authorized (**Colossians 3:17**). An example of doing what God has not authorized is seen in Nadab and Abihu's offering sacrifice with fire which God had not commanded (**Leviticus 10:1-3**). What God wants of us is obedience from the heart.

QUESTIONS

1. What is worship?
2. Who must we worship?
3. Is all worship acceptable as long as we worship God?
4. What makes one's worship vain?
5. What two words describe true worship?
6. From whose teachings are we to learn how we must worship?

7. What things are acceptable before God as worship?
8. What is to happen to those who do not worship God as He has directed?

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WHERE AIN'T GOD?

*He was just a little lad,
And on the week's first day
Was wandering home from Bible School,
And dawdling on the way.
He scuffed his shoes into the grass;
He found a caterpillar
He found a fluffy milk-weep pod,
And blew out all the "filler."
A bird's nest in a tree o'er head
So wisely placed and high,
Was just another wonder
That caught his eager eye.
A neighbor watched his zig zag course,
And hailed him from the lawn;
Asked him where he had been that day,
And what was going on.
"M'm, a very fine way," the neighbor
Said, "For a boy to spend his time;
If you'll tell me where God is,
I'll give you a brand new dime."
Quick as a flash his answer came!
Nor were his accents faint;
"I'll give you a dollar, Mister,
If you'll tell me where God ain't."*

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GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP
- COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16:1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philipians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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