



December 06, 2013

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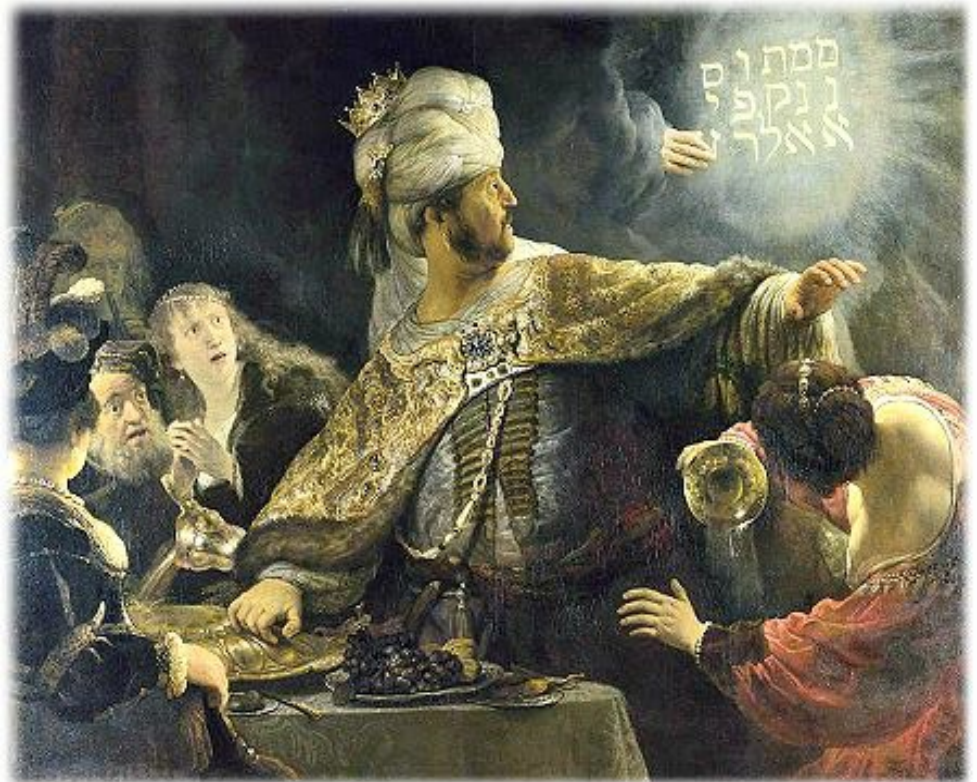


Heads Up!

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FEATURE ARTICLE - WEIGHED AND WANTING - By D.L. Moody



In the fifth chapter of Daniel we read the history of King Belshazzar. One chapter tells us all we know about him. One short sight of his career is all we have. He bursts in upon the scene and then disappears.

THE EASTERN FEAST

We are told that he made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before them. In those days a feast would sometimes last for six months in Eastern countries. How long this feast had been going on we are not told, but in the midst of it, he *"commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone."*

While this impious act was being committed, *"in the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."* We are not told at what hour of the day or the night it happened. Perhaps it was midnight. Perhaps nearly all the guests were more or less under the influence of drink; but they were not so drunk but that they suddenly became sober as they saw something that was supernatural--a handwriting on the wall, right over the golden candlestick.

Every face turned deathly pale. *"The king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."* In haste he sent for his wisest men to come and read that handwriting on the wall. They came in one after another, and tried to make it out; but they could not interpret it.

The king promised that whoever could read it should be made the third ruler in the kingdom; that he should have gifts, and that a gold chain should be put round his neck. But the wise men tried in vain. The king was greatly troubled.

At last, in the midst of the consternation, the queen came in, and she told the monarch, if he would only send for one who used to interpret the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, he could read the writing and tell him the interpretation thereof. So Daniel was sent for. He was very familiar with it. He knew his Father's handwriting.

"This is the writing that was written, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene--God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Tekel--Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Peres--Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

If someone had told the king an hour before that the time had come when he must step into the balances and be weighed, he would have laughed at the thought. But the vital hour had come.

The weighing was soon over. The verdict was announced, and the sentence carried out. *"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom."* Darius and his army came marching down those streets. There was a clash of arms. Shouts of war and victory rent the air. That night the king's blood mingled with the wine of the banquet hall. Judgment came upon him unexpectedly, suddenly: and probably ninety-nine out of every hundred judgments come in this way. Death comes upon us unexpectedly; it comes upon us suddenly.

Perhaps you say: "I hope Mr. Moody is not going to compare me with that heathen king."

I tell you that a man who does evil in these Gospel days is far worse than that king. We live in a land of Bibles. You can get the New Testament for a nickel, and if you haven't got a nickel you can get it for nothing. Many societies will be glad to give it to you free. We live in the full blaze of Calvary. We live on this side of the cross, but Belshazzar lived more than five hundred years on the other side. He never heard of Jesus Christ. He never heard about the Son of God. He never heard about God except, perhaps, in connection with his father's remarkable vision. He probably had no portion of the Bible, and if he had, probably he didn't believe it. He had no godly minister to point him to the Lamb of God.

Don't tell me that you are better than that king. I believe that he will rise in judgment and condemn many of us.

All this happened long centuries ago. Let us get down to this century, to this year, to ourselves. We will come to the present time. Let us imagine that now, while I am preaching, down come some balances from the throne of God. They are fastened to the very throne itself. It is a throne of equity, of justice. You and I must be weighed. I venture to say this would be a very solemn audience. There would be no trifling. There would be no indifference. No one would be thoughtless.

Some people have their own balances. A great many are making balances to be weighed in. But after all we must be weighed in God's balances, the balances of the sanctuary. It is a favorite thing with infidels to set their own standard, to measure themselves by other people. But that will not do in the Day of Judgment. Now we will use God's law as a balance weight. When men find fault with the lives of professing Christians, it is a tribute to the law of God.

"Tekel." It is a very short text. It is so short I am sure you will remember it: and that is my object, just to get people to remember God's own Word.

GOD'S HANDWRITING

Let me call your attention to the fact that God wrote on the tables of stone at Sinai as well as on the wall of Belshazzar's palace. These are the only messages to men that God has written with His own hand. He wrote the commandments out twice, and spoke them aloud in the hearing of Israel.

If it were known that God Himself was going to speak once again to man, what eagerness and excitement there would be. For nearly nineteen hundred years He has been

silent. No inspired message has been added to the Bible for nearly nineteen hundred years. How eagerly all men would listen if God should speak once more. Yet men forget that the Bible is God's own Word, and that it is as truly His message to-day as when it was delivered of old. The law that was given at Sinai has lost none of its solemnity. Time cannot wear out its authority or the fact of its authorship.

I can imagine some one saying--"I won't be weighed by that law. I don't believe in it."

Now men may cavil as much as they like about other parts of the Bible, but I have never met an honest man that found fault with the Ten Commandments. Infidels may mock the Lawgiver and reject Him who has delivered us from the curse of the law, but they can't help admitting that the commandments are right. Renan said that they are for all nations, and will remain the commandments of God during all the centuries.

If God created this world, He must make some laws to govern it. In order to make life safe we must have good laws; there is not a country the sun shines upon that does not possess laws. Now this is God's law. It has come from on high, and infidels and skeptics have to admit that it is pure. Legislatures nearly all over the world adopt it as the foundation of their legal systems.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is pure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."

Now the question for you and me is--are we keeping these commandments? Have we fulfilled all the requirements of the law? If God made us, as we know He did, He had a right to make that law; and if we don't use it aright it would have been better for us if we had never had it, for it will condemn us. We shall be found wanting. The law is all right, but are we right?

AN INFIDEL'S TESTIMONY

It is related of a clever infidel that he sought an acquaintance with the truths of the Bible, and began to read at the books of Moses. He had been in the habit of sneering at the Bible, and in order to be able to refute arguments brought by Christian men, he made up his mind, as he knew nothing about it, to read the Bible and get some idea of its contents. After he had reached the Ten Commandments, he said to a friend:

"I will tell you what I used to think. I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of banditti; that, having a strong mind, he acquired great influence over a superstitious people; and that on Mount Sinai he played off some sort of fireworks to the amazement of his ignorant followers, who imagined in their fear and superstition that the exhibition was supernatural. I have been looking into the nature of that law. I have been trying to see whether I could add anything to it, or take anything from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I cannot! It is perfect!"

DEACON TRUE SEZ -



The difference between government regulations and fairy tales is that fairy tales have happy endings.

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NOTABLE QUOTES AND QUOTABLE NOTES -

- "For two hundred years we had sawed and sawed and sawed at the branch we were sitting on. And in the end, much more suddenly than anyone had foreseen, our efforts were rewarded, and down we came. But unfortunately there had been a little mistake. The thing at the bottom was not a bed of roses after all, it was a cesspool full of barbed wire. It appears that amputation of the soul isn't just a simple surgical job, like having your appendix out. The wound has a tendency to go septic." George Orwell commenting on the loss of religious faith in Europe that he had applauded.
- No nation is rich enough to subsidize idleness. - Anon
- If every family took care of their own, welfare payments could be cut 30%. If churches took care of their own, government programs could cut much of the rest. - Anon
- Now, as old Dr. Bonner, of Glasgow, said, 'The Lord didn't tell Joshua how to use the sword, but He told him how he should meditate on the Lord day and night, and then he would have good success.' - D. L. Moody

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The first commandment directs us to make the Creator the object of our supreme love and reverence. That is right. If He be our Creator, Preserver, and Supreme Benefactor, we ought to treat Him, and none other, as such. The second forbids idolatry. That certainly is right. The third forbids profanity. The fourth fixes a time for religious worship. If there be a God, He ought surely to be worshipped. It is suitable that there should be an outward homage significant of our inward regard. If God be worshipped, it is proper that sometime should be set apart for that purpose, when all may worship Him harmoniously, and without interruption. One day in seven is certainly not too much, and I do not know that it is too little.

The fifth commandment defines the peculiar duties arising from family relations. Injuries to our neighbor are then classified by the moral law. They are divided into offences against life, chastity, property, and character; and I notice that the greatest offence in each class is expressly forbidden. Thus the greatest injury to life is murder; to chastity, adultery; to property, theft; to character, perjury. Now the greatest offence must include the least of the same kind. Murder must include every injury to life; adultery every injury to purity; and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed and perfected by a command forbidding every improper desire in regard to our neighbors.

I have been thinking, Where did Moses get that law? I have read history. The Egyptians and the adjacent nations were idolaters; so were the Greeks and Romans; and the wisest or best Greeks or Romans never gave a code of morals like this. Where did Moses obtain that law, which surpasses the wisdom and philosophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous; but he has given a law in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent time can detect no flaw. Where did he obtain it? He could not have soared so far above his age as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it. It came down from heaven. It has convinced me of the truth of the religion of the Bible."

The infidel, (now an infidel no longer), remained to his death a firm believer in the truth of Christianity.

We call it the "Mosaic" Law, but it has been well said that the commandments did not originate with Moses, nor were they done away with when the Mosaic Law was fulfilled in Christ, and many of its ceremonies and regulations abolished. We can find no trace of the

existence of any lawmaking body in those early times, no parliament or congress that built up a system of laws. It has come down to us complete and finished, and the only satisfactory account is that which tells us that God Himself wrote the commandments on tables of stone.

BINDING TO-DAY

Some people seem to think we have got beyond the commandments. What did Christ say? *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."* The commandments of God given to Moses in the Mount at Horeb are as binding to-day as ever they have been since the time when they were proclaimed in the hearing of the people. The Jews said the law was not given in Palestine, (which belonged to Israel), but in the wilderness, because the law was for all nations.

Jesus never condemned the law and the prophets, but He did condemn those who did not obey them. Because He gave new commandments it does not follow that He abolished the old. Christ's explanation of them made them all the more searching. In His Sermon on the Mount He carried the principles of the commandments beyond the mere letter. He unfolded them and showed that they embraced more, that they are positive as well as prohibitive. The Old Testament closes with these words:

"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Does that look as if the law of Moses was becoming obsolete?

The conviction deepens in me with the years that the old truths of the Bible must be stated and restated in the plainest possible language. I do not remember ever to have heard a sermon preached on the commandments. I have an index of two thousand five hundred sermons preached by Spurgeon, and not one of them selects its text from the first seventeen verses of Exodus xx.

The people must be made to understand that the Ten Commandments are still binding, and that there is a penalty attached to their violation. We do not want a gospel of mere sentiment. The Sermon on the Mount did not blot out the Ten Commandments.

When Christ came He condensed the statement of the law into this form: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."* Paul said: *"Love is the fulfilling of the law."* But does this mean that the detailed precepts of the Decalogue are superseded, and have become back numbers? Does a father cease to give children rules to obey because they love him? Does a nation burn its statute books because the people have become patriotic? Not at all. And yet people speak as if the Commandments do not hold for Christians because they have come to love God. Paul said: *"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law."* It still holds good. The commandments are necessary. So long as we obey, they do not rest heavy upon us; but as soon as we try to break away, we find they are like fences to keep us within bounds. Horses need bridles even after they have been properly broken in.

"We know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with

mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."

Now, my friend, are you ready to be weighed by this law of God? A great many people say that if they keep the commandments, they do not need to be forgiven and saved through Christ. But have you kept them? I will admit that if you perfectly keep the commandments, you do not need to be saved by Christ; but is there a man in the wide world who can truly say that he has done this? Young lady, can you say: "I am ready to be weighed by the law?" Can you, young man? Will you step into the scales and be weighed one by one by the Ten Commandments?

Now face these Ten Commandments honestly and prayerfully. See if your life is right, and if you are treating God fairly. God's statutes are just, are they not? If they are right, let us see if we are right. Let us pray that the Holy Ghost may search each one of us. Let us get alone with God and read His law--read it carefully and prayerfully, and ask Him to show us our sins and what He would have us to do.

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THE EMERGENT SMOOCHFEST AND THE BURNING HOUSE - by Outback Jack

(Now and again I get a letter from me old mate Jack. He wanders here and there and often writes to tell me about "unuseral stuff" he stumbles onto 'round the ridges. Just got this note last week, and thought some of the readers of Heads Up might recognize the names of his passengers. - Ed)

"I was stuck in L.A. last year and was outawork. Since I had druv ever'thin' what's got wheels and some things that ain't, and I saw an ad for a limo driver, I applied for the job, thinkin' the tips might be good if there wuz any of them Califony billionaires needin' rides.

It ended up that I carried lots of funny bods up and down the Left Coast for a few weeks, but the weirdest of all was the blokes I picked up from the big SmoochFest at the Saddlesore religious showplace. 'Parently, all the big knobs from all over wuz there spruikin' on 'bout the "benefits of 'Mergin' wif each uvver."

Dunno how I ended up with the top dogs, but that was what hoppen. Some dude named Rick came along shooiin' the rest of 'em into my long chariot. I had the intercom turned on so I could hear any directions and I heard 'em gabbin' on. Sounded like to me that they brung most of the SmoochFest with 'em. There was one dude named



Brian, and I heard him call another one Mark. One old bloke was named John, and a muso they called Shane, and one other loud guy named Rob. The grandpa of the whole shindig was an old coot named Robert, but they just mostly called him "Doctor" so he musta been the one who taught them most of what they knew. Didn't catch any last names. They were all gladhanding each other and saying how lovely the Smoochfest was. That is, till the one named Brian asked the one named Mark how he ever had the brass to crash the StrangleFire conference a month or two ago. They all had a big laugh over that one. Shane told Mark he'd already beat him to it cuz they'd been playin' his music there for ages. I glanced in the mirror

and saw a few high fives goin' around and big toothygrins. Dunno what that wuz all about.

Anyway, I wuz to deliver these blokes to the 6 star restaurant on top of the range, and knew the way so I sorta tuned 'em out, that is, until I spotted the house on fire. The wind wuz blowin' down the range and I smelt it before I seen it. There's some pretty flash houses up there, and one of 'em was just catchin' alight when we come along. It was close to the road so I could see the flames just gettin' a hold inside the big picture window, and naturally, I slowed down.

I heard Rob, I think it wuz, say, "What's the problem, driver?"

"House on fire. I ought to see if anybody is in there and get 'em out before they burn up," I told them as I leaned on the horn.

The old coot named John spoke up and said, "We don't want to be late for dinner. Surely, they'd have smoke alarms."

Mark agreed, "It's not really any of our business. It's a fire department job."

Rick said, "And besides, we're not trained in fire rescue, and don't have the right gear. This is my best Hawaiian shirt and my tailor is going to be pretty traumatized if I ruin it."

Shane chimed in, "I've gotta watch out for my hands. If I damage my fingers I might have to cancel my concert bookings for months. Count me out."

Rob jumped in then and demanded that I take them to the restaurant immediately. He said, "Come on, driver! Get a move on! We don't need this! I've got meetings tomorrow with my publisher and my media agent and CNN. The last thing I need is bad press for getting involved in something like this. Let somebody else get them out. Let's go!"

I'm not sure, but I think I heard old John say something about the occupants might not be "elected and predestinated" to be rescued.

By this time I had the handbrake on and the door open. Before my feet even hit the dirt, I heard an engine roaring as a car flew up the road toward us and I turned to see what it was. An old white minibus skidded off the road past us, slid to a stop in front of the house, half a dozen big men spilled outta the van and rushed the front door. The first one up the steps kicked the door in and the rest

of us weren't far behind with handkerchiefs over our mouths.

Two blokes ran up the stairs yelling, "Fire! Fire! Wake up! We've gotta get you out of here before the house burns down! Fire! Fire!" The rest of us shouted and banged on doors as we searched the downstairs. We bundled three kids out of basement bedrooms and an old codger out of his recliner in front of the TV. In about three or four minutes we got them all out, including two dogs and a cat, and called the fire department. We pushed them all into the minibus and drove them out to the road to get away from the fire.

My limo passengers were still sittin' there just shootin' the breeze, all laid back nice and easy, not much interested in the rescue. I opened the door, and said, "You should have helped, you know. We'd have been able to save their stuff, clothes and such."

They all just sat and looked at me.

Finally, Mark spoke up and said, "Who gave you the right to disturb those people's sleep? If we had helped you break into that house we could have been sued for breaking and entering! I saw that ignorant redneck kick the door in. And noise! All that shouting and banging on walls! The neighbours will have you arrested for disturbing the peace. That sort of behaviour may go down in Tennessee, but this is southern California, and we are all culturally relevant here!"

Brian was next, "I think I recognized the thugs that broke into that house. They were the same fundamentalist troublemakers that were marching up and down outside our Emergent SmoochFest Conference and protesting against our wonderful Emergent Church Movement. They were even reading the King James Bible over a loud hailer until we called the police on them! They're the same ones that accused our dear leader, Rick, of being a New Ager when he hired Ken, and have been smearing his PEACE initiative, and slandering his health plan. Shame on you for siding with them! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

Rick chimed in, "It's like I told you in my seminar, the fundamentalists are going to be the problem in the 21st century!"

The old Doctor nodded his head in agreement and said to me, "Son, you don't realize that those people in that house are going to have enormous self-esteem problems now that you, you, you ruffians dragged them out of their home in the middle of the night. They will never love themselves like they ought after this!!!"

John topped it off, "How can all this hubbub you've dragged us into possibly produce any good? Our schedule is in tatters, the spirit of our Smoochfest is besmirched, and YOU SMELL LIKE A (profanity deleted) BOY SCOUT CAMPFIRE! . And besides that, those thugs' ties and socks don't even match."

I didn't tell 'em what I thought, just opened the trunk of the limo, pulled out the first aid kit, and shut the car door, "Hope one of you blokes can drive. I'm ridin' with these folks. They've got a few scratches and burns that need treatin',"

'Bout that time, the fire department arrived and took over.

They sure guv them Smoochy blokes some funny looks.

Seeyalater,

Outback Jack"

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**"Who is among you that feareth the LORD,
that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that
walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let
him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay
upon his God." (Isaiah 50:10)**



THERAPY FOR THE FUNNY BONE -

BACKGROUND: In the (US Air Force) C-141 at the time, there was a three-position switch on the right side of the yoke. Up was interphone, neutral was off, and down was transmit on the active radio.

And in a USAF "crew-served" aircraft, you identify yourself by position when responding to a question or checklist item. (I.e., "Ready for take-off?" "Pilot ready." "Co-pilot ready." Etc. In order of precedence: pilot, co-pilot, navigator, flight engineer, load master.) ...

So: Many years ago, a new co-pilot (me) on his first operational MAC trip to Hawaii out of McChord Air Force Base had just finished the after-take-off-climb checklist and: ... Loadmaster: "Who wants coffee?" ... Pilot: "Pilot will take Black" ... Co-Pilot: "Co-pilot will take cream and sugar." ... Air Traffic Control: "Seattle Center will take two black and one with sugar." ...

Oops! ~ *James Patridge*

WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE ROAD??? - Some celebrated answers.

SARAH PALIN: The chicken crossed the road because, (diminutive oath deleted) it, he's a maverick! And

besides, he's on the trail of a grizzly!

BARACK OBAMA: Let me be clear, the chicken crossed the road because it was time for change! The chicken wanted change! Real change! Change he could believe in!

JOHN MCCAIN: My friends, that chicken crossed the road because he recognized the need to engage in cooperation and dialogue with all the chickens on the other side of the road.

HILLARY CLINTON: When I was First Lady, I personally helped that little chicken to cross the road. This experience makes me uniquely qualified to ensure, right from Day One, that every chicken in this country gets the chance it deserves to cross the road. But then, this really isn't about me.

GEORGE W. BUSH: We don't really care why the chicken crossed the road. We just want to know if the chicken is on our side of the road or not. The chicken is either with us or against us. There is no middle ground here.

DICK CHENEY: Where's my gun?

COLIN POWELL: Now to the left of the screen, you can clearly see the satellite image of the chicken crossing the road.

BILL CLINTON: I did not cross the road with that chicken. Also, what is the meaning of "road"?

AL GORE: I invented the chicken, the road, and the concept of bringing them together if global warming does not melt the bitumen on the road first.

JOHN KERRY: Although I voted to let the chicken cross the road, I am now against it! It was the wrong road to cross, and I was misled about the chicken's intentions. I am not for it now, and will remain against it.

AL SHARPTON: Why are all the chickens white? We need some black chickens.



THE AFFORDABLE BOAT ACT

The U. S. government has just passed a new law called: "The Affordable Boat Act" declaring that every citizen **MUST** purchase a new boat, by April 2014. These "affordable" boats will cost an average of \$54,000-\$155,000 each. This does not include taxes, trailers, towing fees, licensing and registration fees, fuel, docking and storage fees, maintenance or repair costs.

This law has been passed, because until now, typically only wealthy and financially responsible people have been able to purchase boats. This new law ensures that every American can now have an "affordable" boat of their own, because everyone is entitled to a new boat. If you purchase your boat before the end of the year, you will receive 4 "free" life jackets; not including monthly usage fees.

In order to make sure everyone purchases an affordable boat, the costs of owning a boat will increase on average of 250-400% per year. This way, wealthy people will pay more for something that other people don't want or can't afford to maintain. But to be fair, people who can't afford to maintain their boat will be regularly fined, and children (under the age of 26) can use their parent's boats to party on until they turn 27; then must purchase their own boat.

If you already have a boat, you can keep yours (just kidding; no you can't). If you don't want or don't need a boat, you are required to buy one anyhow. If you refuse to buy one or can't afford one, you will be regularly fined \$800 until you purchase one, or face imprisonment.

Failure to use the boat will also result in fines. People living in the desert, ghettos, inner cities or areas with no access to lakes are not exempt. Age, motion sickness,

experience, knowledge, nor lack of desire are acceptable excuses for not using your boat.

A government review board (that doesn't know the difference between the port, starboard or stern of a boat) will decide everything, including; when, where, how often and for what purposes you can use your boat along with how many people can ride your boat, and determine if one is too old or healthy enough to be able to use their boat. They will also decide if your boat has outlived its usefulness, or if you must purchase specific accessories (like a \$500 compass), or a newer and more expensive boat. Those who can afford yachts will be required to do so...it's only fair. However there will be extra tax on them.

Government officials are exempt from this new law. If they want a boat, they and their families can obtain boats free, at the expense of taxpayers. Unions, bankers and mega companies with large political affiliations are also exempt.

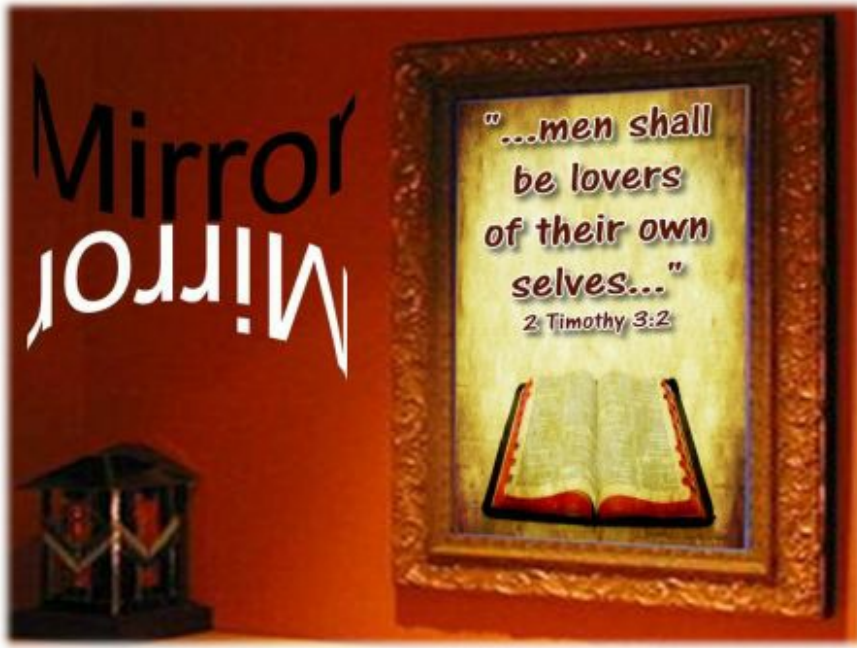


DUNNO WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE?



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**"Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow."
(Isaiah 50:11)**



As we noted in part one of this series, everyone wants to improve himself or herself, whether it's one's situation, condition, image or whatever else people feel would make them happier. The world has conjured up a host of approaches in attempting to accomplish that goal, but its successes are rare and, at best, short-lived.

The biblical approach, on the other hand, has, as its objective, temporal improvement *and* eternal outcomes. In His Scriptures, God has given mankind instructions that will vastly improve one's condition on earth as well as prepare us for eternal rewards to come. As our Creator, God alone knows every aspect of every human being, from the most minute part of our physical bodies to every thought our mind thinks. In other words, there is nothing that God doesn't know about us. Therefore, as we deal with situations and circumstances that come our way, we can't do better than to turn to the One who knows us best.

According to the Manufacturer's Handbook (the Bible) the first humans, Adam and Eve, were created in perfection but then disobeyed God, which resulted in the corruption of their natures and subsequently the natures of their offspring (Romans 5:12). Their sin affected their relationship with God, separating them and all mankind from Him spiritually and physically for all eternity (Romans 3:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Yet God in His mercy sent Jesus to pay the infinite penalty required for mankind to be reconciled to Him. Our Lord's sacrifice satisfied God's perfect justice and made the way for all who by faith accept Christ's payment on their behalf to receive the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

Those who put their trust in Christ are born again spiritually. Their nature has been changed from one that is in bondage to sin and under God's condemnation to one that belongs to God and is no longer controlled by sin. A born-again Christian still retains his old nature and can therefore choose to sin, but his new nature enables him to refrain from sinning. Although his sins--past, present, and future--have been completely paid for by our Savior Jesus Christ, thus securing his eternal destiny, whatever sins he may commit nevertheless still have temporal consequences. They adversely affect his relationship with the Lord, the answers to his prayers, and his relationships with others. He will reap what he has sown, experience the ill effects of immoral activities, will have to pay penalties for breaking civil laws, and so forth.

Those consequences can be avoided by simply obeying the instructions that God's Word presents. That's the "secret" to biblical self-improvement, which, as I mentioned in the first part of this series, is only a secret in the sense that too few Christians know their Bibles well enough to be aware of the instructions of the Scriptures. Even if a believer is willing to obey God, he can't do what God wants if he doesn't know His instructions.

That brings us to the first imperative of biblical self-improvement: we have to know what God says, and that can come about only by diligently reading His Word. A habit of reading the Scriptures daily is not only the best habit a believer can have--it is critical to his having a fruitful life in Christ and maturing in his relationship with the Lord.

Self-improvement, biblically, as we have noted, is diametrically opposed to the world's way of going about improving "self," as well as being contrary to the world's understanding regarding "self." The world sees "self" as inherently good; it is to be highly esteemed and held foremost in one's endeavors; it is to be loved above all, and even deified, according to some religions and psychotherapies. The Bible, in contrast, deems "self" as mankind's major problem, as inherently evil, as continually biased toward the person himself. Even among believers, it is their greatest hindrance to a life of following Jesus, which is what Christianity is all about. In [Matthew 16:24](#), Jesus declared to His disciples: *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up*

his cross, and follow me." Nothing and no one must come before our Lord. Moreover, believers are to consider others before themselves. That's what the Bible teaches, and when we do what it teaches, the effect is that our temporal lives, whether as individuals, families, or churches, are transformed because we are drawing closer to the Lord.

Biblical Christianity is all about selflessness. It is about being "other-directed," putting others first. Jesus exemplified that and taught it: *"...But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister [servant]; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant [slave]: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto [served], but to minister [serve], and to give his life a ransom for many."* *"And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."* (Matthew 20:26-28; Mark 9:35).

Our Savior's sacrifice for us on the Cross was the supreme act of selfless love, as Charles Wesley noted in his hymn: "Amazing love! How can it be, that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" Jesus not only paid an immeasurable ransom for our salvation; He gave us a commandment that reflected His sacrificial love in our relationship with others: *"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:12-13).

Too often we think of astounding acts, such as a sacrificial death on someone else's behalf, and miss the everyday opportunities that we have to manifest selflessness. Jesus gave us such an example when He washed the feet of His disciples: *"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them"* (John 13:12-17).

Foot washing is certainly a wonderful act of humility, but the Lord's example is much more than that.

Jesus is telling us that serving one another needs to be *the rule* in the realm of everyday life. Foot washing was a very common activity when the chief mode of traveling to and from was walking on dirt paths in sandals.

Consider verse 17: *"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."* This is the "secret" to biblical self-improvement, which has been displaced in our Laodicean, humanistic, psychologized, self-serving end-time church. The church is not "happy" because it isn't practicing what Jesus, our Lord of lords and King of kings, demonstrated and taught. The consequences are that there is little difference statistically between the ills of the world and the problems that beset Christendom, i.e., both professing Christians and true believers.

Take, for example, divorce among believers. If there is a case in which one's *self-interest* on the part of one or both is not the root problem, I haven't seen it in my experiences over the years in ministering to couples considering divorce. What about relationships that are mostly in turmoil among family members--husband and wife, parents and children, between siblings themselves? Pick an issue and consider whether or not *self* has raised its ugly head in causing dissension. That is the battlefield we are all in. The Apostle Paul in his letters (inspired by the Holy Spirit) describes the battle regarding "self" and the condition of the combatants. The troubles among the Philippians were caused by their doing things through selfish ambition and conceit. Paul's corrective instructions zeroed in on the "self issue": *"...but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other[s] better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."* Paul underscores the fleshly "me-first" bent that we all struggle with from time to time: *"For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"* (Philippians 2:3-4; 21).

Again, being a bondservant of the Lord, putting Him first, serving others and putting them before ourselves, are the marching orders for those who have received the "unspeakable gift" of eternal life. Scriptures abound with teachings regarding selflessness: *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9). *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another"* (Romans 12:10). *"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities [scruples/conscience] of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me"* (Romans 15:1-3). *"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more"* (1 Corinthians 9:19). *"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth [well-being]"* (1 Corinthians 10:24). *"Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved"* (1 Corinthians 10:33).

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, who were racked with selfish leanings, he wrote a profound chapter on love, in which he stated that true love "seeketh not her own" (1 Corinthians 13:5). In other words, biblical love is concerned first and foremost with others. The Corinthians of Paul's day were not the only believers with a "self" problem; it was a characteristic of many believers in all of the churches, with notable exceptions such as the church of Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13) and others of similar mindsets down through history. Yet Paul prophesied of a "perilous" time prior to Christ's return when a chief characteristic on earth would be that "*men shall be lovers of their own selves*" (2 Timothy 3:1-2). That prophecy, as noted in Part One of this series, not only has been manifested in an unprecedented way in the last hundred years in the world, but incredibly, it has become a false doctrine in the church and is taught by many popular evangelical preachers and Christian psychologists. This is a shocking development in the face of so many Scripture verses that clearly teach the opposite. Yet in light of another prophecy by Paul, we can see how it was possible for such false teachings (self-esteem, self-love, self-image, self-worth, and on to self-*ad nauseam*) to enter the church: "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears*" (2 Timothy 4:3).

Prophecy, however, is not deterministic. God's foreknowledge of events that will take place doesn't predestine individuals to fulfill the prophecies regarding these events. His knowing that the "me generations" will manifest themselves in our day does not relieve those generations of being held accountable for their self-serving choices. Although the acts and consequences of selfishness are seemingly everywhere, that doesn't mean that believers have to conform to them or be controlled by them. The solution to preventing our lives from reflecting the destructive "self" litanies of our day are hardly complex. In fact, many of those problems of living can be averted by implementing two words: Stop it!

Temptation comes along, whatever it may be, and we can either buy into it...or not. We can *stop it* before it becomes sin. The "stop it" solution can certainly be overstated, but too often we bypass the truth that correcting a sin or a potential sin is always a matter of our wills. Scripture, for example, tells us to flee youthful lusts. That's what Joseph did when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. We don't find him standing around hoping and praying that the Lord would take his lust away as she grabbed him by his garment. No. He split, leaving his garment behind. James tells us to resist the devil. Peter writes that we are to "resist steadfast in the faith." Obviously, we are to make choices. We either choose to serve ourselves and sin or serve God by acting in

righteousness. In our willingness to please God rather than self, we have God's grace, we have the true wisdom from the Word of God, and we have the help of the Holy Spirit, the prayers, encouragement, and support of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

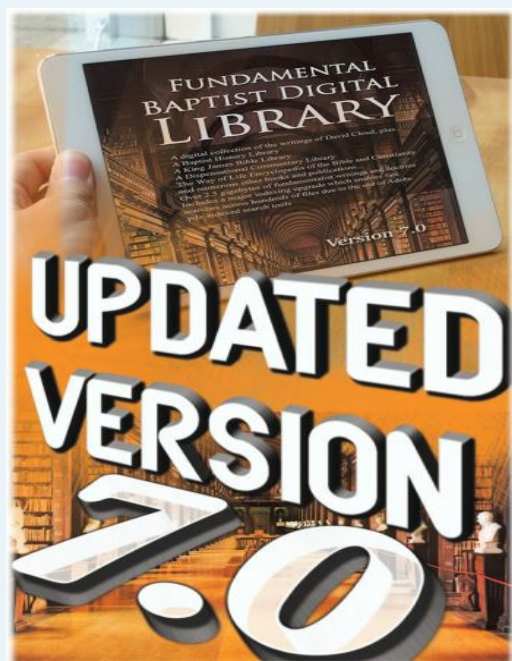
Here's a very short "self" checklist for our consideration and correction:

1. Am I making decisions based on what pleases me rather than what pleases the Lord? That's a *self-love* issue: Do I love me more than Jesus? Think about our situations regarding the opportunity to sin. Guess what I'm going to decide if I love me and want to please me rather than loving Jesus and pleasing Him!
2. In a marriage situation, are we giving preference to ourselves rather than to our spouses, and in the process not treating each other with loving kindness, affection, and respect?
3. What about the way we talk to one another? Does our communication with others reflect a sharp tongue, sarcasm, and put-downs rather than loving and esteeming them? Regarding 1 through 3, two words need to be implemented to correct the problem: Stop it!
4. As parents, are we teaching our children to obey the Scriptures in the way that they treat their siblings and friends?
5. Are we examples to our children regarding the Bible's instructions, and do we consistently and biblically correct them when they act selfishly toward others?

Although this list is just the tip of the iceberg regarding the application of God's Word for living our lives as biblical Christians, I guarantee that even those few things, when obeyed according to the Scriptures, will have a transformational impact in our personal lives, our family relationships, our relationships outside our families, our witness to unbelievers, and, most important, our growth in our relationship with Jesus. Why am I so confident? Simply because we are doing what God tells us to do, and in doing so, we will be enabled and supported by an abundance of His grace through the Holy Spirit.

So the "secret" of biblical self-improvement has been exposed in the light of the Scriptures. Let it no longer be so removed from our lives that it seems a mystery to us. Rather, by God's grace and enablement, let the application of biblical service and selflessness help to demonstrate to the world the truth of the Bible and the reality of a Christianity that obeys what our true and living God has communicated to us. **TBC**

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In Mark's gospel, we read in chapter 8:15-18. *"And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. And when Jesus knew it, He saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?"*

Jesus used a very interesting word when He rebuked His disciples by using the word HARDENED. This is the Greek word POROO. Some lexicons in their definitions, define this word as "to cover with a thick skin, to harden by covering with a callus" (Thayer). Many a teacher or pastor has used this idea to define what Jesus was talking about here. While that is a valid definition, the word POROO is actually a lot harsher word than merely "covering with thick skin."

Digging deeper into the word POROO, it actually speaks of a "tuff-stone." Such a stone is described as being like Persian marble. That was a very hard, yet light, stone. Aristotle used this word to describe a stalactite, such as one might find in cave. A stalactite is formed of calcium carbonate and is very hard. There are several instances in ancient writings that speak of this as being a stone that is used to pack the foundation of a building. This was also a term that was used in the medical field. It spoke of a hardening of a swelled bone, or of a "jelly thickening out of a the bone" (Kittel). The word was also used of a bone that had been broken and the process of the bone mending through the callus that forms at the joint of the broken bone was called POROO. There is actually a different Greek word for a callus such as is found on the skin, such as your hands or feet (TULE – not found in the New Testament). POROO speaks of an impenetrable hardness, like bone or marble.

There are two ideas that are associated with POROO. First of all, POROO suggests that there has been a loss of sensation, or feeling (this is probably where the idea of a thickening of skin was derived). There is a second idea associated with it of blindness or not being able to see something. The way that Jesus uses the word in Mark 8:17 is that of being blinded to the point of not being able to learn a lesson. In other words, the lesson that Jesus was teaching these men would not make an impression in their hearts. Their hearts had become stone hard. In

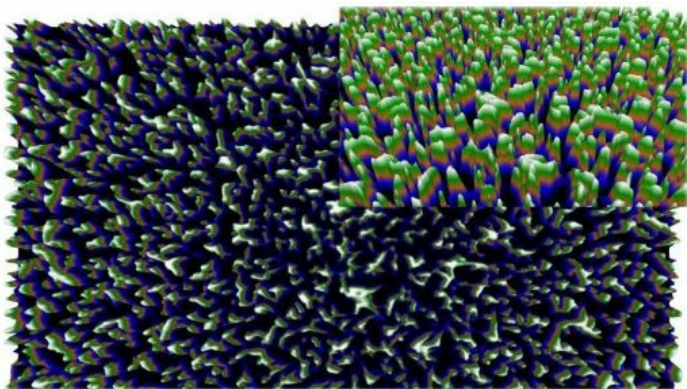


ancient thought, the mind was thought of in the sense, sometimes, as being like wax, and teaching would have the ability to make an impression in that soft wax. Simply stated, such a person could be taught. But, here were the minds of the disciples, at least at this point, that were unable to have an impression made in them, because they had become HARDENED or POROO. This kind of person reaches a place of becoming unteachable. That is a very serious condition of the heart. This person is wrapped up in their own small world. Does that not describe the disciples at this point? Nothing from another world, such as the Kingdom, could touch them. Their minds were shut up to the teaching of Jesus. But their minds were open to their own personal ideas. Their minds had become like marble or mended bone. In our day, we might even say that their minds or hearts had become literally petrified.

A person's own ideas are substituted in the place of the truths of God's word, and such a person will go his or her own way. We are reminded of Solomon's words in [Proverbs 14:12](#), *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* The heart becomes petrified, the conscience has become insensitive and the eyes will no longer see. When that way is chosen, death awaits. Was there hope for these men? Absolutely! Once their own ideas were replaced with God's truth, the hardness dissipated. How do we know? They turned the world upside down as they spread God's Word to that world.

Beware of the POROO heart.

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Black silicon slices and dices bacteria

The spiky surface of black silicon shred certain types of bacteria, offering the potential of new antibacterial surfaces

Originally discovered by accident in the 1980s, black silicon is silicon with a surface that has been modified to feature nanoscale spike structures which give the material very low reflectivity. Researchers have now found that these spikes can also destroy a wide range of bacteria, potentially paving the way for a new generation of antibacterial surfaces.

Surface structures similar to black silicon can be found in nature. Earlier this year, researchers at the Swinburne Institute of Technology in Australia led by Professor Elena Ivanova and Professor Russell Crawford found that the wings of the cicada *Psaltoda claripennis* could shred certain types of rod-shaped bacteria.

This prompted them to seek out other insects with similar spike-like surface architectures. They found that the wings of the *Diplacodes bipunctata* or Wandering Percher dragonfly were even more deadly, killing both rod-shaped and spherical bacteria.

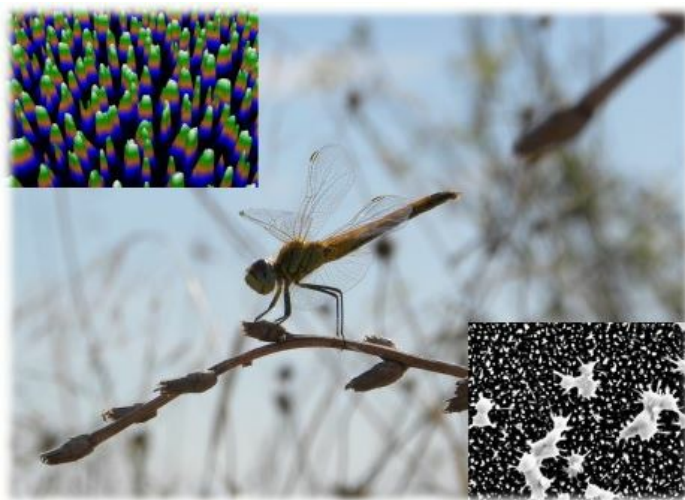
"This structure generates a mechanical bacteria killing effect which is unrelated to the chemical composition of the surface," says Professor Crawford, who is Dean of the Faculty of Life and Social Sciences at Swinburne.

The team then set out to mimic the surface structure of the Wandering Percher dragonfly wing in an effort to

create a surface with similar bacteria-killing properties. They then compared the bacteria-killing capacity of their black silicon creation to the dragonfly wing.

"Both surfaces were found to be highly effective against a range of bacteria, as well as endospores," says Professor Crawford. "They exhibited estimated average bacteria killing rates of up to 450,000 cells per minute of exposure, for every square centimeter of available surface."

Among the variety of bacteria the surfaces were able to kill were the deadly strains of the *Staphylococcus aureus* or golden staph bacterium.



***Diplacodes bipunctata* or Wandering Percher Dragonfly**

"This represents an exciting prospect for the development of a new generation of antibacterial nanomaterials that could be applied to the surfaces of medical implants, making them far safer," he adds.

The team has published its findings in the journal Nature Communications.

Source: Swinburne Institute of Technology

<http://www.gizmag.com/black-silicon-antibacterial-surface/29950/>

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Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. Hebrews 11:3

How many billions of dollars have been squandered on pretending to do something about the weather? On placating the great Climate God?

Richard Lindzen, Professor of Atmospheric Sciences emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology:

Global climate alarmism has been costly to society, and it has the potential to be vastly more costly. It also has been damaging to science, as scientists adjust both data and even theory to accommodate politically correct positions...

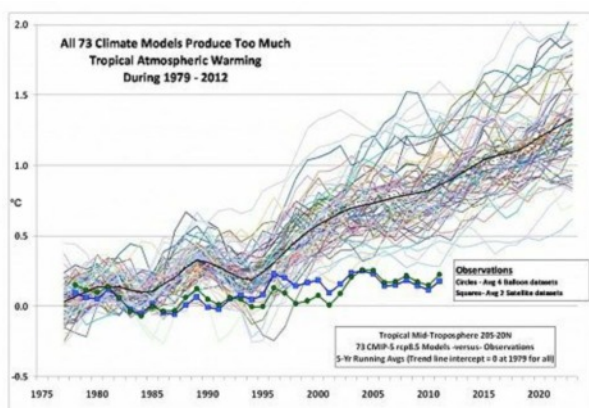
There are past examples. In the U.S. in the early 20th century, the eugenics movement had coopted the science of human genetics and was driving a political agenda. The movement achieved the Immigration Restriction Act of 1923, as well as forced sterilization laws in several states. The movement became discredited by Nazi atrocities, but the American consequences survived well into the 1960s.

In the Soviet Union, Trofim Denisovich Lysenko (1898-1976) promoted the Lamarckian view of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. It fit with Stalin's megalomaniacal insistence on the ability of society to remold nature....

Global warming differs from the previous two affairs. Global warming has become a religion. A surprisingly large number of people seem to have concluded that all that gives meaning to their lives is the belief that they are saving the planet by paying attention to their carbon footprint...

In contrast to Lysenkoism, Global Warming has a global constituency, and has successfully coopted almost all of institutional science. However, the cracks in the scientific claims for catastrophic warming are, I think, becoming much harder for the supporters to defend.

For example:



In fact:

“Real Risk of a Maunder Minimum ‘Little Ice Age’ announced the BBC this week, in reporting startling findings by Professor Mike Lockwood of Reading University. ‘Professor Lockwood believes solar activity is now falling more rapidly than at any time in the last 10,000 years [raising the risk of a new Little Ice Age]..., explained Paul Hudson, the BBC’s climate correspondent. If Earth is spared a new Little Ice Age, a severe cooling as ‘occurred in the early 1800s, which also had its fair share of cold winters and cold summers is, according to him, ‘more likely than not to happen.’”

How much more waste before the cost becomes so crippling that it forces politicians to admit voters have been conned - and fleeced?

Climate-change policies are expected to cost Britain more than £80 billion by the end of the decade, *as critics warn that the global-warming industry is spiralling out of control ...*

Vast sums are being spent on initiatives ranging from climate-change officers in local councils to the funding of “low carbon” agriculture in Colombia at a cost of £15 million alone. Billions of pounds are also being added to fuel bills to pay for green policies.

(Thanks to reader fulchrum.)

http://blogs.news.com.au/heraldsun/andrewbolt/index.php/heraldsun/comments/the_warming_religion_will_collapse_from_its_sheer_cost/

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John 17:21 is one of the favorite Bible verses of the ecumenical movement, used by everyone from Billy Graham to the Pope: *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."*

Many claim that the unity for which Christ prayed is an ecumenical unity of professing Christians that disregards biblical doctrine (since doctrine divides), but the words and context of John 17 destroys this myth. In John 17 the Lord emphasizes that the unity He desires is one based on supernatural salvation and obedience to revealed truth. It is not a unity of nominal Christians and regenerate, of sound doctrine and false. It is not a "unity in diversity" that ignores doctrinal differences for the sake of a broad tent.

THE UNITY OF JOHN 17 IS A GOD-CREATED UNITY

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11).

There is nothing in Christ's prayer to indicate that men are to do something to create the unity for which He prayed. John 17 is a prayer addressed to God the Father, not a commandment addressed to men. It is not something man needs to do; it is something God has already done. The prayer was answered 2,000 years ago. It is a *spiritual reality* that was created by God among genuine believers who are committed to the Scriptures, not a *possibility* which must be organized by man. Each born again child of God is adopted into the family of God and is a part of Christ's kingdom.

In contrast, the ecumenical movement, even its most "evangelical" aspect, is careless about the gospel and salvation. I have attended many ecumenical conferences with press credentials and have asked attendees, "When were you born again?" and more often than not I get an unscriptural answer. I get answers from people who are trusting in their good works or their baptism or their church membership or a "sinner's prayer" or their mystical charismatic experiences or the fact that they "have always been a Christian."

In my research on the emerging church in preparation for writing the book [*What Is the Emerging Church?*](#) in 2008, I read dozens of testimonies by emerging leaders, and most of them were unscriptural. (For documentation, see *What Is the Emerging Church?* chapter III "No Clear Testimony of Salvation," available from www.wayoflife.org.)

Prominent evangelical leaders such as Rick Warren preach a shallow "gospel" that is not the gospel we find in Scripture. (See "[Rick Warren's Shallow Gospel](#)" at www.wayoflife.org.)

Any unity that is a unity among those who aren't clear on the gospel and haven't experienced supernatural salvation is not the unity that Jesus was praying for in John 17.

THE UNITY OF JOHN 17 IS A UNITY IN TRUTH

"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. ... Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:8, 17). See also John 17:19, 6, and 14. Christ emphasized that He was praying for those who love and obey the Word of God and keep its doctrine. It is a unity of those who earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

This is certainly not a prayer that envisions the modern ecumenical crowd that downplays and ignores the Word of God for the sake of a broad, lowest-common-denominator "unity." It is not a unity among all denominations with their multiplicity of heresies. It does not envision the New Evangelical crowd with its unscriptural judge-not philosophy and its wrong-headed tendency to reduce "essential" doctrine to a short list of "fundamentals," while downplaying the so-called "non-essentials" of God's Word for the sake of peace and unity.

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"It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 15:25-26

About once a week, when he is working in our area, I get to have breakfast with Bro. Floyd Risser. Every time we sit down together I come away encouraged, with the Sword sharpened and my spirit edified. I thank God for Bro. Floyd. He is what God meant when He said, *"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."* (Proverbs 27:17), and *"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."* (Proverbs 13:20).

Yesterday he told me there are three kinds of people, *Risk-Takers, Care-Takers, and Under-Takers*. The comment is somewhat similar to the description that says, *"Every successful enterprise begins with a Man, develops into a Movement, turns into a Machine, and ends up a Monument."*

RISK-TAKERS -

Risk-takers are pioneers, adventurers, and trailblazers. They don't read maps. They draw them. They don't follow old trails. They cut new ones. They don't dig up ancient civilizations. They found brand new ones. They don't refine the cultures of days gone by. They tip them in the rubbish where they belong and plant new ones in their

places. If a pastor is a risk-taker, he is not content to have a large church full of pew warmers. He wants to meet the new family down the street and tell them about Jesus, even if he's heard that they are all committed atheists. Especially if they are committed atheists! If the risk-taker is a missionary, he's not greatly interested in taking a furlough every two years. He's interested in the tribe over the mountain, even if they are said to eat strangers, especially if they eat strangers! If he is an evangelist, he's not greatly interested in preaching at Laodicea Baptist Church on Plush Curtain Avenue in Megabucksville, even if the accommodation is 5 star and the offerings are huge. He wants to go to the new little church that's never had an evangelist, and especially if they've been fasting and praying for weeks. If the risk-taker is a Sunday School teacher, he's not satisfied to have a class full of Casper Milktoasts. He wants to reach for Christ the little hooligan who painted graffiti all over the church bus last Saturday night.

I confess, Risk-Takers are my heroes. Men like Barnabas and Paul, who *hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Men like Bro. Randy Pike, who set out to win a Roman Catholic priest in Gladstone to Christ and did it, while another priest cursed him and Bro. Randy's own missions directors told him to leave Catholics alone.

You can always spot God's risk-takers by what you hear them say and by what you see them do. They say things like, "Always take the offensive. Never dig in." or, "Surrounded? Good! We will attack in all directions!" And "Regions beyond." And they set out to do it!!!

CARE-TAKERS -

Care-takers often have a foxhole mentality. They love the status quo. Tradition is sacred and custom must be preserved at all cost. They print the maps (and frame them) to show the trails their illustrious (risk-taking) founders blazed a hundred years ago. They write scholarly books in honour of the missionaries who risked their lives to conquer pagan nations for Christ (but will not support a missionary candidate if he is the least bit adventurous today.) If the care-taker is a pastor he will conceive the idea of investing in stocks and bonds a percentage of the offerings each year. He sets up a non-profit foundation to educate all the youth of his church in the "approved liberal arts seminary" so that, when they return home to manage the bank and the funeral home and the country club and finally become deacons, they will all have Ph.D. degrees. If the care-taker is a missionary, he will not plant any new churches on the mission field, but is happy to interim pastor the ones planted by risk-taking missionaries fifty years before. If he is an evangelist, he will not accept an invitation to minister outside his comfort zone. If there is not a Starbucks or a MacDonalds within 20 miles, he will not consider it. If he is a Sunday School teacher he will only take a class if the lessons are all laid out, including visuals, and if all his scholars are from Christian homes and attend the local Christian school.

You hear them saying things like, "Slow and easy! Moderation is our Motto! and "The Tortoise Always Wins!"

Of course, you know that Care-Takers have a favourite hymn. It is "Hold the Fort For I am Coming."

UNDER-TAKERS -

Under-takers bury the dead churches by degrees. No hurry, since they are paid by the hour. The only maps they

know anything about are the ones issued by the cemetery that list the grave plots still available to churches that are drawing their last breath. They are great believers in consolidating, this church with that, and this denomination with that, Geneva with Rome, and Rome with Mecca, and Mohler with Mormons. Their Latin motto translates, "Syncretism Rules!" If you haven't met the apprentice Under-Taker in your church yet, just look for him among the apprentice Pallbearers. They are never far from the back door of the church, just in case a decease occurs. Their compass mostly points toward Geneva, and their patron saints can be counted on to hold at least five points of Calvinism, sometimes as many as seven.

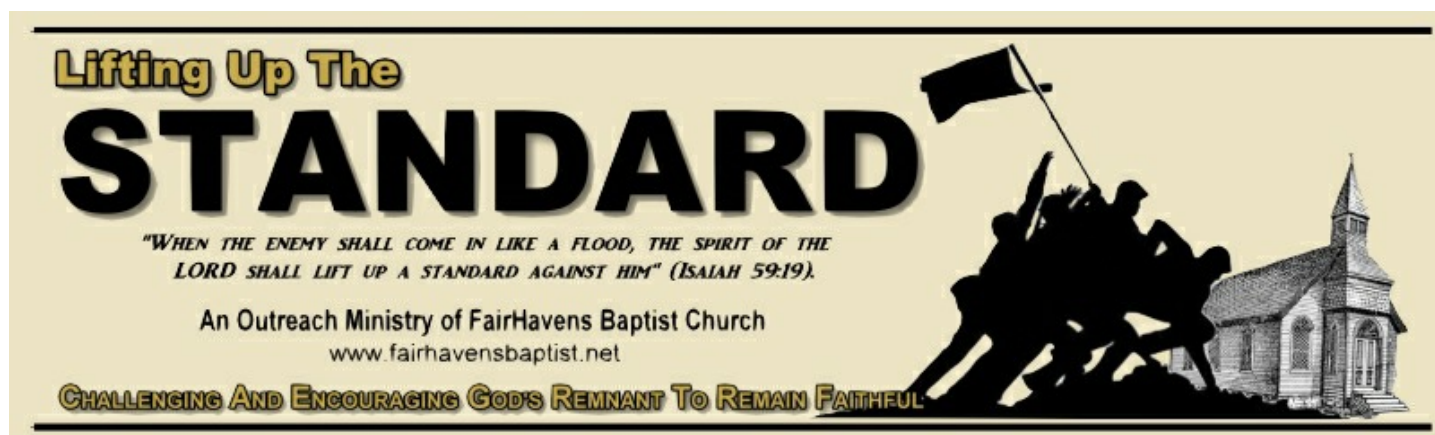
AN OBSERVATION OR TWO -

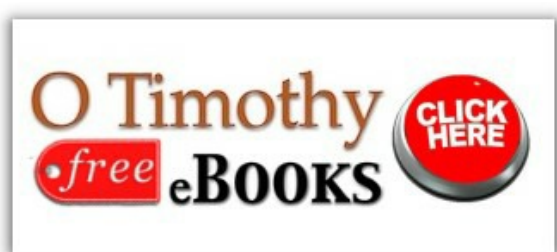
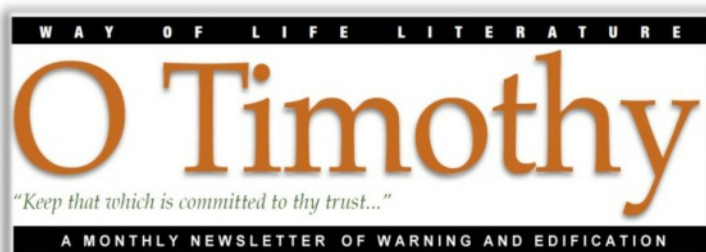
Churches need Risk-Takers. We die without them. We also need Care-Takers, but only if they know the value of Risk-Takers. When the Care-Takers begin to criticize the Risk-Takers and give them the cold shoulder, when they treat them like they are the Step-Children of the churches, when they no longer pray for their tribe to increase, when they no longer give generously to support their risk-taking, when they no longer invite them into the pulpit, when they no longer encourage them to take greater and greater risks for Christ (biblically and prayerfully!!!!!!), when the Risk-Takers are treated with disdain, then.....

we initiate the transition of our church into the hands of the Under-Takers.

Oh, one more observation, I never saw an Under-Taker who was joyful.

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Heads Up!

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