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## Convicting The World of Sin

By Jared Williams

In John 16:7-11 Jesus told his disciples: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged."

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement. The term reprove means to convict. We see it rendered as "convicted" in John 8:9. Thus, we learn that the Holy Spirit through the gospel manifest, makes known to man his error. This is one design of the gospel, that is, it convicts man of his sin that it may afford him consolation. This was the work of the Holy Spirit in apostolic days, guiding them into all truth. Today we have that convicting power in the New Testament. We want to look to the New Testament in our lesson on convicting the world of sin.

1. The Holy Spirit in the gospel tells us that all men are sinners, Paul said, "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:9, 10). Beginning in chapter one Paul proves that all are under sin. This he did to prove that all were under condemnation and needed the gospel, God's power to save them. The Jew was no different than the Gentile, and for certain salvation was not a matter of inheritance, no one is superior to the other, ALL are sinners. The Holy Spirit through the gospel of Christ said, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

2. The Holy Spirit identifies sin as disobedience to God. In I John 3:4, it is said that "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the

transgression of the law." The object of the Spirit is to deter man from committing sin so that he may have the hope of heaven. God has given us his law (royal law) and any violation to it is sin. It means lawlessness. It involves going beyond or doing what God tells us not to do. In James 4:17 he tells us that, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The Holy Spirit further states, "All unrighteousness is sin . . ." (I John 5:17). In Galatians 15:19-21, Paul, speaking by the Spirit, identifies certain sins and points out that those who practice such things cannot enter into the everlasting kingdom which awaits at the end of the age (2 Peter 1:6-11). It is not possible to live a life of fleshly indulgence in any of the areas named and go to heaven.

3. Not only does the Holy Spirit show that alien sinners are in need of salvation and identifies sin, the Holy Spirit reveals the awful consequences of sin. He says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." (Romans 1:18). All accountable beings who refuse God's way of meeting man's needs will experience God's wrath. Ephesians 5:6 says "...the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." To the Jew the Holy Spirit said, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." (Romans 2:5). To convince the Jew that he was a sinner and needed salvation, the Holy Spirit pointed out through Paul's preaching of the gospel that he, the Jew, had no right to condemn the Gentile, for the Jews were guilty of sin too. God's forbearance, goodness, and longsuffering toward men was intended to lead all men to repentance. He further shows that those who obey God will receive eternal life but the contentious, who obey unrighteousness, and do not obey the truth, indignation, wrath, tribulation and anguish." (Romans

2:6-9). Did you know that the scriptures teach that those who are in sin are spiritually dead? The Holy Spirit says, they have no hope, and are without God in this present world (Ephesians 2:12). As a sinner you need to know that "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23).

Friends, the Holy Spirit reveals the whole story, that is, not only does he point out what sin is and the awful results he also reveals that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Christ came and offered himself as a ransom for many. He died for the entire human race and through his blood men are reconciled to God. The Holy Spirit THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD tells how we come in contact with Christ's blood. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit said, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38).

## ARE YOU WILLING

To close your book of complaints and to open a book of praise?

To believe that other men are quite as sincere as we are and treat them with respect?

To ignore what life owes us and to think what we owe to life?

To stop looking for friendship and to starting being friendly?

To be content with such things as we have and stop whining for the things we have not?

To enjoy the simple blessings of life and to cease striving for the artificial pleasures of today?

To forget what we have accomplished and to mediate on what others have done for us?

To cease looking for someone to help us and devote ourselves to helping others?

To accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and let our life be an outlet for his joy, love and peace.

**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**

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**GATHERED FROM HERE AND THERE**

Those who complain about the way the ball bounces are often the one who dropped it.

Everybody knows how to express a complaint, but few can utter a graceful compliment. It's a matter of practice.

Wealthy people miss one of the greatest Thrills in life -- paying the last installment.

Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous mind.  
- S. Johnson

When a youth starts sowing his wild oats, it's time for the parents to start the THRASHING machine!

Better watch your temper! Remember the emptier the pot, the quicker it boils.

There is plenty of difference between a "wise guy" and a "Wise man."

When the day is done, you frequently discover that not much else is.

We like the man that comes right out and says what he thinks -- when he agrees with us.

AN ORDINARY MEMBER

**FAITH**

Doubt sees the obstacles;

Faith sees the way.

Doubt sees the darkest night;

Faith sees the day!

Doubt dreads to take a step;

Faith soars on high;

Doubt questions. "Who believes?"

Faith answers, "I"!

**A Subordinate Role Not An Inferior One**

By Bill Graddy

I have a mother, a sister, a wife, and two daughters. Women are important in my life, and I have no ill will or misguided illusions toward the woman God made for man. Rather, I am grateful to God for my completion. (Genesis 2:18).

As God created man and woman, so he appointed different functions for each. He created man first and gave him to be the head of the woman. (Genesis 2:23; I Corinthians 11:3). God assigned Adam certain duties and gave him special instructions. (Genesis 2:15-17). "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Genesis 2:18). Then, He explains how He did this, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (Genesis 2:21-23). Since woman came out of man, Genesis 2:23, and ". . . is the glory of man," (1 Corinthians 11:7, her role is a subordinate one, and she is to be in subjection to her husband. (Ephesians 5:22; I Peter 3:1).

The functions of each throughout life are obviously not the same. Conflict and confusion arise when either leaves the designated place in which they should serve. Although there is some overlapping in the duties of each, it is the abuse that causes trouble. When the woman desires to rule and take leadership positions, she ceases to function properly in her subordinate role. Her physical and mental prowess is not geared for the stress and strain of man's responsibilities. Yet, she is endowed to be ladylike, motherly, and warm in all the activities related to the family circle. Conversely, it is only an exception when you see a man desirous of filling the role of a woman and being recognized as feminine.

The New Testament is plain relative to her not being in leadership positions in the church such as an elder, preacher, or deacon. Likewise, the New Testament is clear concerning her status in the spiritual development of herself, her husband, her children, and others in which she may come in contact. (I Timothy 2:9-15; II Timothy 1:5; Titus 2:3-5). This in no way renders her inferior but shows God's plan for her.

The home is rapidly becoming an endangered specie. I believe this is true in large measure because women are working outside the home. The economics of this is obvious, but the price we pay is seen in divorces, drugs, diseases, and deprivations. Take fish out of water, and they die. Remove men and women from their God given spheres, and the results will be frustrating and final.

Love and respect are genuinely needed in society. This begins at home. When we function in a stressful relationship for which we are not adapted, the four D's mentioned above will continue to skyrocket.

Adam was not deceived in his position as head of the woman, but Eve was. Adam was tempted and fell, but Eve sinned in her desire to rule, lead, and make decisions that Adam was to make. (I Timothy 2:13, 14).

I have no desire to restrict the activities of men and women. I plead only that each functions in both physical and spiritual realms as the New Testament teaches.

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**OBEY GOD . . . and do it for the Right Reasons**

By Mark K. Lewis

We in the churches of Christ have always insisted, and rightly so, that the Bible teaches that a man must obey God in order to please Him and demonstrate love for Him. This has been a distinguishing mark between us and the denominations, most of whom insist that man is saved by faith only without any further acts of obedience. But God has always required that men obey Him. He told Israel, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people" (Exodus 19:5). Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Indeed, even loving God is not fully possible apart from obedience: "If ye

love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15); "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (I John 5:3). There is no hope of the heavenly home unless we submit ourselves to God's ways: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

Obedience does not mean sinless perfection (I John 1:8-10); but it does mean that we believe in the Lord, because we believe what He says. How can we truly have faith in Christ, and then deny what He says about obedience? No, faith demands obedience or it is not true faith. We MUST preach this to the world.

However, where I fear we have sometimes fallen short is in emphasizing the RIGHT KIND of obedience! Beloved, obedience, of itself, is not enough, either. We must obey from a pure heart, for the right reasons, or our obedience is vain. In II Chronicles 25:2 we read that Amaziah "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart." Here is a man who did what God said, but not for the right reasons. Was he approved of God? In Hosea 1 we read the results of the sin of Jehu. God had told Jehu to put the offspring of Ahab to death (II Kings 9:1-10). Jehu had done what God told him to do, not in order to please God, but because it served his own selfish advantage in the kingdom. And from Hosea 1 we learn that this was the "straw that broke the camel's back" with God; He was now going to obliterate Israel from the face of the map for their sins. And this final act that ended God's long-suffering was an act of obedience!

--but not done from a pure heart, and thus not REALLY pure obedience. We must learn that there is much more to obedience than simply fulfilling a duty. If we obey God to be seen of men and praised by them (Matthew 6), or out of a "bargaining spirit," i.e., just what's in it for us (Matthew 20:1-16), or for our own selfish advantage (Hosea 1:4), we obey for the wrong reasons, and God will not be pleased. The right reasons for obedience are to glorify God (Matthew 5:16), to receive His praise and not man's (Matthew 6:4), and out of trust and thanksgiving (Matthew 20:1-16 -- indeed, this beautiful parable teaches that if we will obey Him for these reasons, He will reward us far more than we could ever bargain for).

The cold, legalistic approach to obedience that characterizes many Christians is one thing that is wrong with the church. We obey out of a sense of duty rather than love, appreciation, and thanksgiving, and this makes our religion cold, formal, and meaningless. I fully believe this is one reason we lose many

people back to the world -- they do not see the true spirit of Christianity living in us. They see us burdened down with duty rather than full of joy, thanksgiving, and love for our Redeemer. No wonder people aren't catching fire for the Lord -- there's no fire for them to catch! Let's restore the spirit of Christianity as well as the doctrine and order, and we'll probably have more people listening to us.

Yes, beloved, let us preach obedience to the world. Let us shout it from the rooftops. But while we are at it, let's preach it to ourselves, too; especially the kind of obedience that comes from hearts full of gratitude, praise, and benediction to the Lord. The denominational world doesn't understand what we mean by obedience because of what they see in our lives -- a cold, formal, "sense of duty" religion. When we practice true obedience people will see the Savior in us.

## INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN HEAVEN?

By Larry D. Mathis

Advocates of mechanical instrumental music, in Christian worship, say that, "Harps will be heaven, so it cannot be wrong to use musical instruments in worship to Almighty God in the church today." Their proof is Revelation 5:8-9; 14:2-3; 15:2-3.

### HARD PRESSED

Those who insist on instruments of music in worship are truly "hard-pressed" for biblical authority: (1) Since they are unable to find the practice authorized in plain passages of the New Testament they turn to the Old Testament for consolation; or (2) They go to the book of Revelation (which is a book of highly figurative language) for proof. This is an open admission that the New Testament, nowhere, in plain simple language commands the use of instruments of music in worship to God.

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS HIGHLY SYMBOLIC

To say that one must exercise great care in interpreting the book of Revelation is an understatement, for it is clothed in figurative language and is unlike any other book in the New Testament. To briefly illustrate our point -- the book of Revelation mentions a great red dragon, an old serpent, beheaded souls underneath an altar, horses, frogs, birds, a sea beast, a lamb, an earth (land) beast, the four beasts, twenty-four elders, thrones, a

great whore, a mighty angel, a radiant woman with child, hail, fire, brimstone, a flood, blood up to the mouth of a horse, and "harps." This is but a sample of the things described in this book of prophecy.

Are the advocates of instrumental music in Christian worship willing to accept the conclusion that anything and everything that is mentioned in Revelation (or heaven) permissible and authorized in the church, on earth, in worship? We think not! If "harps" are authorized in Christian worship what about the other items just enumerated? And, what about "golden bowls of incense," "a golden censer," a "golden altar," and the "sea mingled with fire?" Should these things be added to our worship too? This is totally ridiculous. There is as much authority for one as the other in the church, none! Also, babies will be in heaven but the church knows nothing of infant membership.

### SO-CALLED "PROOF TEXTS"

In the so-called "proof texts" John is describing a celestial company not an assembly of Christians coming together on earth, to worship God; hence, nothing they are doing, that is, simply because they are doing it can be properly cited as an example governing the worship of such an assembly of Christians. What is, or what may be in heaven, is no criteria for what should be in the church now. The church has been established for a number of years when the book of Revelation was penned. And, from the beginning the church praised God in song without the use of mechanical instruments. Our worship must be determined by instructions and examples which are set out in plain, simple, literal New Testament language.

### WHAT DID JOHN HEAR?

Question: "John, just exactly what did you hear?" John replies, "I heard a VOICE." Question: "John, are you sure you did not hear all kinds of mechanical instruments, such as the banjo, guitar, organ, harp, horns, drums, etc.?" John said, "I heard a VOICE." Question: "John, did you hear playing?" John said, "I heard a VOICE." Question: "John, what was the voice doing?" John replies, "The VOICE which I heard SUNG as it were a new song." Question: "John, what did the voice, which you heard singing, sound like?" John answers, "As the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder . . . the voice of harpers harping with their harps." Question: "John, did you actually hear waters and thunder and harps?" John said, "It as AS waters, thunder and harps."

If John heard literal harping on harps, did he not likewise hear literal  
(continued on page 4)

## INSTRUMENTS . . . IN HEAVEN?

(continued from page 3)

thunder and literal waters? Why include the "harps" in worship and leave out the "thunder" and the "waters"? If harps are literal, in the passage, then the thunder and waters are literal too!

John heard "A VOICE", as the voice of many waters, a great thunder, and harpers. The voice was SINGING, not playing. The beautiful melody, the volume, and harmony of the song, which was being sung, was comparable to the melody, the volume and harmony of "the voice of many waters . . . the voice of a great thunder . . . the voice of harpers . . ."

### CONCLUSION

The "heaven argument" like the "Old Testament argument" for mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship falls flat and fails under scriptural investigation. The church of our Lord is a New Testament, not an Old Testament, institution. We are governed by the New Testament, not the Old Testament, or what is, or will be in heaven. When will men learn?

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It has been said that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." It is also true that a *little* Christianity is a dangerous thing. Some church members have enough Christianity to lull the conscience to sleep but not enough to save the soul. Said the Lord to the Laodicians, "*Because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth.*"

(Revelation 3:16)

Seek To Do The  
Will Of God . . .



Nothing More,  
Nothing Less,  
Nothing Else!

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I 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; I Corinthians 12:13).

### 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; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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