

Prepare_{the}Way

Preparing the Bride of Christ for the return of Christ

Issue No. 104

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**The most
misunderstood
word in the Bible**

**5 Similarities between sex
addicts and the insane!**

**Proof that
Jesus is the
Messiah**

Peter Pollock
**The Malachi
message**

**Avoiding the leaven of
the Hebrew Roots Movement**

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COVER: "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it (Luke 18:17)."

Talk to us..

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WHAT'S IN YOUR COURTS?

by Greg Hinnant

WHY we minister is as important as what we minister. Jesus is watching our motives as intently as our missions and methods.

Paul did the same.

Paul said some in Rome were ministering because they envied him and wanted to make his sufferings worse (Philippians 1:15&16). He testified others were selfish: “All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ’s (2:21).”

He commended Timothy for lovingly seeking believers’ welfare and Epaphroditus for exhausting his body to help Paul edify Christ’s body.

He warned Timothy to avoid money-motivated teachers who supposed “gain is godliness (1 Timothy 6:5),” or “serving God is a way to get rich (NCV).”

Their polar opposite, Paul ministered sacrificially, vowing he would “gladly spend and be spent” to help the Corinthians even if the only love offering he received was their unloving neglect (2

Corinthians 12:15).

These, along with honour, position, and power, are but some of the many motives of ministry.

We have recently seen the rise and fall of a false prosperity movement, yet covetousness in ministry remains a problem. Sometimes it’s overt, but more often it’s hidden – yet still dangerous.

It’s time we search the courts of our hearts.

Please ponder these searching thoughts:

Ministering compassionately or commercially? Eager to bless or profit?

When Jesus visited the temple courts, commercialism had taken over (Matthew 21:12-17). So He first “cast out” the dovesellers and money-changers, and then began ministering compassionately to the “blind” and “lame.”

Why didn’t He minister first? He couldn’t. There wasn’t enough space. Commercialism filled the Royal Porch.

After His purging, “Then there was room for the blind and the crippled to get

in (Message).”

Watch your heart courts! Never let commercial interests rule your ministry decisions! If yielded to, they’ll fill your Royal Porch, leaving mercy no room.


You’ll minister only if you profit sufficiently.

That’s mammonism, not ministry; commercialism, not compassion. Compassion drove all Jesus’ ministries – teaching, preaching, healing, feeding.

Many today are “blind” – not seeing Bible interpretations, their true condition, the times, God’s plan.

Others are “lame” – unable to walk closely with Christ in His Word, ways, guidance. They’re wandering, stumbling, backsliding, dying – so near your Royal Porch!

Will you purge your financial motives and make room to help them, well paid or not? The Shepherd’s coming soon... and watching over our courts.

Provide His sheep’s needs and He’ll provide yours. 



The Malachi message

by Peter Pollock

“THUS says the Lord.” That phrase, always said with true conviction by God’s genuine prophets, is not only confirmation and endorsement but a source of great assurance and encouragement to the hearer or the reader. Or so it should be!

Christmas time, for me is, always challenging. Not only because in so many respects it is an absolute misrepresentation of what our Lord Jesus stands for, but because it is a time of inactivity ministry-wise.

However, because of that it affords more time to get steeped and soaked in God’s Word and it was so for me as 2016 moved into 2017. I felt prompted to read Malachi and this I did over and over again!

Often reading it out aloud and just concentrating on God’s words, those red letters, rather than the black ones And it was a profound time, indeed! God’s prophets are His witness to the church; they are His witness for Him, His author-

ity and His witness against sin and sinners, positively affirming His providence and His judgment.

The method is quite simple. First God convicts and then he comforts. First he reveals sin, rebukes the sin and then provides the solution. Yes, He first opens the wound and then applies the healing lotion and the salve as we return to God!

Prophets come when times are bad and godless and they come to turn the people back to God.

The first major point with Malachi is that very little is known about him. When we study and analyse anything, the accepted method is usually to investigate deeply – including a good look at the source and the bearer. But then it clicked. It really isn’t about the messenger, it is about the message!

It makes no difference that he is considered to be a minor prophet. Major or minor is a semantic because what counts is what God actually said! Malachi is a “message,” a “voice” and that’s the crux of it.

It’s the last message of the Old Testament and we know that there were then 400 years of silence before God “spoke” again through John the Baptist. Malachi was, in fact, the last prophet to speak to the Israel/Judah “remnant” that had returned from 70 years of exile. Malachi thus came as a “reformer” who “encourages” as he “rebukes.”

Now we humans don’t like that type of stuff. We hate being rebuked. In fact, we totally resent it! In scripture we read often of Paul “admonishing,” meaning that God had firstly raised him to a position of authority, and this position was recognised and thus heard and hopefully obeyed.

God raises His admonishers. They do admonish His sheep, His true believers, love to listen and receive and are blessed into the bargain. There is great gain and reward spiritually if you openly receive a prophet – so the Bible promises!

Malachi opens with God admitting that He has a burden to share. He has got something to say. Something that is weighty and important even though it is a reproach.

What love means

“I have loved you,” says God. But somehow they didn’t, or didn’t want to, believe it. Maybe their “unbelief” revolved around their particular interpretation of what love should mean.

We are always converting God’s love into material and physical things when, in fact, it is so much deeper and more meaningful than that.

Anyway, God says categorically “I loved Jacob, I hated Esau.” Now that is not something that is easily understood nor am I going to attempt to bring clarity except to say that outside the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to come to grips with the profoundness of this statement! And certainly the listeners to Malachi were somewhat befuddled.

We must understand that Esau also needs to be translated into Edom and that this group does represent unbelievers, paganism, rebellious humanism and godless revolt. God hates that in any shape or form and we should never underplay this truth.

God loves His own passionately, for He is jealous and a consuming fire. But God does not tolerate or abide outsiders. It doesn’t matter what they do or say! Wickedness, evil and opposition incurs God’s indignation “forever.” Thus says the Lord.

God makes distinctions. He is a separa-

tist. Holiness is separation unto God! The Edomites, says God, will be made memorials to God's justice and condemnation while the Israelites will be memorials of God's love, grace and mercy.

These categories are defined spiritually, not physically and culturally. You are either in or out. That is what God is saying and most certainly underlining – that there is no such thing as a happy hunting ground grey area where mankind can float blissfully ignorant or uncaring about God's truth and the consequences of not believing.

All roads to God

The "all roads lead to God" signposts were never ever erected by Him! In a nutshell, Jacob changed and Esau didn't. God knew that in advance. It's a spiritual connection and cannot be viewed, judged or debated on any other platform. It's beyond our understanding, especially so for the man without the Spirit.

The second point that struck home was "sons honour father, servants honour masters but nobody honours Me." God is telling the priests that in no uncertain terms, by their actions, they are despising His name. And worse, they dare to argue and debate the issue.

Widespread priestly pride, covetousness and self-indulgence, not to mention defiance and corruption, had rendered the priesthood ineffectual. Where is My fear? It was totally absent yet they did not think that this criticism was justified, so much had they been caught up in social laxity, irreverence and neglect.

It had become a way of life and it was in huge contrast to the "Levitical" calling which should define the role and attitude of those who serve God. The Levites were a portion of the tribe set apart to serve God.

Part of their job was to execute judgement, as we saw with the "golden calf" incident. They were called to mete out justice and that involved slaying the idolaters. Levites were not included in the armies, they had no territorial possession, because God was their inheritance, and they were scattered amongst the tribes.

Their job was to keep alive "service" and "knowledge" of God. God has a problem with profane fire and all unacceptable sacrifices and practices.

"Your governors would not accept it yet you do it to Me," lamented God! And on top of that they even expect God to be gracious. "You beseech Me," on hands and

knees. But God tells them that He takes no pleasure in them or their sacrifices and offerings. Blind. Sick. Lame. Torn!

Matthew Henry, noted Bible teacher, writes: "If we worship blindly and ignorantly, we are bringing the blind; if we are cold and lifeless and dull we bring the sick; if it's all about physical exertion we bring the lame and if we allow worthless thoughts and distractions we bring the torn."

In short, it's an insult to God and an injury to our own souls. "Cursed be you," says God and He confirms that He is an awesome and great king and that He shall be great among the Gentiles.

"My name is dreadful among the heathens" – and it will be so, because God says so. God hates sin, He abhors it!

God's name is to be feared and He has not given anyone the right to make Him more acceptable and less demanding. It's the leaders under the microscope and condemnation pours out, suggesting that they are unfit to lead the people because of compromise and carelessness.

Laxity and complicity with the world is rife, and God picks on divorce and mixed marriage. Divorce and foreign wives from pagan nations violated two sacred covenants, and with an immutable God it will remain so forever.

The leaders, too, had lost sight of their high calling. "Behold I will send My Messenger and he shall prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to the temple, even the messenger of the covenant who you delight in; behold He shall come."

It's all going to happen but who may "abide" the day – that's the big question? Who shall stand? A refiner's fire, like fullers soap, that's what is in store. A purifier of silver. A "purger" of gold. An offering of righteousness. Phew!

This time He is coming for judgement. He will be a swift witness against sorcerers, adulterers, false witness and those WHO DO NOT FEAR ME!

God points out that the leaders have allowed the people to go away from His ordinances. "I tell you to return" – but the response is to argue and debate. As always, excusing ourselves and remaining stubbornly self-righteous in our intellectual explanations!

Then comes that part of Malachi that is so regularly quoted in the tithing message. But "you rob me," says God. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse – and to me that means a whole lot more than just

some money. Bring it all!

All God wants is everything and then, only then, when we do in fact give up our independent right to ourselves and lay all before Him, will "the devourer be rebuked" and will we be truly "blessed!"

The Book of Remembrance is mentioned because the ultimate bottom-line is just that: Is your name written in the Lamb's book of life?

One day we will each find out that all our life's journey was about concerned an entry into that honoured eternal list and that there are no other options or alternatives.

Jacob I love, Esau I hate. Thus says the Lord. Never forget that!

"You will be mine." My jewels. I will spare you as a man spares his own son. You shall then return and discern between the righteous and the wicked and between him who serves God and serves Him not.

That day comes and it shall burn like an oven and all the proud and wicked shall be stubble and that day shall leave no "root" or "branch."

"In you that fear my name," promises God Almighty, "the sun of righteousness will arise with healing in His wings."

You shall tread down the wicked for they shall be ashes under your feet in the day that I DO THIS. Thus says the Lord!

Lives must change

And finally the message concludes with the promises of a curse if our hearts don't change and we don't respond to His preachers. Lives have to change. Values have to change. The Gospel has to be preached. Disciples have to be made. And the Great Commission needs to be obeyed!

Oh, how desperately we need Malachis. Oh, how urgently we need the Malachi message! Malachi's challenge revolved around maintaining obedience and respect for God's word and His prophets and preachers. There needs to be a constant expectation and excitement about Jesus.

And we must not forget Elijah, a man of great austerity rebuking sin, because it's the same spirit and power that inspired John the Baptist to preach sin, repentance and reformation.

It's time to get back to God's house. Back to God's Word. Back to God's grace. And back on our knees!

Why?

Because, thus says the Lord. 



The Fire And Water Of God

by *Helen Gardiner*

"But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob,

And He who formed you, O Israel:

'Fear not, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by your name;

You are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned;

Nor shall the flame scorch you (Isaiah 43:1&2)."

IREMEMBER some years back, the Holy Spirit came as a refreshing presence. One would pray for people and they would fall like skittles. It is not so today.

Has the Holy Spirit left us?

No, the difference is that today the Holy Spirit is coming mainly as the fire of God. And God will not just pour out His fire on anybody, but, only on those who are fully yielded to His purposes. Fire poured out on unyielded vessels would be destructive.

If we want to be His disciples, we need to be fully surrendered as were the first disciples.

If we want Jesus Christ and His presence, we need to embrace His fire.

Regarding the water, we are now at a place where the River of God (mentioned in Ezekiel 47:1-12) is very deep. There is no more splashing in the shallows. Again, that is why God does not just pour out His water on everyone – because it is so deep.

We embrace His fire by walking in obedience to Him; by walking in the Spirit moment by moment.

These are serious times.

Psalm 50:1-3 reads:

"The Mighty One, God the Lord,

Has spoken and called the earth

From the rising of the sun to its going down.

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty

God will shine forth.

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent;

A fire shall devour before Him,

And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him."

In the presence of the Throne Room, this is how Daniel saw Almighty God, the Ancient of Days: Daniel 7:9&10a: "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him."

Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, John the Baptist says in Matthew 3:11&12:

"I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

There is a separating of wheat and chaff within us, and also there is a separating of people from people.

The Holy Spirit, in the book of Acts sat as tongues of fire upon the disciples in Acts 2: 3:

"Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them."

As we embrace the fire, it ignites us for Jesus Christ and His work, and it also burns up the dross in us and in our lives. Receiving His fire can initially seem like a negative experience because it surfaces the dross in our hearts.

Hebrews 12:28&29 says:

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

Jesus Christ – glorious and resurrected – has eyes of fire (Revelation 1:14).

We need to live in a certain way if we

want to stay in the fire. We read in Isaiah 33:14-16:

“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: ‘Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burning?’ He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil; he will dwell on high; his place of defence will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure.”

We need to check our lifestyles. If we are watching movies and television, we need to be careful of what we are feasting our eyes upon.

If we are doing right, we are promised that we will be given the bread of the Word and the water of the Holy Spirit.

We would also do well to see how we measure up to Psalm 15:

*“Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle?
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?
He who walks uprightly,
And works righteousness,
And speaks the truth in his heart;
He who does not backbite with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbour;
Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;
In whose eyes a vile person is despised,
But he honours those who fear the Lord;
He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;
He who does not put out his money at usury (usury means lending money at exorbitant interest)
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.
He who does these things shall never be moved.”*

There is more in Psalm 24:3-6:
*“Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?
Or who may stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol.
Nor sworn deceitfully,
He shall receive blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,
Who seek Your face.”*

Regarding the fire, we go back to the New Testament:

In Luke 12:49, Jesus says, “I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled.”

Jesus says in Mark 9:49: “For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.”

We end this topic with a word of hope in Psalm 66:10-12:

“For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but You brought us out to rich fulfilment.”



We all know the story of Jacob and Esau. Jacob was a usurper: a swindler. Not a very nice person. Yet God loved him. More than Esau. God, in the beginning of the book of Malachi even goes so far as to say that “Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated.”

Why did God love Jacob so much?

I believe, because, he was a wrestler: he wrestled for the best. He wrestled for God’s best.

We read about Jacob in Genesis 32:24-28: *“Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaks.’ But he said, ‘I will not let You go unless You bless me!’ So He said to him, ‘What is your name?’ He said, ‘Jacob’. And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.’”*

We all start out from Egypt like Jacob. As we journey through the wilderness, it remains to be seen, whether we will co-operate with God, and be changed into Israel.

The Church is full of Esaus who have lost their first love.

But there is hope, you can repent, and wrestle once again for God’s best.

There is wonderful promise for Jacob and Israel: Isaiah 44:23 declares: *“Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, And glorified Himself in Israel.”* Obadiah 17&18 says:

“But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau shall be stubble...”

Isaiah 27:6 says:

“Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”

A passage of Scripture I quoted earlier in this article, namely Psalm 24, speaks of the generation of Jacob, who seek the

face of the Lord.

Jacob and Israel is all about the work of transformation. The inner work which the Lord does by His Holy Spirit and His Word. He needs our co-operation. While He knows our frailty, He nevertheless needs us to work with Him and not against Him. God has a new name for you.

It is like the caterpillar (a greedy one), the chrysalis and the beautiful butterfly.

Where are you?

Let us tell you a story, a prophetic testimony...

John and I live in a big house that has seven bedrooms. Apart from a main bedroom we have rooms where we work. “My” room where I pray and write expresses me totally. It is unashamedly feminine and I have on my walls numerous butterflies.

One day I had been out and I entered my room. I looked at my wall before me and I saw something that wasn’t there before. It was a beautiful blue butterfly, perfectly positioned with the fake ones. Yes it was alive. There was no way, in the natural, that it could have got there as the windows and door were shut. God was speaking and confirming. That was about a year ago. I have learned God always gives plenty of warning about what is to come.

The real butterfly took me back to a vision a dear praying saint had for me very many years ago. She saw me as a butterfly and prayed that I would come to know His Shekinah glory.

Ah yes, we are beginning to touch the edge of that Glory.

The Day is dawning and the Morning Star is rising in our hearts (2 Peter 1:19)

“Spirit filled souls are ablaze for God.

“They love with a love that glows.

“They serve with a faith that kindles.

“They serve with a devotion that consumes.

“They hate sin with fierceness that burns.

“They rejoice with a joy that radiates.

“Love is perfected in the fire of God.”

Samuel Chadwick

Hot Saints

by Catherine Booth

"I wish you were cold or hot (Revelation 3:15)."

WHY does God like people to be hot in His service? For the same reasons that we like people to be hot in ours. We have no confidence in half-and-half, fast-and-loose friends; milkwarm adherents who in times of danger wait to see which way the wind blows before they commit themselves to our views or interests – servants who will serve us, while at the same time they serve themselves, but the moment our interests and theirs appear to clash will leave us to our fate.

We like thorough, wholehearted, all-length friends and servants, and to such only do we confide our secrets, or trust our important enterprises. We may use the half-hearted as far as they serve our purpose, but we have no confidence in them – no heart-fellowship with them, no joy over them: we would rather they were hot or cold, out-and-out friends or foes.

Read in your own heart and mind, in this respect, a transcript of His, and see the reason why He says, "I wish you were cold or hot." I want you to note some characteristics of hot saints so that you may know whether you belong to the number. To be hot implies the possession of: 1. Light; 2. Purity; 3. Pungency; 4. Power.

1. Light.

Hot saints have such a halo round about them that they reveal sins in others.

They do this first, by contrast. "What fellowship has light with darkness?"

The light of God flashed from a hot saint on the dark consciences of sinners makes them feel their sin, misery, and danger, and if they will receive it, leads to their conversion.

It "opens their eyes," and if they will follow it, leads them to Jesus. "You almost persuade me to be a Christian." "Come, see a man Who told me all things that ever I did." "You are the light of the world."

If sinners reject this light their rejection seals their sins upon them, and renders their condemnation double. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they did not have sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin."

What a fearful responsibility rests on all sinners who are brought into contact with saints who are filled with the light of God. Some of you are living under this light: How are you using it? Beware!

Secondly, light reveals sin by antipathy. "Everyone who does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

The presence of a certain degree of spiritual light must produce either repentance or opposition. A dark soul cannot dwell in the presence of a soul full of light without either repenting or opposing. If it does not submit it will rebel.

It was under the hot blaze of this light that the Jews round about Stephen "were cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth." The effect of his light on their darkness was to reveal their enmity and scorch them into a fury of opposition.

When intense spiritual light and darkness are brought in contact, their innate antipathy makes them reveal each other. The Devil could not endure the presence of Jesus without crying out, "I know You, who You are, the Holy One of God."

How is it with you saints here in this respect? Can you get along with dark souls without arousing their enmity? If so, depend upon it, you do not have much light – not that light which accompanies great heat.

If you don't want to be spewed out of the mouth of God, see to it, that you get it!

Thirdly, Light reveals sin by reproof. Hot saints will "rebuke their neighbour and not suffer sin upon him." They are full of zeal for the glory of God, and jealousy for His honour; it breaks their hearts because men do not keep His law. They know that they have the light of life, and they feel that they must hold it up over the wrongdoing, deception, and hypocrisy of their fellow-men in order to "open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light."

You never hear them apologising for sin, or calling it by smooth names. They feel towards sin, in their measure, as God feels towards it. It is the abominable thing which they hate, and therefore they cannot in any case allow it, pander to it, or excuse it.

Most saints will mercilessly turn the blazing lamp of God's truth on the conscience of a sinner with reproof as pungent, pointed, and personal, as Nathan



gave to David, Jehu to Jehoshaphat, or Jesus to the Jews.

2. Purity.

Heat cleanses, purges away dross, destroys noxious vapours. So the burning fire of the Holy Spirit purifies the soul which is filled, permeated with it. Hence, hot saints are pure.

They purify themselves, as He is pure. Their garments are white, they keep themselves “unspotted from the world.”

They improve the moral atmosphere wherever they go. Their very presence reproves and holds in check the unfruitful works of darkness, and sinners feel as Peter felt when he said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

3. Pungency.

Heat burns. Hot saints will set on fire the hearts of other saints.

They singe the consciences of sinners, burn the fingers of Pharisees, melt the hearts of backsliders, and warm up those who have left their first love.

4. Power.

Hot saints are mighty. The Spirit is not given by measure to them. They may not be very intellectual or learned, but their heat makes more impression on the hearts of sinners, and stirs more opposition from hell than all the intellect and learning of a whole generation of lukewarm professors.

The fishermen of Galilee produced more impression on the world in a few years, than all the learning of the Jews had done in centuries, because they were hot in the love and service of God.

Hot saints are more than a match for their enemies. Satan himself is afraid of them. “Paul I know,” said he. Yes, and he knows and fears all such.

Wicked men cannot stand before them; the power of their testimony cuts them to the heart, and makes them either cry out, “What must we do to be saved?” or, “Away with him! Away with him.”

Hot people are not only able to work, but to suffer. They can endure hardness, suffer reproach, contend with principalities and powers, fight with wild beasts, hail persecution and death!

5. To be hot ensures opposition.

Firstly, from Pharisees. They look with contempt on hot people, call them fanatics, extreme people, troublers of Israel, disturbers of the peace of the Church, occasions of reproach to the respectable and reasonable part of the Church.

The Pharisees were the bitterest enemies of Him who said, “The zeal of Your house has eaten Me up.” And they are still the bitterest enemies of those who are filled with His Spirit.

It matters not that they have now a Christian creed instead of a Jewish; the spirit is the same, and will not, tolerate “God manifest in the flesh.”

A formal, ceremonious, respectable religion they do not object to; but a living, burning, enthusiastic Christianity is still Beelzebub to them.

Secondly, to be hot ensures opposition from the world. The world hates hot saints, because they look with contempt on its pleasures, set at naught its maxims and customs, trample on its ambition and applause, ignore its rewards, abjure its spirit, and live altogether above its level.

“Because you are not of the world, therefore the world hates you.” It can tolerate lukewarm religionists – rational, decent people, who appreciate this world as well

as the next, and can see how to make the best of it; but these hot, pestilent, mad fools who obtrude their religion everywhere, who are at everybody about their souls, who are always talking about God, death, judgement, heaven, and hell – “Away with them! They are not fit to live.”

Thirdly, to be hot ensures opposition from the Devil. Oh, how he hates these hot saints! What trouble he takes to trip them. He knows they are worth it.

Many a council is held in hell over these. They set fire to his standing corn. They rout his best-trained legions. They shake the foundations of his throne. They take the prey out of his very jaws; they pull it out of his fires.


He must do something!

He sets his principalities and powers to work on them. Loose and feeble fiends will do for lukewarm people, but these he must take in hand himself, and try all the guile and force of his gigantic intellect on them.

He troubles them on every side, and at last, when God permits, he has their heads off. He got Paul’s, but they defy him even when they are between his teeth; he cannot swallow them; they escape out of his very jaws to glory. Hallelujah! Our arch-enemy is a conquered foe.

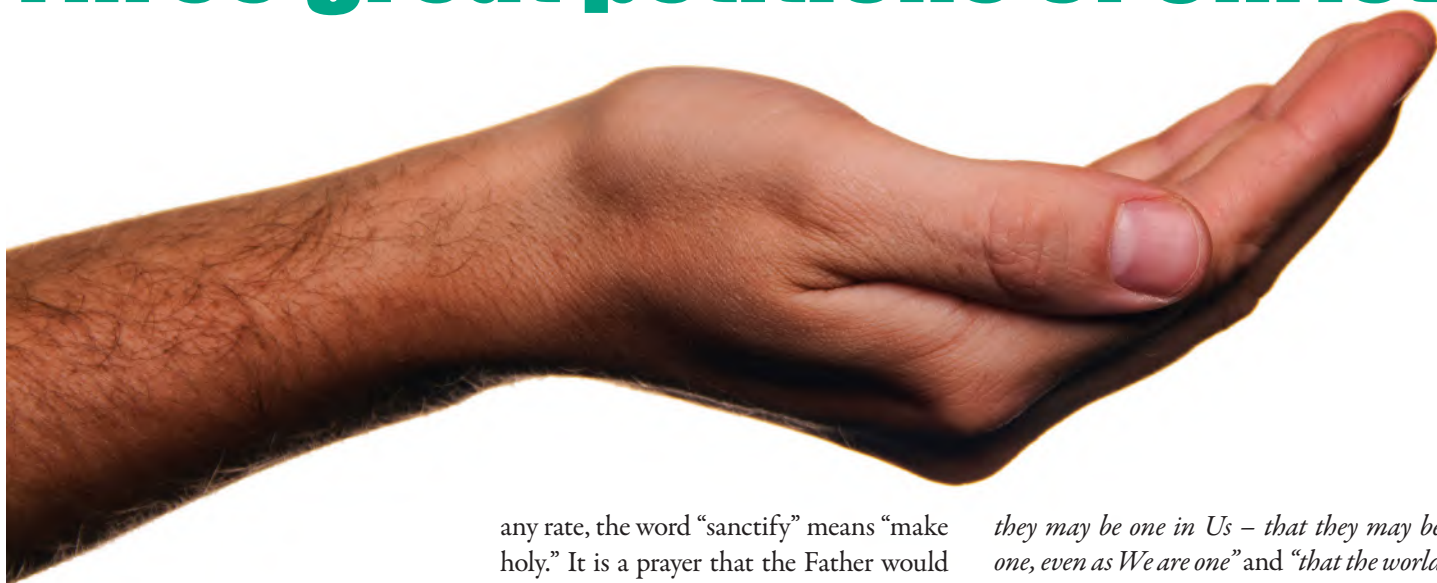
Let me remind you, in conclusion, that to be hot ensures God’s special favour, protection and fellowship, and our final victory.

“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life...” Whereas to be lukewarm is to be spewed out of His mouth, which indicates special dislike, disgrace, and final abandonment.

Which will you be: hot or lukewarm? 



Three great petitions of Christ



by J. C. Ryle

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them (John 17:17-26).”

THESE wonderful verses form a fitting conclusion of the most wonderful prayer that was ever prayed on earth – the last Lord’s prayer after the first Lord’s Supper. They contain three most important petitions which our Lord offered up in behalf of His disciples.

Sanctification

We should mark, first, how Jesus prays that His people may be sanctified. *“Sanctify them,”* He says, *“through Your truth – Your word is truth.”*

We need not doubt that, in this place at

any rate, the word “sanctify” means “make holy.” It is a prayer that the Father would make His people more holy, more spiritual, more pure, more saintly in thought and word and deed, in life and character.

Grace had done something for the disciples already – called, converted, renewed, and changed them. The great Head of the church prays that the work of grace may be carried higher and further, and that His people may be more thoroughly sanctified and made holy in body, soul, and spirit – in fact more like Himself.

Surely we need not say much to show the matchless wisdom of this prayer. More holiness is the very thing to be desired for all servants of Christ. Holy living is the great proof of the reality of Christianity. Men may refuse to see the truth of our arguments, but they cannot evade the evidence of a godly life. Such a life adorns religion and makes it beautiful, and sometimes wins those who are not “won by the Word.”

Who in the face of such facts as these need wonder that increased sanctification should be the first thing that Jesus asks for His people? Who that is really taught of God can fail to know that holiness is happiness, and that those who walk with God most closely, are always those who walk with Him most comfortably?

Let no man deceive us with vain words in this matter. He who despises holiness and neglects good works, under the vain pretence of giving honour to justification by faith, shows plainly that he has not the mind of Christ.

Unity

We should mark, secondly, in these verses, how Jesus prays for the unity and oneness of His people. *“That they all may be one – that*

they may be one in Us – that they may be one, even as We are one” and *“that the world may believe... and know that You have sent Me.”* This is a leading petition in our Lord’s prayer to His Father.

We can ask no stronger proof of the value of unity among Christians, and the sinfulness of division, than the great prominence which our Master assigns to the subject in this passage. How painfully true it is that in every age divisions have been the scandal of religion, and the weakness of the church of Christ!

How often Christians have wasted their strength in contending against their brethren, instead of contending against sin and the devil! How repeatedly they have given occasion to the world to say, “When you have settled your own internal differences we will believe!” All this, we need not doubt, the Lord Jesus foresaw with prophetic eye. It was the foresight of it which made Him pray so earnestly that believers might be “one.”

Let the recollection of this part of Christ’s prayer abide in our minds, and exercise a constant influence on our behaviour as Christians. Let no man think lightly, as some men seem to do, of schism, or count it a small thing to multiply sects, parties, and denominations. These very things, we may depend, only help the devil and damage the cause of Christ.

“If possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:18).” Let us bear much, concede much, and put up with much, before we plunge into secessions and separations.

They are movements in which there is often much false fire. So long as we have Christ and a good conscience, let us patiently hold on our way, follow the things that make for peace, and strive to promote unity. It was not for nothing that our Lord

prayed so fervently that His people might be “one.”

We should mark, finally, in these verses, how Jesus prays that His people may at last be with Him and behold His glory. *“I will,”* He says, *“that those whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am – that they may behold My glory.”*

This is a singularly beautiful and touching conclusion to our Lord’s remarkable prayer. We may well believe that it was meant to cheer and comfort those who heard it, and to strengthen them for the parting scene which was fast drawing near. But for all who read it even now, this part of His prayer is full of sweet and unspeakable comfort.

We do not see Christ now. We read of Him, hear of Him, believe in Him, and rest our souls in His finished work. But even the best of us, at our best, walk by faith

and not by sight, and our poor halting faith often makes us walk very feebly in the way to heaven.

There will be an end of all this state of things one day. We shall at length see Christ as He is, and know as we have been known. We shall behold Him face to face, and not through a glass darkly. We shall actually be in His presence and company, and go out no more.

If faith has been pleasant, much more will sight be; and if hope has been sweet, much more will certainty be. No wonder that when Paul has written, *“And so shall we ever be with the Lord,”* he adds, *“Comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:17&18).”*

We know little of heaven now. Our thoughts are all confounded when we try to form an idea of a future state in which

pardoned sinners shall be perfectly happy. *“It does not yet appear what we shall be (1 John 3:2).”* But we may rest ourselves on the blessed thought, that after death we shall be “with Christ.”

Where that blessed Person is – who was born for us, died for us, and rose again – there can be no lack of anything. David might well say, *“In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16:11).”*

Let us leave this wonderful prayer with solemn recollection of the three great petitions which it contains. Let holiness and unity by the way, and Christ’s company in the end, be subjects never long out of our thoughts or distant from our minds.

Happy is that Christian who cares for nothing so much as to see these fulfilled. ☩



by J. R. Miller

OJESUS, my Saviour and Redeemer, hear my prayer. Lamb of God, who by Your bitter anguish redeemed me from eternal hell, have mercy on me, and bless me.

I adore You, I praise Your name, I worship You, Son of God, who sits and reigns with Your Father in the heavenly glory.

What shall I render to You for Your great love and Your infinite sacrifice on our behalf? Your mercy is boundless, Your grace is beyond comprehension.

I lift my eyes to Your Cross today, for it was there You paid the price of my redemption.

May there come from Your Cross into my heart, as I bow here, a beam of Your love, which shall shine into the depths of my soul, and kindle an answering love which shall consume my whole being in devotion.

I desire to go this whole day under the influence of Your Cross. Help me to remember all the time that I am Yours, purchased by You, even at the cost of Your precious blood!

Let me do nothing that will be unworthy of Your ownership in me.

Keep my heart pure, that I may see You with uninterrupted vision.

Keep my lips clean, that I may speak Your name with reverence and worthy honour.

Keep my hands unstained, that their touch may leave only blessings.

Keep my life unspotted, that wherever I go the light of Your holiness may shine in me.

I ask You, blessed Redeemer, to keep near to me all the day, and to keep me near to You. There is no safe place in this world except close to Your side.

Hide me in the cleft of the Rock of Ages.

Wash away all my sins in Your all-cleansing blood. Fill my heart with Your Holy Spirit.

I ask all these favours and blessings, in Your precious name, Saviour divine.

Amen. ☩

Hebrew Roots and the Leaven of Works

by T.A. McMahon & G. Richard Fisher

"Purge out therefore the old leaven (1 Corinthians 5:7)..."

THE Apostle Paul warned about being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14). These days, the winds of false doctrine are blowing hard against the church.

Most people who believe in God have the notion that there are certain things we can do that will please Him, thus improving our position with the Almighty and gaining certain benefits for ourselves. There is some truth to this idea, but there are also serious problems that can result, such as a form of works salvation. We must remember that grace is God's kindness to the undeserving, and it cannot be worked for or earned in any way (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Of course, true salvation will always have works that accompany it (Titus 2:11-13; 3:8). That truth is found in the Scriptures. For example, "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him (John 14:23).'"

"Whatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight (1 John 3:22)." Obedience to the teachings of the Word of God indeed produces benefits and pleases the Lord.

Jesus accepts us as we are but does not leave us as we were. Genuine salvation produces sanctification and good works as we are motivated by the Holy Spirit.

Asking God for something involves more than just making a request. Yes, Jesus said, "If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it (John 14:14)." Scripture, however, further tells us "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts (James 4:3)." God's response to our requests is often dependent upon our motives, our walk with Him, the desires of our heart in conformity to His desire, His will, His grace, His mercy, and so forth.

Such conditions challenge the false teachings of the Word of Faith, Prosperity, and Healing preachers, who try to bend certain verses of Scripture into a system of cause-and-effect laws, which thereby appear to turn God into a genie in a bot-

tle who must respond to one's demands. Supposedly, when a verse is "claimed," God has no choice but to comply.

Not only is any attempt to interpret the Word of God in such a way that it becomes a system of spiritual laws (or methods or techniques) dead wrong, but it is little different from the beliefs and practices of magic, occultism, and witchcraft. At the very least, it generates legalism.

For example, the response heard most often by those who have not been healed after following the teaching of the Word of Faith preachers is that the healing could not take place because there was a lack of faith on the part of the sick individual.

Legalism results in this system as individuals are coerced into adhering to the particulars of the false teaching in order to get the expected outcome. Another aspect of legalism is creating unbiblical, man-made rules and practices not found in Scripture (Colossians 2:20-23).

Although the errors of the Word of Faith and Prosperity teachings should be obvious for diligent biblical Christians to discern, there is a growing movement that is related in many ways (although far more subtle and seductive) called the Hebrew Roots Movement (HRM).

The HRM is, in general, an attempt by its adherents to draw closer to God by glean- ing things from Judaism that are perceived to be biblically significant and valuable. Though the movement includes Jews who have professed faith in Jesus Christ as their Messiah, for the most part, it comprises non-Jewish Christians (Gentiles).

The HRM technically is not a movement as we would normally define one. There is no national organisation or hierarchy of leadership among this group, yet there are leaders and writers from diverse *ad hoc* organisations, churches, and ministries who favour the trend.

Within the subculture, churches may be called synagogues, pastors may be called rabbis, Jesus may be referred to as *Yeshua*, depending on the whim of the leader or leaders. That make-it-up-as-you-go-along concept was demonstrated when one "Christian Rabbi" wrapped a prosperity teacher in a Torah scroll, called the teacher King, seated him in a chair, and had ushers parade him around on their shoulders.

The attraction for many to the HRM



is often motivated by a love for the nation of Israel and its culture and traditions. However, those feelings have taken multitudes beyond a biblically acceptable attitude toward things Jewish and into beliefs and practices that are contrary to the teachings of Scripture.

For some, the HRM has led them into a gospel of works salvation, which the Apostle Paul warned against and condemned in Galatians: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh (Galatians 3:1-3)?"

Three layers

There appear to be three different layers within the HRM: (1) Those who see Jewish practices with the accoutrements as a means of salvation, (2) Those who see some kind of a Jewish lifestyle as a means of sanctification and as a more godly spiritual life, and (3) Those who immerse themselves in Judaism as a way to understand the customs and manners of biblical times. Layers 1 and 2 create huge problems for their followers. They also create "levels" of Christians and a divisive elitism. Layers 1 and 2 employ imitation, but the third layer includes those seeking better illumination and insight into the Word.

Every sincere believer has been born again spiritually by faith in what Jesus Christ accomplished on the Cross. Eternal salvation is the result. The Holy Spirit then takes up residence within that person and becomes his enabler for living a life that is fruitful and pleasing to the Lord. This is the only way for one to be saved from everlasting separation from God.

Nevertheless, there is a certain kind of "salva-



tion” (sometimes referred to as sanctification) that a believer is to work out by God’s grace (Philippians 2:12&13). But again, as Galatians makes very clear, the born-again Christian began in the Spirit, and his life in Christ can be carried out only by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. The flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8) and, furthermore, it profits nothing (John 6:63).

Many of those who are attracted to the HRM recognise that works play no part in the Gospel. Yet all who hold to the various HRM beliefs and practices have succumbed to a form of works salvation regarding their relationship with the Lord and their hope of drawing nearer to Him.

For many, there is a false sense that “Jewishness is next to godliness.”

Therefore, they see spiritual benefit in Jewish rituals, dietary laws, paraphernalia, and the like. For a number of followers of the HRM, their affinity for such things may be unintentional when it comes to falling back under the Law to achieve righteousness. Nevertheless, it’s a leaven that rises and leads in that direction. No matter how insignificant that leaven may seem, it is at least a rejection of the grace of our Lord: “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21).”

The false teachings found within various groups of the HRM run the gamut – from a clear rejection of Christ’s full payment on the Cross for the sins of mankind, to the guesswork of what laws are to be obeyed, or to a dual-covenant salvation.

Within that mix are numerous ideas that are declared to be based upon Scripture but have no biblical basis whatsoever. The HRM, with its Law/works emphasis and inclusion of extra-biblical content, is a major contributor to the last-days apostasy and therefore needs to be exposed and judged biblically.

We as believers need to follow the exhortation of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians:

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21).”

This is accomplished by searching the Scriptures to discern whether or not what’s being taught is consistent with the Word of God (Acts 17:11). The HRM, however, thwarts that critical exhortation for discernment. Many followers of the movement are taught that the Gospels were originally written in Hebrew in a version that was supposed to be superior to the Greek texts, containing Hebrew idioms that provided deeper insights.

Since no one has ever produced copies of the original Hebrew language version, adherents are told that much of what has been “missing” can be gleaned from rabbinical sources, even the mystical, occult Kabbalah.

The obvious fallacy in this is that it points people toward the extra-biblical material and speculations of men in order to supposedly explain the inspired Word of God.

Furthermore, those who promote the idea of an original Hebrew New Testament disparage the Greek text of Scripture that God chose in which to originally present the New Testament.

Not only is that wrong, but it misses the obvious reasons for a Greek New Testament. Greek was the universal language of that day, understood by both Jews and Gentiles. Hebrew was the language specific to the Jews. The Gospel, however, was not for the Jews only, but God’s mandate to the disciples was that they were to preach it to the Gentiles as well (Matthew 28:18-20).

To further compound the error, HRM followers are exhorted to learn Hebrew in order to increase their spiritual understanding and become more like the Jewish Jesus.

Back to the law

Going back to the Law has been a problem for Christianity down through its history. From Paul’s issues with Peter (Galatians 2:11-14), to the Judaizers of Galatians, to the dogmas of Roman Catholicism and the Russian and Eastern Orthodox Church, to the legalism of Seventh-day Adventism and other “Christian” cults of today – all teach that you need to abide by the Law.

Yet none teach that a person must observe the whole Law. All are very selective regarding which laws they choose to obey. The HRM also reworks Old Testament observances that only seem to reflect what God ordained. The Passover practiced to-

day, for example, is not the same Passover observed during the Exodus and up until the first century.

The contemporary Seder is based on an extra-biblical Jewish tradition that Christians attempt to recreate but that has no meaning for the non-Jew. Those of the HRM however, are not the only people who participate in the Seder. It is widespread among Evangelicals who are attracted to the present-day practice, thinking that it is consistent with Scripture.

The biblical Passover celebrated Jewish liberation from Egypt – which does not apply to people who were not delivered from Egypt but from sin. Jesus gave to the Church the Lord’s Supper, not the Passover. Jesus’ death is the fulfilment of the Old Testament practice of Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Honouring the Seder ceremony for the sake of witnessing to Jews may be well-meaning on the part of Christians who participate but it in fact promotes the invented content of the Talmud and sends the message that the Messiah has yet to come.

There is one incontrovertible fact that is ignored by nearly all in the HRM groups. That inescapable fact is that first-century Judaism is not the same Judaism that exists today. In fact, to be correct we would have to refer to Judaisms. There are a dozen or more subcultures and divisions within Judaism today. Orthodox, Conservative, Ashkenazic, and Sephardic Judaisms are only the tip of a very large iceberg.

The huge question that the HRM has yet to answer is, Which Judaism? An arbitrary take-your-pick philosophy simply adds to the confusion and chaos.

The leaven of the HRM has been slowly rising within the churches of our day. But there are indications that the movement may increase like a flood. The names of some of those who promote certain of the teachings and practices of the HRM within Christendom have highly influential organisations or ministries. They include Joseph Farah of WorldNetDaily, *Blood Moons* author Mark Biltz, *The Harbinger* author Jonathan Cahn, pastor John Hagee, blogger and cultist Michael Rood, and pastor James Staley (now in prison for fraud).

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21).”

There is a great amount of “frustrating the grace of God” by those involved in the HRM, primarily due to a lack of understanding regarding the difference

Hebrew Roots and the Leaven of Works

Continued...

between the Covenant of Law and the New Covenant of Grace. We celebrate this difference when we partake of communion.

Beginning with Galatians 2:21, we see that righteousness cannot come “by the law,” nor do salvation and sanctification. Just as salvation is the gift of God, so too is righteousness: “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life (Romans 5:17&18).”

As Harry Ironside noted, “We are not only freed from the law as a means of attempting to secure justification, but are also freed from the law as a means of sanctification.”

Matthew 28:20 is clear: as we disciple others, we are to teach them everything that Jesus commanded (a huge responsibility), not everything that Moses commanded. The believer in Christ who looks to the law as a means of righteousness is in serious error. All the righteous requirements of the law are not fulfilled by us but are fulfilled in us by Jesus Christ, who satisfied the requirements of the law for and in every believer (Romans 8:1-4).

Christ fully completed every righteous requirement of the Law, and He gives that victory and standing to His followers. Swedish theologian Anders Nygren writes, “They who are ‘in Christ’ are by that very fact righteous, and not by a keeping of the law made possible by that fact. Their righteousness consists in the fact... that they no longer live of themselves but ‘are in Christ.’ Therein, and not through any keeping of the law, is the righteousness of the law fulfilled (Romans 10:4, see also Galatians 3:24-26).”

In AD 70, the Temple in Jerusalem was completely destroyed. First-century Judaism died. When Jesus was sacrificed on the Cross, He, as the Lamb of God, satisfied the eternal penalty for mankind’s sin, and at that point He rendered the Temple and the priesthood obsolete (Hebrews 8:7-13; 10:1-9; 12:26-29).

When Jesus cried, “It is finished,” He



meant that not only was redemption complete but, as a result, biblical Judaism had completed that for which it was intended. Jesus alone was the focal point of salvation.

The ripping in two of the Temple veil as Christ gave up His spirit (Matthew 27:51) signified that He had accomplished what the Old Testament had prophesied. Christ’s death both fulfilled and ended the function of the biblical practices of Judaism with its temple, sacrifices, and priesthood.

Sewing the veil back again

The way into the Holy of Holies and the very presence of God was now open and available to all.

The HRM, however, seems to want to sew the temple veil back together.

To that end, in order for the religion of Judaism to continue without a Temple or a sacrifice or a priesthood, it had to be totally revamped to compensate for its losses.

Israel’s way to God no longer existed. A new way had to be cobbled together.

Old Testament requirements, additional traditions, modifications, and contributions from leading rabbis, were put together in documents known as the Mishnah (AD 200), the Jerusalem Talmud (AD 400) and the Babylonian Talmud (AD 500).

The Talmud, with its more than 20 volumes containing input from hundreds of rabbis, is the book that dictates much of Jewish religious life today. Jewish Midrash consists of paraphrases of Scripture and Rabbinical commentaries. These are an added component in latter-day Judaism. The Talmud, however, is the chief source of its practices and beliefs, and a large portion of Talmudic practice is found within the HRM.

The brilliant Hebrew Christian Alfred Edersheim said that applying the Talmud to Christianity was a huge mistake and that the Talmud had follies and superstitions of former days that needed to be refuted.

Many in the HRM claim to be “Torah observant” (living according to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), when what they actually are is Talmud observant.

Adherents of the HRM believe that they are following biblical customs when, in fact, they are recreating later practices and even medieval traditions.

For example, the wearing of the *yarmulke* or *kippa* (a type of skull cap) by Jewish men is a human tradition with no basis in the Law of Moses. Another apparent necessity in the HRM is the wearing of what is called a “prayer shawl,” also called a *Tallit*, a Hebrew term that is found in the Talmud but nowhere is there evidence of such a practice in the Hebrew Old Testament.

Among HRM followers there is a serious lack of searching out the genuine biblical roots of their beliefs and practices, including the aforementioned erroneous belief that the Gospel of Matthew, and perhaps the other three Gospels, were first written in Hebrew.

More critical, it seems, is the lack of understanding of the Old Testament versus the New Testament, and the concept of Law versus grace.

The New Testament in every way surpasses the Old Testament, spiritually and functionally.

John Reisinger explains: “The whole subject is as clear as crystal the moment we see that Christ established a New Covenant that replaces the Old Covenant, and that the New Covenant brings with it new and higher laws of conduct that are based entirely on grace. These new laws are just as objective as any law under the Old Covenant. These objective commands can demand a kind of behaviour that Moses could never demand simply because these new laws are based upon truth and power of grace.”

The Old Testament reaches its intended goal in Christ, and that fullness and fulfilment is given to believers by virtue of Christ in them (Galatians 2:20&21). Living it out can take place only by the enablement of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling those who have been born again.

As Lewis Sperry Chafer points out, “The law of Moses presents a covenant of works to be wrought in the energy of the flesh; the teachings of grace present a covenant of faith to be wrought in the energy of the Spirit.” In other words, Grace empowers us while the Law condemns us.

Many who participate in the HRM may

not realise that in their misplaced zeal to draw nearer to God they are actually moving in the opposite direction. They keep bits and pieces of the law, with neither rhyme nor reason for their choices, as they ignore or avoid the judgments meted out by the law.

The law is an entirely unified system much like a seamless garment. One cannot arbitrarily keep what one wants and ignore the rest. That is simply “cafeteria Judaism,” as if the law were a pick-and-choose smorgasbord. James 2:10 is clear: “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”

The law confronts us with the fact that we need mercy and grace found in Jesus alone.

Sadly, those of the HRM understand neither law nor grace, and are unwittingly fulfilling what Hebrews 2:1 warns against: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

The current slippage includes major doctrinal errors by HRM leaders – especially those involved with Dual Covenant salvation.

Dual covenant teaching promotes the belief that Gentiles are saved through Jesus, and Jews are saved without Jesus, presumably under the Mosaic or Abrahamic Covenant as they try to keep the various parts of the Law of Moses.

Those who recognise the impossibility of keeping the law respond that nevertheless Jews by birth are automatically and unconditionally saved. If that were the case, why would Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declare regarding his kinsmen, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved (Romans 10:1)?”

Paul is clear that the Gospel is for the Jews (Romans 1:16) first and foremost. Furthermore, John writes, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12&13).”

Scripture is absolutely clear: Jesus is the only way for Jew or Gentile to be saved (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Grace trumps race.

The drift away from the Word of God – and especially the New Covenant – has become a flood within the HRM. Its affinity for Judaism screams for an answer to the question we brought up earlier – which Judaism?

Is it Orthodox, Reform (Progressive),

Conservative, New Age, or any of the other sects and subdivisions of Judaism? This question is not being answered in the HRM let alone even being asked.

None of these subcultures in Judaism represent biblical Judaism, nor do they come even close. Superstitions, divination, necromancy, and kabbalistic practices abound.

Rejecting the Trinity

Modern Judaism in all of its forms is monotheistic and rejects the essential scriptural doctrine of the Trinity.

Where the HRM yearns for legitimate Old Testament practices, it misses the all-important fact that they were only a shadow of things to come. All of the types pointing to those things have been completely accomplished by Jesus.

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come (Colossians 2:16&17)...”

Notice that verse 16 includes feast days and the Sabbath as insubstantial shadows; how much more then are the non-shadow paraphernalia derived from non-biblical traditions and customs – such as yarmulkes, prayer shawls, modes of dress, twisted payots (side curls), Western Wall prayers, red strings on the wrist, shofars, etc?”

For the Jew, these things have some supposed spiritual value even though they are not by God’s instruction. According to Scripture, employing unbiblical practices in an attempt to gain spiritual merit opens the practitioner to dire consequences – perhaps not as dramatic as what took place in the lives and “strange fire” deaths of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1), but nothing good can come from approaching God by using man’s ways.

Adherents of the HRM are attracted to things of the Law and to an obsolete Judaism, both past and present. Some early connections include cultish doctrines such as are found in Seventh-Day Adventism, with its penchant for selective laws, and the Worldwide Church of God (WWCG).

In its erroneous endeavours, the HRM has drifted away (if indeed it was ever there) from the Church, the bride and body of Christ which comprises Jews and Gentiles. Galatians 3:28 makes that clear: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Colossians 3:11 confirms that the new believer in Christ is “neither Greek

nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all.”

Elwood McQuaid reminds us, “Today’s church is a body of twin remnants of Jews and Gentiles. It is not a Gentile institution; and when a Jewish person becomes a believer in Jesus, he or she does not become a Gentile. Nor, for that matter, is it an extension of Judaism. Gentiles are not transformed into Jews, nor do they become a new branch or extension of Judaism. The church is unique.”

The HRM confuses both Jews and those in the church. The movement becomes something of a hybrid that is neither Judaism nor Christianity. It is a charade of both Judaism and Christianity.

It has synagogues that are not synagogues, rabbis that are not rabbis, and anachronistically mixes Talmudic traditions with New Testament concepts and words, thus creating a new religious belief system and practice.

Both sides are very confused. Its elitism is illusory; its pretended insights and superiority are often imaginary.

In summary, the HRM is a form of man-made spirituality and therefore stands in opposition to the Word of God.

How might we minister to those who have become involved with the Hebrew Roots Movement?

Although conditions of engagement may be very different at times, involving family members, or friends, or those in leadership who are believers, we must recognise that any change of their hearts can be accomplished only by the Holy Spirit who alone can bring about repentance. Nevertheless, we can be used of the Holy Spirit to explain what the HRM teaches and how it is contrary to Scripture.

Paul instructs us regarding biblical correction: “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26).”

We are to be steadfast not strident, gentle, patient, teaching with meekness, and most of all remembering that only God can bring them to “the acknowledging of the truth.”

Finally, and most important, our endeavour on their behalf must be supported by unceasing prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 4:16).

With grateful thanks to The Berean Call.



5 Similarities between sex addicts and the insane

by Steve Gallagher

"Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead (Ecclesiastes 9:3)."

SOCIETY deems a person insane who has lost touch with reality and has become irrational in his thinking. Such a person has long indulged in extreme pride and self-centeredness and

has lost the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, real and unreal.

Men who habitually give over to sexual sin enter their own form of insanity. Although most sexual addicts can still function in life – hold a responsible job, pay the bills, interact with other people – their thinking about sexual (and spiritual) matters becomes extremely irrational.

Their insanity is not primarily of the mind but of the heart.

Consider some of the outlandish things sex addicts think and do: the man who ransacks garbage dumpsters looking for a scrap of pornography; the husband who enjoys watching his wife in bed with other men; the exhibitionist who really thinks others will be turned on by seeing his private parts; the "john" who squanders thousands of dollars on empty encounters with call girls; the "peeping tom" who spends countless hours prowling around neighbourhoods hoping to catch a glimpse of flesh. These are but a few examples of the bizarre behavior that comes with sexual sin. I haven't even mentioned the really whacked-out stuff such as S&M, B&D, self-asphyxiation, weird fetishes, cannibalism and so on.

When you really think about it, isn't the sex addict's entire fantasy world based upon delusional thinking? Isn't a man outside the realm of reality when he imagines himself with a harem of girls who live to satisfy him? Or concocts a mental storyline where the young married woman at work seduces him? Or daydreams about having sex with some famous movie star? And, of course, all of these strange behaviours originate in the thought life.

But beyond all of this, there exist a number of interesting characteristic similarities between a sexual addict and an insane person.

1. Extremely Selfish

The first is that, in the case of both individuals, "self" is enormous. The mentally deranged person is so obsessed with himself that he completely loses sight of other people's welfare, concerns and rights. He becomes so huge in his own thinking that he sees himself as the centre of the universe.

The ultimate in this type of crazed thinking is when a man claims to be God or Jesus Christ – something that occurs more frequently than you might realise.

While the typical sexual addict does not become quite this delusional, his thinking is gradually permeated by extreme selfishness as he allows his illicit desires to take precedence over everything else in life.

For instance, his obsession with pleasure will drive him to do things that will devastate his wife and children. Like the "double-minded man" of James 1, he vacillates between good and evil. When in his right mind, he hates what his actions do to

loved ones. But even the best of intentions evaporate when the madness of sensuality overtakes him. Once the fire of lust is ignited within him, everything else fades from view.

2. Acceptance of Self-Harm

Another commonality of the two is that they are both willing to do things that they know will bring harm to themselves. People deemed insane often destroy their lives – and what is so puzzling to those around them is their willingness to do so over the most ridiculous things. (It's no wonder that "psychotic" people so often end up living on the streets.)

How is it any different for many who are involved in habitual immorality? Consider the homosexual who has illicit encounters with dozens of men, knowing the inevitability of acquiring AIDS. What about the man who commits adultery even though he knows he will lose his wife and children? Think about the man who commits sexual crimes, knowing that a few minutes of indulgence could very well put him in prison for years. What else but madness of mind could cause a person to do things that will only devastate his life?

It is also true in a spiritual sense. The sexual sinner has become so driven by lascivious desires that he purposefully does what his conscience tells him is against his own eternal interests. Charles Finney once wrote: "Sinners act as if they were afraid they should be saved. Often they seem to be trying to make their salvation as difficult as possible... They rush upon damnation as if it were heaven, and flee from salvation as if it were hell. Is this exaggeration? No; this is only the simple truth. Sinners press down the way to hell as if it were the chief good of their existence, and shun the way to heaven as if it were the consummation of evil."

3. Out of Touch with Reality

A third common denominator between these two people is that they both treat fiction as truth and truth as fiction. This, of course, is what defines a person as insane – losing touch with reality.

But isn't this also the case with the "Christian" sexual addict? For instance, he can read the warning in a passage of Scripture such as 1 Corinthians 6:9&10 – "Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor ef-

feminate, nor homosexuals... will inherit the kingdom of God – and walk away convinced that it does not apply to him! Only madness in the heart can account for such self-deception.

4. Overvaluing the Meaningless

Another commonality of these two is that they both make trivialities the focus of their lives. When you see a "bag lady" pushing her cart full of junk down the sidewalk, each piece of which she treats as though it were a priceless jewel, you know instinctively that she has slipped over the line into insanity.

How is it any different for the man who has the treasures of heaven within his grasp, but squanders them for a few fleeting experiences of pleasure? Sex has become such an enormous idol in his heart that everything in life revolves around it. Sex has its place amongst a number of other interests in life for the normal person, but it becomes everything for the sex addict.

5. Tormented by Paranoia

The final common denominator between the insane person and the sexual addict I will mention is that they both lose their sense of trust for others – even those whom they should know only have their best interests in mind. It goes without saying that many delusional people think that others are against them. They imagine the zaniest conspiracies: everybody is out to get them.

The sex addict can also become paranoid. "The wicked flee when no one is pursuing," Solomon wrote, "but the righteous are bold as a lion (Proverbs 28:1)." The guilt over one's behaviour can have this effect upon a sinner's thinking. Since his secret actions are so huge in his mind, he imagines that other people know what he has done. His guilt drives him into the most delusional thinking.

Of course, it goes without saying that in both cases, paranoia flourishes when self is huge. The bigger a person's self-life, the more he imagines that others are thinking about him. What a letdown when he discovers that other people think very little about him!

For the Christian (?) sex addict, this suspicion carries over into his relationship with God as well. He reads and hears

about the love of God, but his irrationality causes him to vacillate between extremes of presumptuous pride ("God's grace covers all my sins!") and unbelief about God's benevolent character ("If He really loved me, He would deliver me!").

The insanity of his sin motivates him to buy into the same falsehood that Satan has been proliferating ever since the Garden: that he – and not God – is man's true benefactor.


How to Find Sanity

There is one remaining factor that must be touched upon: no one has ever been as sane and as in touch with reality as Jesus Christ. In my book, *Counselling the Sexual Addict*, I wrote the following:

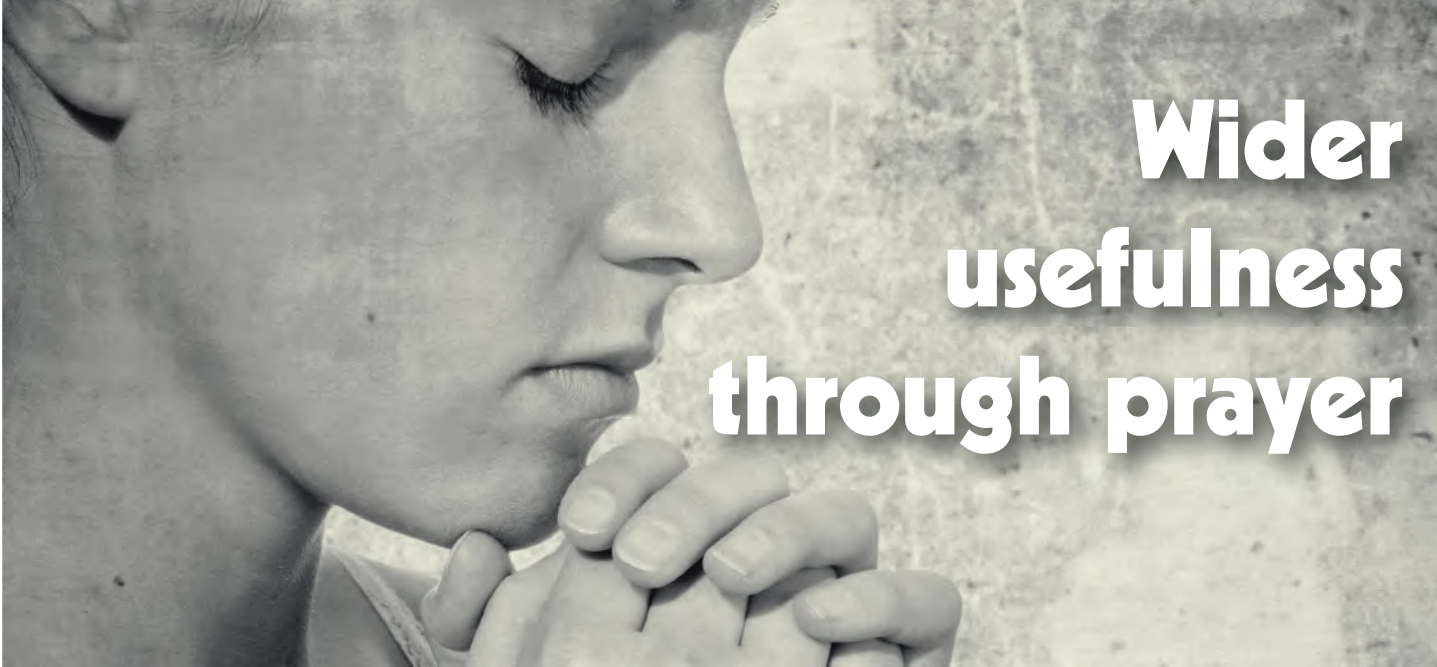
What a comfort to know that Jesus Himself is the *teleios* for every believer. He is "the hope of glory." Indeed, He was the most "together" person who has ever lived. Jesus possessed an astounding level of emotional maturity. He did not carry around the emotional baggage that inevitably accompanies sin – He was full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1).

Although He was called the "Man of Sorrows" (because He grieved over the hardheartedness of those He ministered to), He was also an extremely joyful person. Children would look into His face and find a gracious, inviting expression. It is this marvellous person whom we are called to emulate. His life epitomises spiritual and emotional well-being.

The truth is that a person will only find relief from the insanity of the fallen human mind to the degree that they surrender to God. Rightly did Paul write, "The mind of the flesh (with its carnal thoughts and purposes) is hostile to God, for it does not submit itself to God's Law (Romans 8:7 AMP)." The purpose for the process of sanctification is to replace that faulty, selfish mindset with God's thinking.

Yes, there are many comparisons between the insane person and the sexual sinner, but the good news is that as we immerse ourselves in the Word of God, earnestly living out its principles, we shall "know the truth and the truth shall make us free." 

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Wider usefulness through prayer

by David MacIntyre

Prayer is the confirmation of our creature-dependence. For the believer also it is the acknowledgment that he is not his own, but is, by reason of the great atonement, the “purchased possession” of the Son of God.

Pius IV, hearing of Calvin’s death, exclaimed: “Ah, the strength of that proud heretic lay in this, that riches and honour were nothing to him.” David Livingstone, in the heart of darkest Africa, writes in his Journal, “My Jesus, my King, my Life, my All, I again dedicate my whole self to You.”

Bengel spoke in the name of all the children of faith when he said, “All I am, and all I have, both in principle and practice, is to be summed up in this one expression – ‘The Lord’s property.’ My belonging totally to Christ as my Saviour is all my salvation and all my desire. I have no other glory than this, and I want no other.”

Afterwards, when death drew near, the following words were pronounced over him, “Lord Jesus, to Thee I live, to Thee I suffer, to Thee I die. Thine I am in death and in life; save and bless me, O Saviour, for ever and ever. Amen.” At the words “Thine I am,” he laid his right hand upon his heart, in token of his full and hearty assent. And so he fell asleep in Jesus.

Such is the normal attitude of the redeemed soul, an attitude which prayer acknowledges and confirms.

Further, in prayer we present ourselves to God, holding our motives in His clear light, and estimating them after the counsel of His will. Thus our thoughts and feelings arrange themselves into classes (as in a process of polishing or smoothing); those that rise towards the honour of God taking precedence over those that drift downward towards the gratification of self. And so the great decisions of life

are prepared.

In prayer, Jacob became Israel; in prayer, Daniel saw Christ’s day, and was glad; in prayer, Saul of Tarsus received his commission to go “far hence” among the Gentiles; in prayer, the Son of Man accomplished His obedience, and embraced His Cross.

In his autobiography, George Müller gives a striking testimony: “I never remember, in all my Christian course, a period now (in March, 1895) of 69 years and four months, that I ever sincerely and patiently sought to know the will of God by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word of God, but I have been always directed rightly. But if honesty of heart and uprightness before God were lacking, or if I did not patiently wait before God for instruction, or if I preferred the counsel of my fellow men to the declarations of the Word of the Living God, I made great mistakes.”

As we present ourselves before the Lord in prayer, we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. When we yield to His inward working, His power commands our being. Our plans, if we have formed them at the dictation of nature, are laid aside, and the purpose of God in relation to our lives is accepted. As we are Spirit-born, let us be Spirit-controlled: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

Power Through Prayer

Through the acceptance of the will of God for us, we are led out into a richer influence and a wider usefulness. We can effect little for one another by ordinary human means, but much may be done by prayer. Prayer brings the Divine omnipotence into the occasions of life.

We ask, and receive; and our joy is full.

By prayer a handful of “unlearned and ignorant men,” hard-handed from the

oar and the rudder, the mattock and the pruning hook, “turned the world upside down,” and spread the name of Christ beyond the limits of the Roman power.

By prayer, the tent-maker of Tarsus won the dissolute Corinthians to purity and faith, laid the enduring foundations of Western Christianity, and raised the name of Jesus high in the very palace of Nero.


The prayers of Luther and his colleagues sent the great truths of the Gospel flying across Europe as on the wings of angels.

Before the great revival in Gallneukirchen broke out, Martin Boos spent hours and days, and often nights, in lonely agonies of intercession. Afterwards, when he preached, his words were as flame, and the hearts of the people as grass.

George Whitefield frequently spent whole nights in meditation and prayer, and often rose from his bed in the night to intercede for perishing souls. He says: “Whole days and weeks have I spent prostrate on the ground in silent or vocal prayer.”

The biographer of Payson observes that “prayer was preeminently the business of his life,” and he himself used to strongly assert that he pitied that Christian who could not enter into the meaning of the words, “groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26).” It is related of him that he “wore the hardwood boards into grooves where his knees pressed so often and so long.”

In a word, every gracious work, which has been accomplished within the kingdom of God, has been begun, fostered, and consummated by prayer.

“What is the secret of this revival?” said one in 1905 to Evan Roberts. “There is no secret,” was the reply, “It is only... ‘ask, and receive.’” 

A prayer for revival


Spirit of God, come, Oh! come,
we pray;
Earth's night is dark – and many
go astray;
The fire of love for souls is burning low,
Oh! send Thy fire and set the
church aglow!

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come,
we pray;
We need a mighty Pentecost today.
Great Spirit, come – convincing
men of sin!
Unveil the unbelief that works within.

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come,
we pray;
The fire must fall, there is no other
way –
To bring revival both to church
and home.
Yours must be the fire; burning
Spirit, come!

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come,
we pray;
Light up the darkness with Your own
bright ray.
Burn up the worldliness, the sin,
the dross;
And turn men's hearts to Christ and
to His Cross.

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come,
we pray;
Revive Your work! Oh! Lord,
without delay.
Revive the love of souls, their
need reveal,
And set Your church ablaze with
holy zeal!

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come,
we pray;
Revive and deepen prayer from
day to day.
You do respond to faith's
persistent plea,
"Teach us to pray," till we the
answer see! 



Prayerlessness, the enemy of revival

by M. W. Knapp

SPIRIT-given, heaven-sent revival, whether it be in the heart of one person or in a community, begins in the secret chamber of prevailing prayer. Anything that hinders steadfastness in prayer is a foe to revival. In order for one to pray effectively for revival, the following conditions must be met:

*All sin must be given up.

*He must pray with pure motives.

*He must be willing that God shall use him, as He may will, to aid in the revival.

*He must persist in pleading – until he feels sure that God hears and answers (Luke 18:1-8; 11:1-13).

*He must make humble confession and, when in his power, make restitution where he may have wronged others.

*He must be free from an unforgiving spirit. God has expressly declared that He will not heed the prayer of an unforgiving person (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Mark 11:22-26).

*He must be ready to seek a reconciliation with any who may have trespassed against him (Matthew 5:21-24).

*He must pray in faith, "nothing wavering (James 1:5-7).»

*He must be willing to give the glory to God, not to his prayers or personal work or exhortation or sermons (1 Corinthians 10:31).»

Prayer Brings Revival


James Duncan, preaching with great unction and power, was asked what was the secret of such powerful preaching. "The secret," he said, was "thirteen hours of consecutive prayer."

When asked the secret of his spiritual power, Charles Spurgeon said: "Knee work! Knee work!"

Livingston of Shotts, on two different occasions, preached with such power that in each service 500 were converted. Both sermons were preceded by a night of prayer.

Charles Finney, after spending a day in the woods in prayer and fasting, preached at night in a phenomenally irreligious congregation. The sermon was accompanied by such divine power that the whole congregation, except one man, fell prostrate upon the floor, and voiced their agony under conviction of sin, in such loud outcries that the preacher was forced to stop.

John Vassar, the Tract Society worker, was successful almost beyond comparison in his personal dealings with men. His pastor said: "He absolutely prayed day and night – prayed about everything, prayed for almost everything, prayed with almost everybody he met.

"He prayed when he went out and when he came in. He prayed before every religious service, and then prayed all the way through it. I have occupied the same room with him night after night, and rarely went to sleep without hearing him at prayer, or awoke without finding him in prayer." 

PROOF THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

by Britt Gillette

IS there proof Jesus is the Messiah? Does believing in Him require “blind faith?” No. In fact, it’s the exact opposite.

Some people mock the idea of Jesus as Saviour, calling it a “fairy tale crutch for the weak.” Others claim Jesus is nothing more than a mythical figure – a superstition, no different than the Greek or Roman gods.

Even worse, some people who **do** believe in Jesus say, “There’s no evidence to prove it’s true. You just have to accept it on faith.”

But is that really the case? Absolutely not.

While faith is an essential element to following Jesus, Christian faith is more like trust than a blind belief with no evidence (Hebrews 11:1). There’s plenty of evidence Jesus is the Messiah, and some of the most convincing evidence is fulfilled prophecy.

THE SUFFERING MESSIAH

When Jesus came, His followers thought He would conquer Israel’s earthly enemies and establish an everlasting kingdom. They were right. But they were wrong about the timing.

First and foremost, Jesus came as a blood sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world. Had they known the following prophecies, perhaps they would have understood what Jesus meant when He said He would be killed and rise on the third day (Matthew 16:21).

Known as the prophecies of “the suffer-

ing Messiah,” these events were foretold hundreds of years before the crucifixion. In fact, these prophecies are so detailed and specific, you might think they’re New Testament verses about the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus. Obviously, they’re not. But they prove beyond all doubt who the Messiah is.

Here are just a few of them:

Betrayed by a Friend – King David said a trusted friend would betray the Messiah. This would be a person so close they shared each other’s food (Psalm 41:9). This is exactly what happened to Jesus. A thousand years after David made this prophecy, Jesus dipped His bread in a bowl and handed it to Judas (John 13:21-30). Judas took the bread and left to betray Jesus.

Betrayed for 30 Pieces of Silver – When Judas betrayed Jesus, he did so for the exact sum of 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14&15). Five hundred years earlier, the prophet Zechariah foretold this exact price. He said the Messiah would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12).

Thrown into the Potter’s Field – At the same time, Zechariah revealed another amazing detail. He said the 30 pieces of silver would be thrown in the potter’s field (Zechariah 11:13). In ancient times, the potter’s field was a graveyard for unknown people. People dug up clay to make pottery, and the leftover field was only useful as a burial ground.

When Judas realised what he had done, he tried to give back the 30 pieces of silver. When the religious leaders refused it, Judas threw the money down in the Temple.

Not wanting to put blood money in the Temple treasury, the leading priests used the money to buy a potter’s field for the burial of foreigners (Matthew 27:3-8). This decision fulfilled Zechariah’s prophecy.

Rejected – Hundreds of years before Jesus, Isaiah described the Messiah as “despised and rejected.” He said He would be a man familiar with the deepest sadness and people would turn their backs on Him (Isaiah 53:3).

When Pilate presented Jesus to the people, he said, “Here is your king.” But the people demanded He be crucified. “Crucify your king?” Pilate asked. But the people said, “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:14&15). They rejected Jesus as king. The leaders of His day despised Him. Yet Peter said, “the stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone (Acts 4:11).”

Silent in Front of His Accusers – Isaiah said the Messiah would be silent when faced by His accusers, much like a sheep is silent before the shearers (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus fulfilled this prophecy too. The high priest Caiaphas asked Jesus, “What do you have to say for yourself? How do you answer these charges?” and Jesus was silent (Matthew 26:62&63).

Accused by False Witnesses – King David said false witnesses would accuse and slander the Messiah (Psalm 35:11). He said they would claim, “We saw Him do it with our own eyes (Psalm 35:21).” This also happened to Jesus. The religious leaders couldn’t find any evidence against Him. So false witnesses made up stories (Mark 14:56).

Pierced Hands and Feet – King David said the Messiah’s hands and feet would be pierced (Psalm 22:16). This also happened to Jesus. He was nailed to a cross (John 19:17&18). Crucifixion required the Roman soldiers to drive nails through His hands and feet. When King David made his prophecy, this method of execution didn’t exist. Nevertheless, the crucifixion of Jesus fulfilled this prophecy.

Given Vinegar to Drink – King David said the Messiah would be given gall (poison) for food and sour wine to quench His thirst (Psalm 69:21). This happened to Jesus. While He was being crucified, the soldiers gave Jesus wine mixed with bitter gall (poison). But when He tasted it, He refused to drink it (Matthew 27:34). Then someone filled a sponge with sour wine and held it up to Jesus on a stick so He could drink it (Mark 15:36).

His Clothes Divided – King David said others would cast lots for the Messiah’s clothes at His execution (Psalm 22:17&18). This also happened to Jesus. When the Roman soldiers crucified Him, they divided His clothes among themselves. But His robe was a single garment, and they didn’t want to tear it. So rather than tear it, they threw dice to see who would get it (John 19:23&24).

His Side Pierced – Five hundred years before the crucifixion, Zechariah said the

people of Israel will look upon the Messiah they have pierced and mourn for Him as for an only son (Zechariah 12:10). This happened to Jesus as well. Checking to make sure He was dead, one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus with a spear (John 19:34).

Buried in a Rich Man’s Tomb – Hundreds of years before Jesus, Isaiah said the Messiah would be treated like a common criminal and buried in a rich man’s tomb (Isaiah 53:9). The Bible tells us this happened to Jesus. After the crucifixion, a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for Jesus’ body. Joseph wrapped the body in a clean sheet of linen cloth and placed it in the tomb he had prepared for himself. Then he rolled a boulder into the entrance to seal it (Matthew 27:59&60).

Risen from the Dead – A thousand years before the resurrection, King David said the Messiah’s body would not be left among the dead. He said God would not allow His Holy One to rot in the grave (Psalm 16:10). And Psalm 49 said God will restore the Messiah’s life, saving Him from the power of the grave (Psalm 49:15).

Three days and three nights after the crucifixion, Mary and Mary Magdalene went to see Jesus. When they arrived at His tomb, a great earthquake shook the ground. An angel rolled a rock away from the tomb’s entrance and told them Jesus

had risen from the dead just as He had promised (Matthew 28:5-7).

These prophecies point to one man as the Messiah – Jesus. How can anyone read them and still reject Him as the Messiah? The odds of one person fulfilling all of these prophecies is beyond chance. How many people can claim specific details of their life were foretold hundreds of years before their birth? Jesus can.

Yet many people still dismiss Him. They call Him a “good teacher,” but say He was a mere man. That’s impossible. Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh – the Great I AM in the form of a man. If that’s not true, how is He a “good teacher?” Anyone who would lie about such a thing is evil. Such a person is not a “good teacher.”

But there’s no need to worry. Jesus didn’t lie. He was and is God in the flesh. Bible prophecy proves it. No other man in all of human history fulfilled the Messianic prophecies, and no other man can. The Messiah had to come at a specific time in history (Daniel 9:25). Jesus did.

The Messiah had to be born in a specific place in a certain way. Jesus was (Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:14). The Messiah had to be crushed and made an offering for sin (Isaiah 53:10). He had to overcome the power of the grave (Psalm 49:15). And He had to be the Saviour of the world (Luke 2:11).

Thank God Almighty, Jesus is! 

Will you help us be a blessing?



Did you know that *Prepare the Way* is sent free of charge to church leaders in many African countries, as well as overseas missionaries and prisoners? But this **only** happens through the support and donations of people just like you.

If you have a heart for the nations and a desire to see churches built up through sound, Biblical teaching, then please would you consider supporting this ministry?

Prepare the Way is a 100% non-profit ministry. No-one associated with the magazine draws **any** form of salary or income from the magazine – so, very simply, every cent you give goes straight towards sending out more magazines! The more gifts we get in, the more magazines we give away – it’s as simple as that.

If you are able to help, please fill in the form below, or simply do a direct deposit into the magazine’s account (Prepare the Way, Standard Bank, Howick Branch, Branch code 058325, Account number 052449815)

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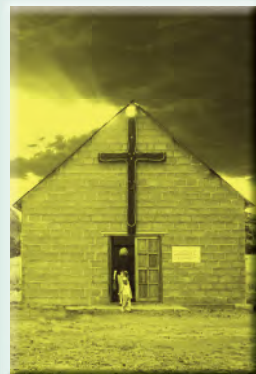
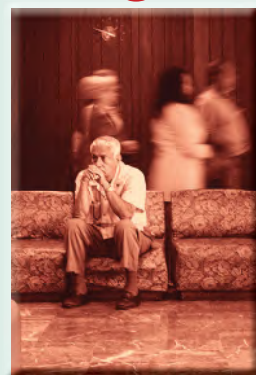
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Faith

The Most Misunderstood Word in the Bible

by Gene Dahler

IKNOW theories are dangerous, but I still would like to share one with you. My theory is that the biblical word “faith” is possibly the most misunderstood word in the Bible

Biblical “faith” is not accurately understood because of the general misunderstanding of what the word “faith” in the Bible means. Many are applying the current day definitions to a Biblical word assuming that the meaning of the word in the Bible is the same. When that is not the case, then we find ourselves misunderstanding the Bible.

For example, here are some sample current day “faith” definitions from dictionaries.

Dictionary.com: Confidence or trust in a person or thing.

Merriam-Webster: Allegiance to duty or a person. Firm belief in something for which there is no proof.

Do you believe these definitions are correct for the biblical word “faith?”

The answer we all should have is “No.” Both of these definitions most definitely are not the meaning of the word “faith” in the Bible.

Continuing with the current world definitions of “faith,” let’s look at how some well-known and respected people describe faith:

“Faith is not something to grasp, it is a state to grow into.” – Mahatma Gandhi

“Faith consists in believing when it is beyond the power of reason to believe.” – Voltaire

“Scientists were rated as great heretics by the church, but they were truly religious men because of their faith in the orderliness of the universe.” – Albert Einstein

“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.” – Martin Luther King Jr.



“Your faith is your world view.”

– Pastor Rick Warren

Do you believe any of these definitions are correct for the biblical word “faith?”

Once again, the answer we all should have is “No.”

None of the above definitions are correct for the meaning of biblical faith.

The Bible actually provides us with the proper biblical definition of the word “faith.” Here is that definition:

Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

So faith is assurance. Assurance of what? Of things hoped for. The word “hope” is the Greek word *elpis* which means confident expectation. So “faith” is the assurance of things we have confident expectation in. Those things are all future things.

So, then faith is what you receive when you have assurance of things that will happen in the future. In other words, no doubts. Why are the things not seen? Answer – because they haven’t happened yet!

Now do you understand why the world and many Christians have no idea what the biblical word “faith” means? Faith is the assurance of things which you have a confident expectation of happening in the future, without any doubts.

The world and most Christians do not know of or have

this faith.

Remember this when you are reading your Bible, all of the definitions we previously referred to are wrong, and that it is important to apply the correct definition. Is that really important? Here is an example of the significance of biblical faith:

Hebrews 11:6 – “...and without faith it is impossible to please Him...”

Biblical faith is an essential part of our relationship with Jesus. It is impossible to please Him without Biblical faith.

To help us apply the proper definition to the word “faith,” try substituting the words *“the assurance of things there is confident expectation in”* when you come across the word “faith” in the Bible. It may give you a much better understanding of what the verse means.

SAMPLE VERSES

1 John 5:4 – “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.”

Amended version: For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our assurance of things which we have confident expectations.

1 Thessalonians 3:10 “... as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?”

Amended version: ...as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your assurance of things to have confident expectation in?

Note that 1 Thessalonians 3:10 confirms that it is possible to add to and even complete a person’s faith. How? By adding to the knowledge and understanding of God’s future plans.

Understanding what the word “faith” means in the Bible will greatly help us understand all of the verses that contain the word “faith.”


But, more important than that, we now know that faith is the assurance we have in future things that we have confident expectation in (no doubts), things that have not been seen because they are in the future.

Where do we get that faith? Of course, there is only one source of future information that we can have 100 percent confidence in, that is the Bible.

Romans 10:17 – “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

Amended version: So assurance of things there is confident expectation in comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

One of the great advantages in being a mature born-again Christian is knowing many of the major events of the future for the planet, for the nations and for the people. They, therefore, enjoy a rest, peace, freedom and power that is not available anywhere else. That is just one of the blessings of knowing and understanding God’s Word.

I pray this discussion on the biblical word “faith” will be of assistance in helping you understand God’s Word and will help lead you into your own personal biblical faith. 

Thanks to
Elizabeth Kendal

WATCH & PRAY



EGYPT: PALM SUNDAY DOUBLE MASSACRE

Soon after 9 a.m. on Sunday April 9, as the believers were enjoying Palm Sunday celebrations, a suicide bomber entered Mar Girgis (St George) Church in the Nile Delta city of Tanta. Launching himself towards the front of the church, he detonated himself beside the altar. At least 27 worshippers were killed and a further 78 others wounded. A few hours later in coastal Alexandria, a suicide bomber approached St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral. Unable to gain entrance to the church, he blew himself up outside, killing 18 civilians and four police officers. The head of the Coptic Church, Pope Tawadros II, had just finishing addressing the congregation, but was not hurt. By Sunday afternoon, Islamic State in Egypt had claimed both attacks.

Please pray for Egypt's grieving, traumatised and anxious Christians. May God comfort them, supply all their needs and redeem all their suffering. May the Lord pour his Holy

Spirit on them that they will continue to demonstrate divine amazing grace (see Luke 6:27-31), evangelising Egypt (and the world) in the process.

ERITREA: IMPRISONED AND ABUSED TO DEATH

Christian Solidarity Worldwide reports that two Protestant Christian women who had been detained in Wi'a military camp died in Masawa Hospital on March 17, five days after being admitted. Imprisoned for their faith, the women had commenced a hunger strike in protest at their treatment. CSW has learned that the women's bodies showed clear evidence of violent sexual abuse. When the women died the authorities confiscated their medical records, doubtless to eliminate evidence of human rights abuses.

CSW has also learned that a significant number of Christians were arrested on Christmas Eve and forcibly marched barefoot to an unknown location. Eritrea is one of the most violently repressive and abusive totalitarian states in the world. Christianity has been under

sustained and targeted attack since 2002. Pray Psalm 10 for Eritrea; pray the Lord will intervene.

INDIA: IMPUNITY EMBOLDENS ATTACKERS

On March 17 Assemblies of God pastor Ajay Kumar and Bible college student Assaryav were lured into a trap in Begusarai, Bihar state and then bashed by Hindu militants. Not only did police not intervene, they subsequently arrested the two Christians on charges of "forcible conversions." Kumar and Assaryav remained in custody until after midnight when they were released on bail, charged with "deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of citizens of India." A minority comprised mostly of the poor and marginalised, the Indian Church has little voice or influence inside India. The situation is extremely serious.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth (Psalm 121:1&2)."

SOMALIA: MORE CHRISTIANS ASSASSINATED

Morning Star News reports that one night in February, armed militants from al-Qaeda affiliate al-Shabaab broke into the home of a Christian convert family in Afgoi, in Somalia's Lower Shebelle Region. Shouting "Allahu Akbar" they shot converts Suleiman Abdiwahab (38), his wife Faduma Osman (35) and their son Ahmed Suleiman (11). Neighbours rushed in to find Suleiman critically wounded with bullet wounds to his chest; his wife and son dead. Three other children aged 13, 9 and 7 managed to escape.

The neighbours took Suleiman to hospital; the family has since been relocated. May God bring healing to this grieving and traumatised family and protect and preserve his imperilled Church in Somalia.

Manna for mahala!

If you'd like to receive Peter Pollock's Daily Manna devotional, which will also take you through the whole Bible in a year, then go to our website (www.prepare.co.za), and on the home page go to the "Daily Manna Sign-up" at the top, fill in your details and we will e-mail it to you every morning. What's more, it's absolutely free!



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Prepare the Way Days: June 4, November 5

These are the days for this year's remaining *Prepare the Way* days at 9.15 a.m. at Mount Zion Church in Merrivale (near Howick). Peter Pollock will be preaching at both meetings – and, what's more, you're invited to stay for lunch, too!

The devil's convention

SATAN called a worldwide convention of demons. In his opening address he said,

"We can't keep Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from forming an intimate relationship with their Saviour. Once they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to their churches; let them have their covered-dish dinners, but steal their time, so they don't have time to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ."

"This is what I want you to do," said the devil: "Distract them from gaining hold of their Saviour and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!"

"How shall we do this?" his demons shouted.

"Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered.

"Temp them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work six or seven days each week, 10 or 12 hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles.

"Keep them from spending time with their children. As their families fragment, soon, their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work! Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice. Entice them to play the radio or music whenever they

drive. To keep the TV, DVDs, CDs and their PCs going constantly in their home and see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non-biblical music constantly.

"Have them kill babies before they are born. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ. Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards.

"Have them be drawn to perverted lifestyles. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogues, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering products, services and false hopes.

"Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines and TV so their husbands will believe that outward beauty is what is important, and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives.

"Keep the wives too tired to love their husbands at night. Give them headaches too!

"If they do not give their husbands the love they need, they will begin to look elsewhere. That will fragment their

families quickly!

"Give them Santa Claus to distract them from teaching their children the real meaning of Christmas. Give them the Easter Bunny so they won't talk about Jesus Christ's resurrection and power over sin and death."

"Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted. Keep them too busy to go out in nature and reflect God's creation. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, plays, concerts, and movies instead.

"Keep them busy, busy, busy!"

"Make plans to have them stop prayer in schools and public places. And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled conscience.

"Crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek the Power from Jesus. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause. It will work! It will work!"

It was quite a plan! The demons went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to get busier and

more rushed, going here and there.

Having little time for their God or their families.

Having no time to tell others about the Power of Jesus to change lives. I guess the question is, has the devil been successful in his schemes?

You be the judge! 