

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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CHRIST'S "SHALL" VERSUS SATAN'S "SHALL NOT"

by Ted J. Clarke

The word "not" is a useful word in our common vocabulary. God's word uses "not" often to provide us with warnings to avoid doing things displeasing to God. Eight of the Ten Commandments told God's people to "not" do something (Exodus 20:1-17). Hebrews 10:25 warns Christians, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." If we truly love God, we will not find the "thou shalt not's" as being too negative (Mark 12:29-31). Jesus also cautioned, "Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Those who think that preaching from such passages is too negative will have to take up their case with God. Anyone who disagrees with periodic negative preaching and teaching simply does not know what is in the Scriptures. It is peculiar that some who seem to be opposed to preaching the "nots" of the Bible end up adding some "nots" where God did not put them!

Satan's "Nots"

Satan is a master at perverting good things for his evil purposes. He has taken a good word like "not" and used it in evil ways, causing the human race much grief. In Eden God had told Adam and Eve that if they ate of the forbidden fruit they "shall surely die." Satan, through the serpent, told Eve, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 2:17; 3:1-5). Eve believed that "not" that Satan added to God's word and plunged the human race into sin (Genesis 3:6-23). The Devil's "not" changed the meaning of God's word. How sad it is that many are still adding "nots" to God's word, making it mean the exact opposite of what He has revealed.

Denominational preachers pervert God's word in Mark 16:16 by adding a

"not" which God did not put there. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Most denominational preachers say, "He that believeth and is **not** baptized shall be saved..." making the verse teach exactly the opposite of what God said. Such men (or women) are as guilty as Satan of perverting God's word, putting a "not" where God had none! Believing such "nots" will cause many to be lost.

Some in the Lord's church are following Satan and denominationalists in adding unauthorized "nots" to God's word. For example, the Lord has said that those who continue to abide in His word "shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). However, there are those who are saying that despite a diligent and proper study of God's word, "ye shall **not** know the truth." Even those who do not say outright that we can **not** know the truth, imply the same by some of their teaching. One preacher reportedly told his congregation that well educated brethren differ on what the Scriptures teach on the subjects of marriage, divorce and remarriage. Therefore, since equally intelligent people differ on these subjects, it must be obvious that we can **not** know the absolute Bible truths on these matters. His desired conclusion was: since we can **not** know the truth about these things, we can not say that our position is right and others are wrong. Consequently, this preacher and his congregation will not have to worry about dealing with unscriptural divorces and remarriages or even adultery, since we can **not** know the truth on these things. This same sort of thinking is being set forth on a host of other issues in religion such as "what constitutes worship; what is the role of women in

preaching and leadership; how does grace relate to obedience, and a large number of other matters. Surely these who so teach do not realize the consequences of such ungodly thinking.

Calamitous Consequences

If we can **not** know the truth of God's word on marriage, divorce and remarriage because men with intelligent minds differ on these subjects, **then we can not know the truth on any Bible topic!** Since equally intelligent men differ on every Bible topic you can think of, the only conclusion one could properly draw is that we can **not** know any truth from God's word, even though Jesus said "ye shall know the truth." It is clearly a case of whether you will take the Lord's "shall" or Satan's "shall **not**." How far will some preachers go to avoid taking a stand for the truth?!

Since men of equal intelligence differ as to whether or not God exists, is it therefore the case that we cannot know if He is real? The same could be said regarding whether or not Jesus is the Son of God, or if the Bible is a revelation from God. Some very smart men say "yes," while other educated men say "no." Must we say, therefore, that we can **not** know? **To say that we can not know the truth on a particular Bible topic where men of equal intelligence differ, is to say that we really can not know the truth for certain on any Bible subject!** If that were the case, why did God bother to give us the Bible? Even if one does believe that we cannot know the truth on any Bible matter where men of equal education and intelligence differ, he could not teach that we must accept his position and conclusions. Why? Because there would be others equal to him in learning that would differ with him. Such people are caught in their own trap!

There are two basic reasons why men do not see the Bible alike. One is that they are using worldly wisdom instead of learning from God. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not upon thine own understanding. In all thy

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ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). The wisdom of the world will cause men to perish (1 Corinthians 1:18-21). God's word has been revealed, but "the natural man" (worldly man) rejects it (1 Corinthians 2:9-14). The apostle Paul tells that God has revealed His will for us; that we can know His will and understand it; and that we can obey it (Ephesians 3:3-5; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15; 1:8-10). Only Satan and his followers would say that we can **not** know, understand and obey God's will. What do **you** say? A second reason men do not see the Bible alike is that they fail to consider all that God has said on a given matter. Psalm 119:160 affirms, "The sum of thy word is truth..." (ASV), meaning **all of it** (the "sum") must be considered to really have the truth.

Another consequence of saying we can **not** know the truth on marriage, divorce and remarriage (or similar subjects) is that if such is true, then we can **not** know some things that we need to know to be saved. Sexual sins such as adultery and fornication will cause us to be lost, excluded from God's kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21). If we can **not** know the truth about marriage, divorce and remarriage, we also can **not** know if we are guilty of adultery or fornication, since these are sins involving marriage or improperly divorced and remarried persons (cf. Matthew 19:3-9). Will God punish adulterers and exclude them from His kingdom, as the verses above say, when

He did not make His word clear enough that we could know if we were committing those sins? Who can believe it?

Conclusion

Some Christians (many of them are elders and preachers) do not want any conflict in their lives, so they work hard to avoid teaching and practicing the difficult doctrines in God's word. They don't want to tell someone that they are lost unless they are baptized in order to have their sins forgiven (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21). Such people do not have the courage of John the Baptizer, who told Herod that he was in an unlawful marriage (Mark 6:17-18). These people think that they are making their lives easier by avoiding the truth, so they teach or imply that we can **not** know the truth. In so doing, they make God unjust or helpless to give us a Bible we can understand. If the Bible does not furnish us with all that we need to be saved, it makes false claims (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3). If Christ's word will judge us, and it will, then we can know the truth of it (John 12:48-50; 8:31-32). Does your preacher stand with Christ or Satan? Don't be fooled by appearances. Satan and his followers appear to be "ministers of righteousness," but if one does not follow God's word, he is not of God (2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 John 9-11). Jesus says, "ye shall know the truth" and Satan says, "ye shall **not** know the truth." Which do you trust as Savior?

AFRAID TO BE SHAMED

by Owen D. Olbricht

Some of the old time preachers who came to Mammoth Spring, Arkansas for a meeting, when they quoted, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16), would often say, "I would be ashamed to be afraid and afraid to be ashamed to preach the gospel of Christ." The reason they were not ashamed of the gospel was that they realized that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, that the salvation of men depends on the preaching of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:21).

The gospel is the word of truth (Eph. 1:13), which is the basis of our faith (Rom. 10:17). The Ephesians had come to believe after they heard the word, as well as did the people of Berea (Acts 17:11, 12). Jesus acknowledged this fact, that the word is what brings people to

believe, when He prayed that through the word of the apostles people would believe in Him (John 17:20).

Inasmuch as faith comes through God's word (Rom. 10:17), it follows that those who make shipwreck of the faith (1 Tim. 1:19) or depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1) are those who depart from the word. These are those who leave the word and accept the teaching of demons (1 Tim. 4:2). Anyone who holds to the word can remain in the faith, but those who turn from the word are those who depart from the faith.

In the present generation too many are departing from the word and, for this reason, are departing from the faith which has once and for all times been delivered (Jude 3). These have chosen teachers who will teach what they want to hear preached instead of teachers who will restrict themselves simply to the word of God.

Some in this generation try to inform us that preaching the word is not the way to reach people of this modern age. They confidently tell us that if we would change our approach we would have more who would respond to our teaching. We may have more who would accept us, but that is not important. Our concern should **not** be whether or not we please men, but **should be** whether or not we please God (Gal. 1:10).

No one who stands up to preach the gospel of Christ should be ashamed to preach the word as it has been revealed. Those who fail to preach the word because they are ashamed of the word are an embarrassment to Jesus. He said, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

Only those who faithfully preach the word are acceptable to Jesus (Gal. 1:8, 9). Those who do not preach the gospel just as it has been revealed are accursed. This gospel is found, not only in the gospels, but is also found in the other writings of the New Testament. The complete New Testament is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself did not reveal all the truth (John 16:12), but used the Holy Spirit to reveal all the truth after He had returned to the Father (John 16:13).

When Paul instructed Timothy, he

told him not to be ashamed of the testimony of Jesus (2 Tim. 1:8). When he instructed him concerning what he was to teach, he told him to commit to others the things he had learned from him, Paul (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul's instruction included more than just the message Jesus taught while on earth; therefore, what Timothy was to teach others included what Jesus had personally taught, but not only that. He was to teach also all that Paul had taught through the revelation of Jesus (Gal. 1:11, 12).

A faithful preacher of Jesus will preach all the counsel of Jesus (Acts 20:20, 27). Regardless of the approach and the attitude of the present generation, the word is to be preached as it is and for what it is. Those who do this should not be ashamed and should make no apologies. Only those who faithfully preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2) are obedient, and they alone are pleasing to Jesus Christ. Those who do otherwise are not servants of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:10).

It is time for those who believe in Jesus to demand that His New Testament be faithfully preached. We must not be ashamed, for the gospel alone is the message of salvation for this and every generation.

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JESUS CHRIST, PRIEST AND KING – A DEATH BLOW TO PREMILLENNIALISM

by Ron Gilbert

The doctrine of premillennialism has caused many problems in the religious world. A great number of denominations embrace this false doctrine. Battles have been and are being fought in our brotherhood over this issue.

In 1878 W. E. Blackstone wrote a book entitled, *Jesus is Coming*. In this book he set forth the doctrine of premillennialism. One of the cardinal doctrines of premillennialism is to deny that the kingdom and the church are the same. On page 137 Blackstone said, "Again, as we have before shown, the church is not the kingdom...surely this language plainly distinguishes between the church and the kingdom is yet future." Premillennialism also teaches that Christ will set up his kingdom on earth and reign 1,000 years.

Old Testament Prophecies

There are some passages concerning Christ being priest and king that need to be considered in view of the doctrine of premillennialism.

In Psalms 13:2, the Lord said he would raise up one, of the fruit of David, to sit on David's throne. Peter declared in Acts 2:30 that this one was Christ. In Luke 1:31-33, the angel Gabriel told Mary that the child she was to have was to be the Son of the Highest and that the Lord God would give unto him the throne of his father, David. Peter declared in Acts 2 that Christ was at the right hand of God on the throne of David. Mark 16:19 informs us that Jesus ascended into heaven and sat down on the right hand of God. Many New Testament passages show that Jesus is now at the right hand of God (Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1).

The Old Testament tells us that Christ, the Branch, would "Build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zechariah 6:12-13). Notice that Christ was to be priest while on his throne or priest and king at the same time. Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec, who was also priest and king at the same time (Hebrews 7:1).

Now think about it, if Christ was to

be priest and king at the same time, and if it can be shown that he could be neither priest nor king on earth, then premillennialism will have been shown to be a false doctrine.

Since he was to be priest and king at the same time, when one proves Jesus could not be one of these on earth he has proved that Jesus could be neither on earth. However, let us consider both positions of king and priest separately.

Christ As High Priest

First, consider Christ as priest on earth. The book of Hebrews tells us that we have a high priest who is now seated at the right hand of God (Hebrews 5:14; 8:1). We learn from Hebrews 8:4 that Christ could not be a priest on earth. Why? He was of the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 6:14). Remember, Zechariah 6:12-13 said Jesus would be priest and king at the same time. So then, we have seen from the scriptures that Christ could not be a priest on earth, therefore he could not be a king on earth.

Christ As King

Next, consider Christ as king. Jeremiah said of Jechonias (or Coniah) and his heirs, "Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David ruling any more in Judah" (Jeremiah 22:30). When one reads the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1:12, Jechonias was in the lineage of Christ. Thus, Jesus would not prosper sitting on the throne of David in Judah. Peter declared in Acts 2:30-33 that Christ was sitting on the throne of David at the right hand of God. Notice, Christ was on the right hand of God on David's throne, not in Judah. Therefore, Christ, according to Jeremiah 22:30, could not be king on earth.

Christ is presently reigning as King. Remember, Christ was to sit and rule on his throne while he was priest. Christ is now on the right hand of God as both our high priest and our king, Hebrews 4:14. If Christ is now a king, of what is he king? He must then be king of a kingdom now! If he is king of a kingdom, then the kingdom must exist now. It does exist, according to Colossians 1:13.

Next, consider that Christ's kingdom could not be established at his second coming, as taught by premillennialism.

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In 2 Samuel 7:12-13, it was said that the kingdom would be established while David slept with his Fathers. At the second coming of Christ, David, nor anyone else, will sleep, but all will be resurrected (John 5:28). Peter pointed out on the Day of Pentecost, when the kingdom was established, that David was dead and buried and that his sepulchre was still there (Acts 2:29).

The fact that Christ is now at the right hand of God reigning as priest and king on David's throne proves the doctrine of premillennialism to be false.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

by Wayne Jackson

One of the best known laws of the universe is the law of cause and effect. Simply stated, it is this: every effect must have an adequate cause. Now let this law be applied to the Bible. The Bible is an effect. It was caused by some source. Really, there are but two possibilities: (a) The Bible originated from a purely human source; or, (b) The Bible, while employing human writers, is nevertheless ultimately of divine origin. How can one determine which of these views is correct? The only way is to examine the Bible itself and see whether or not it bears those marks of identification which would be expected of a book that originated with God. What would be expected of a divine volume?

(1) If God gave the Bible, we would expect Him to tell us so. The fact is, the Bible claims to be the Word of God literally thousands of times (cf. Jer. 1:9; Acts 1:16), and Christ Himself endorsed this very view of Scripture (see Mt. 22:31).

(2) If God is the source of the Bible, since He is perfect (Mt. 5:48), and not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33), we would expect it to be perfectly harmonious. Though composed over sixteen centuries, the Scriptures are perfectly harmonious. While some have charged the Bible with contradictions, such an allegation will not stand.

(3) Since God is holy (Isa. 6:3), we would expect the Bible to have an exalted moral tone. That is exactly what one finds. Its precepts — "love your neighbor as yourself" — and "do unto others as you

would have them do unto you" (see Mt. 22:39; 7:12), have amazed millions of people down through the ages. No philosophy can boast of such morals.

(4) If the Bible is from God, we would not expect that any group of men, regardless of their genius, could produce a volume that would surpass that ancient document. Though the Scriptures have been completed almost nineteen centuries, no one has been able to author a book that would make the Bible obsolete. This is inexplicable!

(5) If the Bible is from the timeless God, we would expect it to be perpetually relevant. This is the case. Other books are shortly out-dated, but the Bible is as fresh and up-to-date as when it came from the pens of the inspired writers.

(6) If the Bible were of divine origin, we would expect it to accurately portray the character of man. This is exactly what it does do. Though man was created upright in God's own image (Gen. 1:26), by sin he has progressively separated himself from his Maker (Isa. 59:1, 2). He has become exceedingly corrupt (Jer. 17:9), and hence stands in dire need of help. Man could not have authored the Bible if he would, and would not have penned it if he could!

(7) Finally, if the Bible is of God, we would not expect it to be simply a vague philosophical and abstract treatise, but rather, to give specific information of what man's purpose is and how he may achieve that purpose. Thrillingly, the Bible reveals that man's purpose on earth is to serve God (Isa. 43:7; Eccl. 12:13). It reveals the mission of Christ to save man from his wickedness (Lk. 19:10), and urges us to be responsive to His redeeming message of grace (Heb. 5:8, 9; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). Let us hear its message.

Christian Courier
Stockton, CA

The Word of God

*For feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the Word of God
Nought else is worth believing.
I'll trust in God's unchanging Word
Till soul and body sever:
For, though all things shall pass away,
His Word shall stand forever.*

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).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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).

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