

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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Upholding God's Character (Psalm 19)

by Neal Pollard

The character of God has been denied by the atheist. It has been blasphemed by such films as "Jesus Christ, Superstar" and "The Last Temptation Of Christ", such organizations as the N.E.A., and such books as "The Satanic Bible". The character of God has been misunderstood by the grieving, the poor, the afflicted, and the suffering. The expectations of God have caused many people to throw up their hands, giving up at the thought of the self-control and sacrifice demanded by His word. Yet, a stark contrast in the midst of human doubting continues to be the inspired praise uttered by the eastern shepherd -- King David. In Psalm 19, he upholds God's character in at least six ways.

GOD'S CHARACTER IS UPHELD BY THE WORLD OF NATURE (1-6).

God created the world and all that is in it (cf. Exodus 20:11). His glorious image is set upon the natural world (Psalm 8:1). The heavens declare His righteousness (Psalm 50:6). He owns day and night (Psalm 74:16). God can see in the dark (Psalm 74:16)! The world is the robe of His majesty (Psalm 104:1-3). As creator of the world, He deserves honor (Revelation 4:11)!

GOD'S CHARACTER IS UPHELD BY THE WISDOM OF HIS WORD (7-10).

We find His thoughts in His word (cf. Matthew 4:4). As His thoughts are above ours (Isaiah 55:8,9), His word is exalted (Psalm 19:7; 99:5,7). In verses 7-10, we notice seven superlatives of God's word. First, it is **perfect**. It is flawless and indisputable. Being perfect, it is the producer of salvation (cf. Romans 1:16). Second, God's word is **sure**. What it promises will transpire. What it promotes is supreme truth. Therefore, it is the producer of wisdom (cf. James 1:5). Third, God's word is **right**. Right morally, right materially, and right spiritually. Such being the

case, it is the producer of happiness. Fourth, God's word is **pure**. Following God's precepts will defile neither body nor soul. It promotes that for which man most longs (freedom from the stain of sin). Hence, the word of God is the producer of faith (cf. Romans 10:17). Fifth, the word of God is **clean**. We are told that "clean", as used in Psalm 19:9, means "clear, bright, and shining" (Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies, p. 78). When God's child is stumbling on the dark path of mortality, witnessing the decay and dissolution of all else, he is encouraged by the everlasting rays of light and hope emitted by the word. Therefore, as it has itself endured and will ever endure, the word is the producer of endurance. Sixth, God's word is **true**. It is stable and firm. It is solid ground. On it, the wise man will build his house (Matthew 7:24,25). Therefore the word is the producer of righteousness. Seventh, the word is **desirable**. Who would fail to desire the word, which is greater than all this world could offer (1 John 2:17). Greater than exceeding wealth! Greater than abundant pleasures! As such, God's word is the producer of comfort.

In these verses, David also provides many descriptions of God's word. God's word is composed of law, so it teaches obedience. God's word is composed of testimony, so it testifies of its own authenticity. God's word is composed of statutes, so it trusts its observers to completely fulfill what it has committed. God's word is composed of commandments, so its truths are absolute. God's word is composed of fear, so its terror is awesome. God's word is composed of judgments, so it tries the heart and life of man.

GOD'S CHARACTER IS UPHELD BY THE WARNING HE LEFT (11).

What would we think of a parent who

failed to warn his child against playing in the street? Such negligence would reflect negatively on the parent's character. Just so, the warnings God has left us are a positive reflection on His perfect character.

Such warning reveals love in the character of God (cf. 2 Peter 3:9). Such warning reveals authority in the hand of God. Such warning reveals mercy in the heart of God, for David exclaims, "thy servant is warned".

GOD'S CHARACTER IS UPHELD BY THE WEALTH HE BESTOWS (11).

But, God's wealth toward us is **CONTINUED**. We must keep God's commands to be spiritually wealthy. God's wealth is **CONTINUOUS**. The verse says "there is..." (verse 11b). If we continue to walk in the light, we will be continually cleansed from sin (1 John 1:7). God's wealth is **CONFINED**. Spiritual blessings are given only to those who serve God (see Ephesians 1:3). God's wealth is **COUNTLESS**. David speaks of "great reward". Christ offers great reward to the faithful (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).

GOD'S CHARACTER IS UPHELD BY THE WASHING HE OFFERS (12-13).

The sins of the man after God's heart are as well documented as anyone else's in the Bible. David realized the terrible cost of dying lost (Psalm 51). So, David praises God for the spiritual cleansing God offers, even in the midst of reaping the consequences of forgiven sin.

David reveals that this washing is **SUPERIOR**. David points to the "washer". He says, "Cleanse **Thou** me..." Only God can offer spiritual cleansing, for only He is holy. David also says that this washing is **SPECIAL** ("Cleanse Thou **me** ..."). How wonderful to know that God will wash **ME** from **MY** sins! David points out that this washing can be **SECRET**. Some of the most grievous sins of a man are committed in his heart, hidden from everyone but God. David is thankful that God will not carry the sin for which he has asked forgiveness into the judgment before all. David says that this washing is **STRENGTHENING**. As a

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result of his faithful obedience, David anticipated "uprightness" and "innocence" (Psalm 19:13; 1 John 1:9).

GOD'S CHARACTER IS UPHELD BY THE WORDS OF HIS CHILDREN

(14). No one knows a father better than his children know him. God's children should know Him well. God's children experience the fruits of the natural laws He has instituted, like the rain, the sun, warmth, cool, and the like. God's children experience the marvel of His providence. God's children experience the fulfillment of His promise to give them all necessary things. God's children experience hope in His promises and peace in godly living.

David, knowing God, was devoted to Him. The psalmist declared his devotion by the words of his mouth. He promises inward devotion by the meditation of his heart.

The testimony of David, God's dear child, is significant. David calls God "Lord," acknowledging His exalted position. David speaks of God as "Strength," pointing to His matchless power. And, David declares God to be "Redeemer," emphasizing His unparalleled provision and propitiation.

CONCLUSION. Above the feeble whisper of man's rebellious ignorance rises the thundering proof of God's perfection. Though more maligned than all else. Combined, God's character remains above reproach. With David, we must see the glory of God! Yes, "Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the

glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness..." (Psalm 29:1,2).

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WHO WILL GO TO HELL?

by David Long

When I speak of hell, I mean a place of torment where the wicked will be punished in never-ending agony. It is the "fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:43-47). It is the "lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). It is the "second death" (Revelation 20:14; 21:8). It is the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8). It is a place of "outer darkness" (Matthew 25:30). It is a place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12; 25:30). It is a place of "everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46). It is a place of "everlasting fire" (Matthew 18:8). It is a place of "everlasting destruction" (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

The Greek word for this place is "Gehenna" and is used 12 times in the Bible (Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6).

Who will be going to this place of everlasting punishment? **The Devil and his angels and those who are said to be on Jesus' left hand.** "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:41-46). **The unprofitable servant will be there.** "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30). **Those who are contentious and do not obey the truth will be there.** "But unto them that are conten-

tious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Romans 2:8-9).

The angels that sinned will be there. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2:4). **The erring child of God will be there.** "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Peter 2:20-22). **Those who know not God and have not obeyed the gospel will be there.** "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). **The folks of Sodom and Gomorrha and those who follow their ways.** "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). **Those mentioned in Revelation 21:8 will be there.** "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." **Those mentioned in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 will be there.** "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards,

nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Those mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21 will be there. *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."* And the list could go on and on. Please read Romans 1:21-32 and Jude 4-16 for others who will be in hell. It is here at this point that we must ask ourselves a question. Do we fit into any of these who will be going to hell?

How can we escape going to hell? The answer is easy. Become a Christian and stay a Christian. How does one become a Christian? First, we must hear the word (Rom. 10:17). Second, we must believe that Jesus is Christ (John 8:24). Third, we must repent of our sins (Acts 17:30). Fourth, we must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Acts 8:37; Matt.:32-33). Fifth, we must be baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Then upon being baptized, God will add us to His church (Acts 2:47). Then we must remain faithful (Rev. 2:10; 1 Cor. 15:58).

Dear reader, are you a member of the Lord's church, the church of Christ? Do you have the assurance that when you die, you will escape hell? Remember most people do not, listen to Matthew 7:13-14, *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* If you want the assurance of eternal life, contact the church of Christ in your area. We want to help you!

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Our generation is trying to drink its way to prosperity, destroy its way to plenty, war its way to peace, hate its way to love, sin its way to God, and to drift its way upstream.

Your speech was wonderful, delivered well, my only other comment is that you came to several good places to stop an didn't.

VERSE BY VERSE

by Max Patterson

Which is better? To preach an expository sermon (taking a paragraph and explaining in context what it means), or to preach a topical sermon? Those who like expository sermons claim that those who preach topical sermons sometimes lift verses out of context to prove their point. And, I must admit that that has happened. Those preachers preaching topical sermons must do their research well enough to be sure they do not use verses in a way not intended by the author. On the other hand, I once heard an expository sermon in which none of the application points were made in the scripture being used.

I believe there is a time and place for both types of sermons. However, it is incumbent upon the preacher to make sure he expresses what the Holy Spirit is saying by correctly explaining what the words and sentences mean, and to draw only those conclusions that are warranted by the text.

Sometimes the topical sermon is associated with a "legalistic, rationalistic" approach.

However, I can assure you that the evidence is to the contrary. Let me give you an example. The liberal element of our brotherhood is pushing for the women to have a greater leadership role in the public assembly. A widespread practice is to take the single verse of Galatians 3:28 in an attempt to use the expression "neither male nor female" to offset the many and clearly specific instructions which call for the men to be in leadership roles in the public assembly.

In Galatians 3:28, Paul is talking about our relationships to God – not to each other. In Christ, with regard to salvation, all racial, social, and gender barriers fall. There are no first, second, or third class citizens with regard to Christianity based on what you are, or have, here on earth. The issue of what women can and cannot do in the public assembly is the furthest thing from Paul's mind. This is a perfect example of someone reading a verse and forcing it to say what he wants it to say, rather than, in humility, hearing and accepting what it actually says.

Whether a topical or expository sermon is good and helpful depends upon the study and even the integrity of the one presenting the sermon. To be true to the original test is paramount.

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ENVY, HATRED, MALICE AND ALL UNCHARITABLENESS

by Dennis Gullede

I was amused by an article in the July/August 1993 issue of *American Heritage* magazine, entitled, "Predicting The Present," which told of the American Press Syndicate, in 1893, interviewing certain "experts," and asking them to make brief predictions about what American life would be like in the 1990's. One respondent envisioned a populace so "educated and refined" that "the confinement and punishment of criminals will occupy but little of the thought or time of the men of 1993." A prophet this man was not.

The violence and crime in America is almost unbelievable. Of course violence and crime have been with us since the day that Cain rose up and slew his brother Abel (Genesis 4:8), but the callousness with which men now perpetrate their inhumanities against men certainly boggles the mind. The days of feeling safe in your home are gone. There is a debate that is currently raging about the effects of TV violence upon children. The average child views an estimated 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elementary school, and some would have us to believe that they will not be adversely affected. School violence is raging out of control. Kids carry an estimated 270,000 guns to school each day. Gun fights are replacing fist fights. Schools in some parts of the country have bullet drills.

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Students learn to hit the floor when they hear gunfire.

What is the answer to the problem? The "politically correct" pose some very simplistic solutions: take away all guns, build more prisons and beef up police protection. I haven't yet been able to figure out how these suggestions even touch the heart of the problem because the problem stems from man's heart. Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19). Thought precedes action.

Gary L. Bauer, President of the Family Research Council, said in a September 3, 1993, memo: "While Washington continues to be without a clue about why we are in trouble as a nation, former Watergate conspirator Chuck Colson identified the core issue in a recent speech in Chicago. Chuck said America is falling into the trap of accepting four secular myths: (1) Human beings are good and innocent and not responsible for wrongdoing; (2) Government can provide utopia; (3) Moral values are relative; (4) The cult of radical individualism is superior, even though it dismisses family, church and community."

Like Judah of old, it might be said of America today: "Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the Lord your God. And the fear of Me is not in you" (Jeremiah 2:19). If we continue the present course of moral and religious drifting, envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness will rule the day.

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HOW ARE YOU SEEING THESE DAYS?

by Garry Stanton

The gospel uses eyesight or the lack thereof, as a means to illustrate various shortcomings or failures of the Christian's life. Let us look at some of these in order to help us evaluate our own standing before God.

Some Christians are spiritually nearsighted. "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Pet. 1:9). A person who is nearsighted can see things that

are near but not things which are distant. Spiritually, nearsightedness is when the only thing one sees is the world and its problems which are near and not the things which are afar off, the eternal things of glory. Christians should "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). The Christian's citizenship is in heaven (Philip. 3:20). Christians are to "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Christians are to seek first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33).

Some Christians are in spiritual darkness. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:5-6). The lack of the light is attractive to some because it allows them to do whatever they want. Jesus said, "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:19-20). Darkness also hinders man from seeing the right path to follow. Jesus said, "He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35). Christians must know where they are going! Paul reminds us, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8).

Some Christians have problems because they have spiritual double-vision. They see two masters in their lives, Jesus and the world. But Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 16:24). It is not hard to see why so many Christians become frustrated and give up, they are trying to do the impossible, serve two masters! If they would only make up their minds to serve God, it would be easier to live the Christian life because they would no longer be seeing double.

How are you seeing these days? Are you spiritually nearsighted, are you in darkness, are you seeing double? It is not too late to go to the Great Physician, He can correct your vision problems!

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GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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