

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

Volume 12

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

February 1973

Number 26

## The Present Rebellion Against Authority

A sermon preached by Rubel Shelly  
over radio station  
WHBQ (560kc) December 12, 1971

### Introduction

One of the most unnecessarily tragic episodes of the Old Testament involves the inexcusable disobedience of Saul, king of Israel, when Jehovah instructed him to make war against the Amalekites and totally destroy them. Heaven's charge to Saul was given through the prophet Samuel: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (I Sam. 15:3). Could human language have been more explicit? Yet Saul and the armies of Israel chose to spare "Agag (the king of the Amalekites), and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse that they destroyed utterly." (I Sam. 15:9).

Saul attempted to justify his action on the ground that he intended to bring all the spoil back to offer as sacrifices before Jehovah. But God would have none of his feeble excuses! "And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king." (I Sam. 15:22-23).

This lesson will deal with what is perhaps the most basic of all the moral problems facing our world today, i.e., rebellion against authority. Men defy the authority of Christ and the Bible in religious matters. Citizens defy the civil authority which God has delegated to policemen, majors, governors and other officials by obeying only those laws which they like and disobeying the rest. Children successfully defy their parents. Arrogant and hateful men defy the authority of elders in the Lord's church. There seems to be nothing sacred! No authority is worthy of the respect of this generation of self-willed men!

Saul's sin of disobedience was direct result of his lack of respect for and rebellion against authority. The same attitude among both young and old of this day is producing a whole host of problems in the church, the home and society. The purpose of this sermon is to give Biblical perspective to some of the more common attitudes and actions of rebellion among people of our time.

### Rebellion in the Home

The tendency to rebel against authority is certainly evident in the homes of America. Rebellious young people defy their parents and do as they please. They refuse to abide by restrictions which have been laid down concerning people they can see, places they can go and things they can do. Some children even ignore their parents' rules about drinking, smoking and the like. But at this point it should be observed that the fault for this situation is not altogether traceable to the young people themselves. Contrary to popular opinion, most young people feel that their parents should keep them from getting too far out of line by setting reasonable and right standards and then enforcing them. Many parents, however, seem to be afraid of their children. They hesitate about issuing orders and disciplining their children when those orders are not carried out! This hesitation encourages children to think that they can get by with disobedience, so they rebel. Thus, due to a lack of firm parental discipline, an attitude of resistance toward authority is developed.

In support of the contention that children really do want their parents to teach them to respect authority, witness the following letter written to Ann Landers which appeared in her newspaper column:

Dear Ann, in a recent column you told a parent that his sassy teen-ager really WANTED to be hauled up short and disciplined. You said kids often push as far as they can-testing, hoping somebody will say "Enough. No more of this." Well, I'm a teen-ager who will back you up. You never wrote truer words. I am a boy almost 19 and I understand things a lot better than I used to. I know

(Continued on Page 2)

## The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

No. 3

The first two proofs of the historicity of Jesus' resurrection were the empty tomb and the witnesses. This article deals with the third proof: CHANGED LIVES.

The most obvious change would be the apostles. The men who had deserted Jesus in Gethsemane were the same ones at whom the Jewish rulers were amazed "when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men." (Acts 4:13) Peter and John even said, "we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20) Most of these men met a hard, cruel death, because of what they spoke. Did they die for what they knew to be a lie? Impossible!

Another group that changed was Jesus' brothers. John 7:5 states, "even his brothers did not believe in him." But Acts 1:14 says, "All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers." There change must have resulted from Jesus' resurrection. (see also I Cor. 9:5 and 15:7)

The third changed life would be the apostle Paul. Jesus appeared, "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me," Paul says (I Cor. 15:8). Paul was a prejudiced man against Christianity and it would take indisputable proof to convince him. About 200 years ago a man named Littleton was going to disprove Christianity by tearing apart the conversion of Paul. After less than one year of "tearing" he became a believer. He wrote that, "the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, duly considered was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation."\*

So the resurrection of Jesus Christ is shown by changed lives of men. One drunk quit drinking, because he became a believer. His friends teased him about the Bible and miracles like the water turning into wine. He said that he did not know

(Continued on Page 4)

### The Fulton County Gospel News

... is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name, be SURE to include the Zip Code Number. It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. If you care to know of its financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request.

EDITORS: Erwin Cowen  
and James E. Henley.

## They Sat Down to Rest, and Resting-Died!

On the walls of a large university is written; "On the plains of hesitation lie the blackened bones of countless millions, who at the dawn of victory, sat down to rest, and resting, died!"

Isn't that quite often the story of men and women who begin the Christian life, and with all their past sins forgiven and victory in sight, they sit down to rest on past attainments.

Doing nothing is always dangerous! doing nothing is the manifestation of a dead faith. (James 2:26). It is the faith of the devils. For even "The devils believe, and tremble." Faith is made perfect by works. (James 2:22). Brethren, "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

Two men caught in a severe snow storm with car stalled, set out on foot to seek shelter. One of the men began to grow numb with cold and wanted to sit down and rest. His companion knew what that meant. The only hope was to keep the freezing man moving. Gentle persuasion having failed, the man who still had his senses resorted to scolding and threats. He even shook and buffeted the freezing man and kept pulling and pushing him until they finally reached shelter. If he had given up, and permitted the freezing man to sit down and to go to sleep, as a freezing man will do, this would have proved fatal.

And so it is sometimes in the experience of church members. Jesus warned, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold but he that endureth to the end the same shall be saved." If I see a cold brother in the Lord, I would not love him if I let him go to sleep and die without the hope of eternal life. I must struggle to wake him up spiritually. —via Fisher St. Bulletin  
Jonesboro, Arkansas

## The Present Rebellion (Cont.)

from experience that there were times when I talked terrible to my folks and did things I shouldn't have done because I wanted them to move in on me. Instead, they let me do anything. When I got into trouble they made excuses for me and got me off. A high school teacher saved me from becoming a delinquent and a bum. She told me I had to good a brain and too much ability to waste it on nonsense and that I'd better discipline myself because it was apparent that nobody at home was going to do it. That teacher changed my life. She did the job my folks failed to do. I will never forget her. (Signed) George.

The Bible teaches that parents have a right to demand obedience from their offspring. "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord." (Col. 3:20). The parent who does not use his God-given authority and teach his child obedience is doing the child a gross injustice. He is fostering an attitude in the child which will get him in trouble at school, with the laws of the land and with God Almighty! Solomon wrote: "Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from Sheol." (Prov. 23:13-14).

In today's homes there is likely no more crucial area of disagreement and testing of parental authority than hemlines for the girls and haircuts for the boys! Fathers especially do not like to see their daughters wear clothing that is immodest, suggestive and revealing. So, the first time Suzie buys a short dress and models it at home, Dad may blow his top and declare that it is going back to the store. So Susie cries and whines a while and Dad gives in! There is no excuse for the daughter of a Christian man wearing the senseless fashions of today! That man ought to have enough backbone to make his daughter dress modestly! And then there is the matter of Bob's hair. Mom has noticed that it has been getting rather "shaggy." Now it is beginning to look like a girl's hairdo and so she orders him to get it cut. He moans that his hair is not nearly so long as that of most of the guys at school and that he doesn't want to be odd by having his hair cut shorter than theirs. Mother and son have words over it for several days or weeks following. Finally she tells herself that she just can't win and that, after all, this is certainly not as bad as smoking marijuana!

What kind of spineless parents are these? The Bible says that girls are to be especially careful to wear clothing that is modest. (I Tim. 2:9). It also says that it is shameful for a man to wear his hair long like that of a woman. (I Cor. 11:14). Christian parents know those verses are in the Bible. They know they should make

their children observe these principles. They just refuse to do it!

Yes, there is a great deal of rebellion against the authority of parents in the home. Much of it is traceable to weakness on the part of the parents. Yet older sons and daughters who are Christians have a responsibility to submit to their parents without testing to see how much they can get away with!

## Rebellion Against Government

Another place where the tendency to rebel against authority is evident is with regard to civil governments. Mobs of young people march in the streets to protest something they don't like. Their leaders mount platforms and denounce the government and its policies. They advocate "civil disobedience" to bring the government to its knees in meeting their demands. They propose to sit in judgment upon our laws to determine which ones should be obeyed and which ones should be broken. They say, "If it is a good law we will obey it; if it is a bad law we will disobey it."

This attitude toward law holds that the individual wishes and judgment of each person is the ultimate standard of right and wrong. This is the attitude which was adopted at one time in Old Testament history. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Jud. 17:6). The result back then was anarchy. The same will result today! Accepted by enough people, this attitude will destroy orderly society and bring us to a point of complete social chaos.

The Roman government of the time of Paul was cruel and oppressive in many ways. Nevertheless when the apostle wrote to Christians concerning their obligation to the government, he said, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God." (Rom.13:1). In the simplest possible terms, Paul said that God's people are to obey the laws which are binding in their societies. He wrote: "Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake." (Rom.13:5).

This duty to obedience is qualified by only one restriction: only when to obey the government is to disobey God does the Christian have the right to refuse to do what the state may require of him. When Peter and the other apostles were forbidden by the Jerusalem officials to preach in the name of Christ, they were faced with this dilemma. Their answer was: "We must obey God rather than man." (Acts 5:29). It is unlikely that such a situation as this would ever occur in America, for our government bends

(Continued on Page 3)

## The Present Rebellion (Cont.)

over backwards to respect the religious convictions of its citizens. The popular present day notion that people involved in acts of riot and rebellion against the government are acting in the tradition of the early Christians is sheer foolishness. There is no evidence that Christians ever organized any sort of movement to defy the Roman government of the first century-in spite of the fact that that government was in the hands of evil men, that its taxes were exorbitant, that it legalized and encouraged slavery, that it persecuted and even killed Christians!

You may not agree with the umpire on every call, but you cannot play baseball properly without him! You may not agree with every law that is on the statute books and you may not like the men who are charged with their enforcement, but you cannot have human society without laws and law enforcement officials! After all, almost any form of government is to be preferred over anarchy.

### Rebellion in Spiritual Matters

While giving attention to various areas where rebellion against authority is in evidence, it should also be pointed out religion has not escaped this trend. Men have taken it upon themselves to alter, add to and take from New Testament Christianity until they have changed it into something altogether different from what God intended it should be!

Colossians 3:17 requires: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father, through him." To do a thing "in the name of the Lord Jesus" is simply to do it by his authority. Again, II Corinthians 5:7 indicated that God's people are to "walk by faith." Since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom.10:17), this means that we are obligated to walk in the light of the Scripture and do those things which God has required of us. Beyond that, it means that we cannot do anything for which we do not have Christ's authority through the New Testament. (Cf. II John 9).

Have men followed these clear principles? Have they always done the Lord's will in recognizing right and wrong? Have they always worshipped him in the way that he has desired? Have they taught as doctrines only those things which are found in the Word of God? Have they been unwilling to go beyond that for which they have Biblical authority? The answer to all of these questions is in the negative! Men have not respected God's authority. They have not obeyed his clear will for their lives. They, like Saul of ancient Israel, have taken liberties with God's instructions and have altered doctrines, restructured the

organization of the church and introduced any number of unauthorized practices into her worship.

Consider the worship of the church as an example of mankind's refusal to abide by divine authority in religion. Christ taught that men must worship their Heavenly Father "in truth." (John 4:24). By his own definition, "(God's) word is truth." (John 17:17). The mere fact that a worshipper desires to do a certain thing in the course of his worship to God does not mean that it would be right for him to do it. Does he have scriptural authority for that act? A study of the New Testament reveals that early Christians engaged in five acts of worship by the authority of the Savior: (1) they taught the Word of God (Acts 20:7), (2) they offered prayers (Acts 2:42), (3) they sang songs of praise and mutual edification (Eph. 5:19), (4) they gave of their money to support the work of Christ and his church (I Cor. 16:2) and (5) they ate the Lord's Supper regularly. (Acts 20:7)

Since these are the only items of worship for which the New Testament provides authority, we would be presumptuous if we were to add such things as incense, animal sacrifices or mechanical instruments of music to our worship. The apostate Roman Catholic Church added mechanical music, incense, candles and holy altars to the simple pattern of worship given in the New Testament. Protestant Reformers did away with many of these additions, but kept others--including mechanical instruments. If we are to respect the authority of the Bible we must go back to the New Testament and abandon all unauthorized practices in our worship. We must follow the pattern given from heaven!

The same sort of rebellion against divine authority is evident when one considers the plan of salvation or the organization of the church. Rather than content themselves with what the Word of God authorized, men have made numerous changes which have resulted in the establishment of hundreds of different denominations. Christ said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." (Matt.28:18). Men have rebelled against his authority and have thereby brought themselves under the condemnation of God in spiritual matters!

### Why This Spirit of Rebellion?

Granted that men have a tendency to rebel against authority, we are still left to wonder why it is so. What causes men to think that they serve their best interests by throwing off restraints and living undisciplined lives!

Almighty God has created men so as to give us the power to choose. All of us exercise that freedom of will--too often to choose the wrong things. Witness the

fact that even small children do not like to be told what to do, where to go and how to behave. It is thus obvious that the human spirit can choose the path of resisting authority. Add to mankind's freedom the evil promptings of Satan and the justification of rebellion offered by God-denying human philosophies and there is created a situation wherein men revel in their resistance of authority!

The prevailing philosophical mood of the twentieth century is existentialism. This anti-authoritarian philosophy stresses the personal freedom of the individual and makes one's own subjective desires and experiences the ultimate standard. This view denies all absolutes and completely refuses to recognize the right of parents, school authorities, governments or even God to command obedience!

### Reasons Why We Must Respect Authority

There are two fundamental reasons why men must respect authority. First, God both deserves and demands submission to authority and obedience from his creatures. God is the creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them. With infinite wisdom and power, he brought all things into being and now preserves their continued existence by the laws he has put into operation. God is infinite in his knowledge and is able to have all things of the past, present and future open and manifest before him. He is also sovereign, possessing the right and ability to command. Thus it is that the prophet exclaimed, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken." (Isa. 1:2)

Does God deserve our submission and obedience? Man's power is terribly limited but God's is limitless! Man's is the creature and God is the creator! Man is the subject and God is sovereign! Yes, God does deserve our submission and obedience.

Beyond the fact that he DESERVES our respect for his authority, there is also the fact that he DEMANDS it! Christ said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt.7:21). There is no more fundamental principle in the Bible than that God requires men to obey him. He blesses the obedient and, in his infinite and totally righteous justice, punished the disobedient.

God not only requires that we recognize and submit to his inherent authority but also that we submit to authority which he has delegated to others. In all spiritual matters, Christ has been given authority over mankind. (Matt.28:18). Thus we must submit to his

(Continued on Page 4)

The Present Rebellion (Cont.)

authority and guidance which are contained in his "last will and testament," the New Testament scriptures. In the home, children must obey their parents. (Eph.6:1-3). In matters involving civil law, we must obey governmental leaders and submit to the laws of the land. (Rom.13:1-2; Tit.3:1).

It is therefore obvious that we are obligated by God to submit to his authority. His will in this matter is perfectly clear!

Second, we must respect authority for our own sakes. It has already been shown that God justly punishes all those who refuse to submit to his authority or that of his delegated ministers. Rebellion is sin, and all sin will be punished eternally in the pit of hell! (Rev.21:8). Even if we confine our thinking to this life, we can certainly see that respect for authority is best for mankind. Civilization cannot survive unless individuals in society have a health respect for law and its just enforcement.

Football is played by a set of rules accepted by both teams involved in a given contest. The playing field has specified boundaries and the contest itself must be played by the rules of the game. Abolish the rules or set them aside on every play and any effort to continue the game is absurd! By the same token, life cannot be lived if men set aside the rules of God as given in the Bible or claim that every situation is an exception to those rules!

Conclusion

Rebellion against authority is the most basic of all the moral problems facing our world today. It is pointless to talk about New Testament Christianity, living a moral life or doing good if men do not accept the fact of God's authority over thier lives. Socity will become sheer chaos if the delegated authority of governmental leaders, parents, teachers or others in similar positions is not respected.

How wise we all would be to heed Isaiah's counsel to ancient Israel: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but it ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it." (Isa.1:19-20).

CONTRIBUTIONS

Agnos Church of Christ . . . . .	\$ 5.00
Wheeling Church of Christ . . . . .	79.00
Sturkie Church of Christ . . . . .	5.00
Viola Church of Christ . . . . .	5.00
William Hubert . . . . .	2.00
O. T. Russell . . . . .	2.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ . . . . .	5.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ . . . . .	5.00
Bertha Stein . . . . .	2.00

# The Basis of Stewardship

What a beautiful memorial! David never wanted it forgotten, so he prayed, in I Chronicles 29:10-19, "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee."

Israel had just given with overwhelming generosity to the building of the temple. The king believed future generations ought to know about this, not for the purpose of their saying, "Look how great these people were! See what they did!" Instead he knew that such examples of generosity could stir the holy purposes of many saints in the ages to come and motivate them to give freely. The king believed in the power of a good example.

Prayers reveal much about one's attitude. And this prayer defines the elements that this man after God's own heart believed were essential to good stewardship.

1. *He acknowledged the sovereignty of God.* "All that is in heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all." Lips can easily assent to these words; but hearts may be slow to receive them. One without the other is inconsistent. "If Jehovah be God, follow Him," is the way the prophet Elijah expressed it in I kings 18:21. This is the basis of good stewardship.

2. *David knew the brevity of life.* "Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding." People who believe in the hereafter should not horde up material possessions as if they will be here to enjoy them forever. Jesus said, "Lay up treasures in heaven." This brings things that are eternal into proper perspective.

3. *He was under the constraint of love.* God had been so good to him. "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?" He believed in gratitude and he knew God would reward him for it. "I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness." All love in giving is not on the human side; "God loveth a cheerful giver." And He rejoices at the gift of love.

When you think of giving, don't miss the point. God isn't simply raising money. He's raising men.

—Hardeman Nichols

\*\*\*\*\*

Deliverance belongs to the Lord; thy blessings be upon thy people!

The Resurrection (Cont.)

about that, but in his own house Jesus had turned beer into furniture. Jesus still changes lives today.

\*Quoted by F. F. Bruce, THE SPREADING FLAME (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), p. 68.

The previous articles showed the three major proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They were as follows: the empty tomb, witnesses, and changed lives. This article is the conclusion on the topic. An application of this historical fact must be made.

In becoming a Christian the resurrection idea is important. Paul says, "if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Rom. 10:9) The final step in becoming a Christian is inseparable from Jesus' resurrection. "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Rom. 6:4-5) Paul says that we die to sin just like Jesus died a physical death. Also we are raised up as a new creature like Jesus was resurrected with a "spiritual body."

The strongest statement in the Bible concerning the importance of Jesus' resurrection is this: "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain . . . If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins . . . If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied." (I Cor. 15:14-19) Not many doctrines are equal in importance to it, therefore.

The fact that he is living today is important to Christians, since we need him as our mediator. "The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever." (Heb. 7:23-24) Upon the assurance of his eternal priesthood, since he is resurrected, the following verse is an appropriate closing: "Consequently he is able FOR ALL TIME to save those who draw near to God through him, since HE ALWAYS LIVES to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25)

Steve Williams

Rosa Ragsdale  
 Mammoth Springs, Ariz.