

Psm. 11:3

Baptists For Liberty

Prov. 29:2

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Gal. 5:1

NEWS LETTER

Issue #3

December 2012

Verse of the month: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety." Psalms 4:8

ATTENTION:

Unfortunately in the after math of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown CT politicians and the media have turned the tragedy into a gun grab, while other kinds of shysters are using the opportunity to con people out of money. Please do not donate to any organizations with out thoroughly vetting it first! If you would like to help the families of Newtown please go to "My Sandy Hook Family Fund."

Their website is: www.MySandyHookFamilyFund.com

This organization was created by parents of children who survived the attack on the elementary school in order to help their friends and neighbors.

The goal of "My Sandy Hook Family Fund" is to provide immediate and continuing support to the 26 families who lost family members in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. All net proceeds donated will go to support the families of the victims.

To stay up to date on the investigation of the shooting, it's effects on the community, and more the best source & reporting is the local news paper, The Newtown Bee. Their website is: Newtownbee.com

"He that is of God heareth God's words"

By Steve McCool sr.

John 8:42-47 *"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."*

Here in these verses Jesus is addressing a group of Jews whom were seeking to kill Him. They have been questioning His authority and His teachings. Nothing he said to them could convince them that he was the Son of God. He claimed to be from the same God of Moses, Abraham, and the prophets. And yet they rebuked Jesus for making these claims.

Comments from the editor;

Everything here in America is political from being born to dying and everything in between, including but not limited to; education, what you eat, self defense, parenting, marriage and yes even holidays, as well as what you might normally consider "political" like foreign affairs. Thus this month's issue focuses on topics relevant to the events of the past couple of months such as a Biblical perspective of Israel, Education, why some Christian's abstain from Christmas, and finding peace from God. (Please note not all of the Staff or our contributing writers abstain from the celebration of Christmas & all opinions should be weighed against scripture.)

Opinions?

If you would like to share your opinions on current events, news, or articles we've published, or would like us to share an article you've written we'd be glad to publish them in future issues.

We only have two rules:

1. That you are of like faith

(see our Profession of Faith on our website: BaptistsForLiberty.weebly.com/profession-of-faith.html)

and 2. Opinions & articles that we publish must be written in a spirit of grace, the editors reserve the right to not publish submissions that we deem violates this rule. Politics can be a heated debate but it need not be among brethren.

Send your submissions to

worksjoanna@yahoo.com

Also In This Month's Issue:

Sermon: "He That is Of God Heareth God's Word" by Bro. Steve McCool Sr. (Continued) & **"The Future of Israel"** by Bro. David Green, Page 2

Historical Marker: "The Father of Modern Education" By Bro. Steve McCool Sr. Page 6

"Why I Don't Celebrate Christmas: A personal testimony" by Bro. Raul Enyedi Page 7

"Real Peace" by Bro. Todd Bryant
& December Reading Page 10

SERMON:

"He that is of God heareth God's words"

By Steve McCool sr.



(continued from front page)

They even dared to accuse Him of having a devil or being of the devil.

Jesus asks them why they do not understand His words. He then tells them why. He tells them that it is because their father is the devil and because of this they will do the bidding of their father the devil. He also tells them that like the devil there is no truth in them.

Finally Jesus tells this group of Jews that the reason they cannot hear the words of God is because they are not of God. How this must have been a slap in the face to these Jews who had been taught that because they were of the seed of Abraham that they were of God. As their ancestors had done they too had forsaken the teachings and warnings given by the Old Testament prophets. When the true Messiah came they rejected Him because he did not teach what they wanted to hear. Oh how we see this today in our own lives. It seems at times the closer we walk with our Lord the more we are ridiculed for our walk. With every mistake we make whether at work or at home our walk is put in question by those who have no walk. There are those out there who are watching and waiting for us to fail all because of who we are, the children of God. The sad fact is that while we are here on this earth we will endure sin. Even though we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, as long as we are here in this world we are prone to sin.

But a lot of what the world sees as mistakes and short comings in our lives can also be the truths of God's word. How many times, when we speak out about the sins of others, does the world say we are judging unfairly or we have no right to judge others because of our sins. They will then attempt to quote a scripture they heard once preached out of context. How often do we hear that "God is love" or "God loves everybody" or how about "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as we all believe in the same God". These claims cannot be further from the truth. Jesus told His disciples "If you love me follow my commandments." Paul taught us that we should "study to shew ourselves approved". So if we follow His commandments and study His word then we will see that God only loves His chosen people and if we do not believe what His word says then

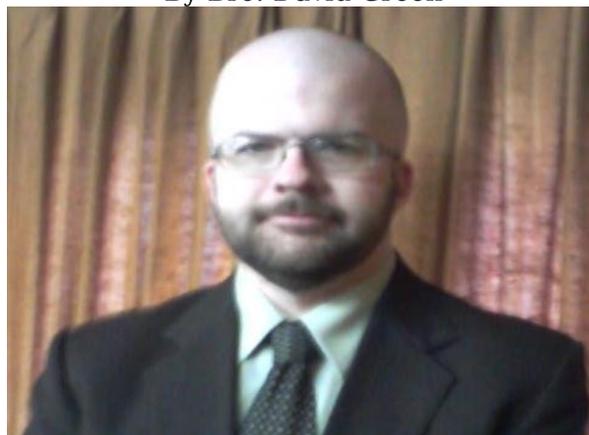
we are not His chosen people.

The Jews in Jesus' day were so religious by their own right that they could not recognize the Messiah that had been promised of old. In our day those who have grown up in the religious world do not recognize Him or His true teachings.

To ward off the threats of those who would have us fail we must walk close to our Lord always. Study His word daily. Question everything that others say is fine and good. Be good Bereans.

"The Future of Israel"

By Bro. David Green



INTRODUCTION

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." (Romans 11:1-3).

The subject that was assigned to two other brethren before it was passed on to me is The Future of Israel. And, we will take as our text verse 1:

"...Hath God cast away His people? God forbid..." Before we get into the subject, let me define the word Israel. The Israel we are talking about are the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We do not mean all descendants of Abraham, nor do we mean the church. God is very clear about this topic and I am amazed that it is even a question in the theological world!

Notice the foundational promises for this topic:

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

"And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the

length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." (Genesis 13:14-17).

"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites." (Genesis 15:18-21)

"And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Genesis 17:8).

Abraham was promised a specific land in a specific place. He was told it would be for an everlasting possession. And, notice, there were no conditions placed upon this covenant.

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year." (Genesis 17:20-21).

This covenant was again repeated, even after Abraham's failure in not waiting for the Lord. He made it clear that the covenant would NOT be through Ishmael, but through Isaac...Thus limiting it to certain of Abraham's seed.

"And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 28:13-14).

Again, we find the covenant repeated. This time limiting it further to Jacob (who became known as Israel - see Genesis 32:28).

DAVIDIC COVENANT

"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." (2 Samuel 7:12-16).

The covenant given to David assures him that his descendants will not be destroyed or displaced by another family. Whatever chastisements may come, the line of David will always have the right to rule over Israel.

"My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah." (Psalm 89:28-37).

This passage tells us without any doubt that the covenant given to David was unconditional and will last forever.

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:31-33).

The promises given to David are transferred to Jesus Christ, the descendant of David who will sit on that throne!

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8).

Even the apostles expected these things to happen literally. When they asked our Lord about it, he simply explained that it was not for them to know the times or the seasons. He did not correct them for their thinking, so obviously they were right in asking. Those promises were LITERAL and they were UNCONDITIONAL!

ISRAEL TODAY

The year 1948 marked the establishment of a new state of Israel and confirmed what premillennialists have been saying since the time of Christ. This was obviously an act of God. Tell me, what ancient people do you know of who have been scattered all over the earth, been away from their homeland for

nearly 1900 years, able hold onto their national identity and finally become a nation again? While we are witnessing nothing short of a miracle today, we want to shift our attention from the past to the future. And, for the most part, that is where we will stay.

ISRAEL DURING THE TRIBULATION

"For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." (Jeremiah 30:5-7).

The tribulation period is known as "Jacob's Trouble." It will be a horrible time on this earth, especially for Israel!

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matthew 24:15-22).

Here we read of our Lord's discourse of the time of Great Tribulation. By this time, the Lord's people will be taken out of this world in the rapture. Praise the Lord we will not have to go through any of the tribulation period! But Israel will. Let us take notice of the "Abomination of Desolation" in verse 15.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Daniel 9:26-27).

This is the 70th week prophesy that was given by Daniel. The coming Roman prince will make a covenant with Israel... he is the Antichrist. And it seems he will be very clever individual. He will succeed in the Mid-East Peace Process and will allow Israel to resume their Old Testament worship.

This in itself is amazing. In my office, I have a picture of Jerusalem right now and in that city there is a Muslim mosque where the temple should be. Nobody in the world wants to upset the Muslim world by allowing the Jews to rebuild their temple there and begin sacrifices again, but it will happen! Literally!

However, in the midst of that seven year covenant, everything will go downhill. The agreement will be broken and it will mean trouble for Israel!

"And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." (Isaiah 28:18).

It is called a "covenant with death" and an "agreement with hell." This is not of God! Notice what happens:

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

This passage tells us that the Antichrist will sit himself up to be God in the temple.

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." (Revelation 11:1-2).

Jerusalem will be given to the Gentiles again, and the city will be trodden for about 3.5 years.

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels," (Revelation 12:6-7).

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:13-17).

Although the devil will be cast out of heaven and he will try to destroy Israel, God's protective hand will

be upon them during that time. Some folks have tried to figure out what the eagle represents in that passage. It could be America, but it is doubtful that this country will still be her ally in the Tribulation Period. It might also be representative of an airplane. It very well could be a literal eagle that the Lord creates for His divine will. Nothing is impossible with God!

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." (Revelation 14:1-5).

There will be 144,000 Jewish men who will, I believe, be a testimony for our Lord during this horrible time on the earth! This "chosen few are the redeemed from the 12 tribes of Israel! To the post-trib brethren, let me just ask where is the church? Why does the Lord use Israel instead of His church? It is because the Lord's churches will not be here!

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God." (Zechariah 13:7-9).

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Romans 11:26-27).

The time of Jacob's trouble will take its toll on Israel....only 1/3 of the people will survive, but all of that number will be saved! I do not believe this will be a random 1/3, I believe this will be a chose third!

ISRAEL IN ARMEGEDDON

When our Lord comes back to the earth at the end of the Tribulation Period, he will come back and He will fight for His chosen nation, Israel.

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." (Zechariah 14:1-5).

The time will come when the nations of the world will stop fighting each other and join together to fight against Israel and the God of Israel. Christ will fight for Israel and He will win!

ISRAEL DURING THE MILLENNIAL REIGN

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matthew 24:27-31).

When Christ comes back to stand upon the earth and fight for Israel, He will come in all His power and glory. It is during this time that all the people of the earth will see Him. It is also at this time, there will be a final regathering of Israel from the four winds. (See Deuteronomy 30:1-5).

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." (Zechariah 14:16).

There will be a central method of worship and that will be by worshipping the true King of Kings in Israel! Isn't it interesting how different things will be! No the world will not be ruled from Washington DC or Rome or London....Jerusalem will be the capital of the world.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."
(Revelation 20:7-9).

The final battle will be centered around Jerusalem, and again God will fight against the nations at that time.

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."
(Matthew 24:32-34).

Since we have been in Matthew 24 in this sermon, I feel it is a good idea to take a look at this parable now. Some good folks believe that the fig tree is Israel. However, in this passage I see no evidence that the fig tree is not anything else than a fig tree. If it meant Israel, then from AD 70 until 1948, the Lord's people were very much mistaken when they were not waiting for and longing for Israel to be reborn. Yet, history tells us they were looking for the Lord to come back. Why were they not looking for Israel? Not one time were we told to be watching for Israel, we have always been told to look for the Lord's return! While this topic of Israel's future is important, we must not allow it to get in the way of where our focus should be. Also, some well meaning folks have tried to date the rapture by this interpretation of the parable. At one time, theologians thought that it should be 40 years. Well, 1988 has come and gone. So now, there are disagreements between those who interpret the parable this way. The latest possible date I have found them to believe is 2068, based upon the 120 years found in Genesis 6:3. Could be, but what happens if you are wrong? You have bred a whole new group of scoffers. Others have simply shifted the date from 1948 to 1967 (when Israel regained all of Jerusalem.) Let's steer clear of such interpretation...When I preach about the Lord's return, I'll simply say what the Bible clearly teaches: that it is imminent and we are closer to His return than ever before!

What is this verse teaching us? All of these things will happen in a short, terrible time. Thankfully for Israel's sake, our Lord promised that when all these events of Matthew 24 happen, that generation will not pass away. So the remnants of that generation who goes through the Tribulation Period will live to see the setting up of the kingdom. Though it may seem that God is through with Israel, and they will all die, there will be some saved!

ISRAEL IN ETERNITY

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:1-2).

I find it interesting that though the world is made new He calls His holy city Jerusalem. It will be a HUGE city of about 1500 square miles. There is no reference of a new London or a new Rome. Not even a new Washington DC. But there will be a new Jerusalem!

CONCLUSION

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid..." (Romans 11:1).
Praise the LORD, He has not cast away Israel forever!

Historical Marker:

'The Father of Modern Education' or 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

By Bro. Steve McCool Sr.

II Corinthians 3:17b "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

For some time now in our nation we have been witnessing a falling away from the Christian heritage that our Lord Jesus Christ bestowed upon us through the founding fathers. I thought we had seen the removal of the bible from our schools in the 1960s, but after a little studying on the subject it seems the removal of the bible from our schools started in the 1840s by a man named Horace Mann. Seems Mann is known as the "Father of Modern Education" in America. He was one of the first to remove corporal punishment from the public schools. He taught that the schools should be the institution that instructed children on morals and discipline not the home or the church. He also believed that the school was not a place to teach religion. Although many parents were against these teachings they did nothing to stop Mann from his indoctrination of their children. He was elected to several political offices and served as the first secretary of the Board of Education in Massachusetts.



(clipart from: free-clipart-pictures.net)

Folks the "Father of Modern Education" was a member of the Unitarian Church and was a Humanist. He traveled to Europe mostly Prussia

learning what he could from their education systems. Less than 60 years after we were freed from the tyrannical rule of Europe. Just one generation after the Revolutionary War and the founding of our nation our forefathers allowed the religion of Humanism into our schools and into our homes.

Today we think of this as being a new concept but in reality removing God and His Word from public schools and public institutions is not as new as we think. Noah Webster warned of this. Webster said "In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed."

So why then does the expulsion of God from our schools seem new to us? Well, for one, we live in the South. One of the reasons that the South has been known as the Bible Belt is because Southerners have fought hard to keep their Biblical heritage taught to their children. As mentioned above, Horace Mann was from Massachusetts. His humanistic teachings swept over the Northern states in the 1840s and 1850s. One of Mann's goals was to have one education system nationwide. In the 1850s Northern politicians tried to force a national education system on the South. This did nothing but add fuel to the fire that would later lead to the South's rebellion and eventual War of Northern Aggression.

At the time of the war Humanism was predominantly a Northern problem. After the war and during Reconstruction the politicians in Washington forced a national school system full of Humanistic teachings on our country. The teachers and the schools in the South fought this battle long and hard until the 1960s when the liberals gained control of the Supreme Court.

The loss of many of our liberties has been because of the teachings of Horace Mann. The man who brought the Humanism religion to American schools.

Jesus said in Matthew 19:14 "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"Why I Don't Celebrate Christmas: A personal testimony"

By Bro. Raul Enyedi



I, too, as many others Christians, have been saddened and upset by the increasing secularization of the winter holidays, which, by every year that's passing by, become more superficial, losing more and more of their traditional values. The commercials seem to swallow up these values and use them only to increase profit. I, too, as many others, once had a nostalgia and a longing for the old times when traditions were respected, when the Christmas day had such an emotional charge, more than any other day of the year. I was among the voices that cried out: "Let's bring Christ back into Christmas!"

I wanted Christ to be back into the center of the holiday and to receive once again the worship he received from the shepherds and the wise men. And I was even one of those who insisted that Christmas was not about Santa, but about Christ. The carols I was singing talked only about Christ. I wanted, from all my heart, a truly Christian Christmas. But I knew that in order to have that, I had to do everything according to the Scriptures and eliminate all that was contrary to it. And so it was that I began my study, to find what the Bible really does say about Christmas. Very early I found that the New Testament does not contain any commandment to observe the birth of Christ. This was a bit odd, since in the Old Testament, when the Lord gave the Law to Israel, He gave them specific and detailed commandments to observe certain feasts or celebrations.

Not only have I found no specific commandment in the New Testament about observing the birth of Christ, but I found no exact date of his birth either. After all my inquiry, I was able to find only an approximate period, sometime late September or early October. There was no way Christ's birth could take place at the end of December, because the shepherds did not keep their flocks out in the fields during this month (see Luke 2:8), and a census would have been impossible at that time, too, for the traveling conditions in Israel were very difficult in the midst of the rainy season (Luke 2:1-3).

My next discovery troubled me even more. The Bible says nothing about the Christmas carols, the tree, the exchange of gifts, the special church programs and the preparing of rich tables in honor of the birth of the Savior. There is no commandment and no example in the Bible for anything that we do at Christmas. I asked myself, how can I have a Christian, scriptural Christmas when nothing that I do is found in the Bible? How did we, Christians, come to observe a holiday not commanded by the Bible? Why did we choose an obviously wrong date and customs that resemble with nothing in the Scripture? And if everything that pertains to Christmas, things that I assumed to be Christian, do not come from the New Testament, where did they come from? Oh, how great a surprise was the answer to the latter question!

All the encyclopedias I read showed me that the origin of the holiday is not biblical but pagan. And they told me all the books about myths and history of religions. The Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic sources openly confessed the pagan origins of Christmas. And so I learned that the ancient pagan nations had a great festival dedicated to the birth of the sun god, which had different names, according to the different languages. The Egyptians called him Osiris, the Babylonians Tammuz, the Persians Mythra and the Romans Saturn, and gave him the title Sol Invictis, the Unconquered Sun. It was the same god everywhere, only the names differed. All these pagan nations celebrated the birth of the sun god in the winter time, just after the solstice (December 21st), because that's when the day starts increasing again. The romans celebrated the Saturnalia during this time, the holiday dedicated to Saturn. During this time, there was an excess of eating, drinking and all sorts of orgies, a merry time for pagans. And December 25th was the climax of pagan 'spirituality.' The Christmas carols are also directly connected to this pagan holiday. The Romans called them calendae. Groups of people went from house to house, wishing luck, happiness and fertility to their hosts. The Christmas tree is also an ancient pagan symbol. And so is the Christmas exchange of gifts, which the pagan Romans called sigillaria, during which the children were given gifts of small figurines of clay or wax.

How did we Christians come to observe a holiday not commanded by the Bible: a holiday pagan to its very core? History tells us that Christians decided to celebrate Christmas after they began to depart from the Scriptures and started giving their own laws and rules. After the time of Constantine the Great, ruler of the Roman Empire from AD 306 to 337, when Christianity became the official religion of the Empire, making a lethal compromise with the State, multitudes of pagans were 'Christened,' while still devoted to their own gods. Not being able to separate them from their idols, the Church decided to keep the pagan date and customs, but give them Christian names. John Chrysostom (AD 347-407), among many others, associated the pagan holiday with the name of Christ. Says he: "But they call it the 'Birthday of the Unconquered. Who indeed is so unconquered as Our Lord?' Or, if they say that it is the birthday of the Sun, He is the Sun of Justice." Such was the way in which the Christened pagans were kept satisfied. For it did not matter to them by what name their god was called, as long as they could keep their pagan worship customs. They did not worship Jesus Christ, but they worshiped the sun god, whom they could also call Jesus Christ.

Upon finding these troubling things, I started asking others why we keep this holiday, why at a pagan date with pagan customs, hoping to find some light in their answers. When I asked: "Why do we observe Christmas?," I received many answers, some even childish. I will only mention the answers that made me think and ponder.

1. "It is a good thing to set a day or two apart to remember that Jesus was born to bring salvation to mankind." I was not satisfied by this answer, because I asked myself: who decides what is good for me as a Christian? God or men? I believe that God, my Father, knows better than anyone what is good and what is bad for me. He is a good Father, and wants the best for me. And he told me in the Scriptures what is good. Now, if the Bible does not tell me that we need to have a holiday honoring the birth of the Lord, this means that I do not need such a holiday for my spiritual welfare. I ask all those who tell me that it is good to have such a holiday: Do you think that God hid or refused to reveal something good for us? If Christmas is something good, and God did not tell us about it, it means that He hid something good for us. This monstrous idea is nothing but the same seed of doubt planted by Satan in Eve's heart, suggesting to her that God does not want our good completely, but keeps something good from us. If Christmas would be good or necessary, our Lord and His apostles would definitely have taught us to observe it. Apostle Paul told the elders of the church in Ephesus: "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:20, 27). But Paul does not teach anything about Christmas. Why is that? Because Christmas is not profitable to us. To deny this is to deny the apostle's sincerity, and even worse, God's sincerity.

2. "We need a special day to remember Christ's birth. It does not matter what day, and December 25th is just as good as any other day." I can't help but wonder then, if we are so honest in our desire to pay our homage to the birth of our Savior, why didn't we choose a date that is closer to the time when He was born (end of September, beginning of October)? Why was December 25th chosen, from all the days of the year, knowing that it is the most pagan of all? Is it just a coincidence? I don't think so!

3. "What is not explicitly and implicitly forbidden in the Scriptures, is allowed. The Bible neither approves nor disapproves of such a holiday, therefore it is up to us." Could we possibly understand the silence of the Scripture as being permissive in such a case? Or rather its silence is the strongest argument against observing the holiday? Let us remember that all the Christmas customs that we have today also existed in the time of Christ and the apostles: Not with the Christians, however, but with the pagans!!! The date, the celebration of the birth, the carols, the tree, the gifts, the rich tables and many other details related to the feast existed in the time our Lord walked on this earth. Did He identify Himself with any of these? Did He commission His apostles to go to the pagans and teach them that He is the Unconquered Sun celebrated by them: that the Christmas tree represents Him? The answer is an obvious and absolute NO! All the analogies between Christ and this holiday were made much later, by 'Christians'

who thought that they can change and improve the Bible and who were looking for excuses for their desertion from the boundaries of the Scripture!

The feast of the Nativity cannot be dissociated from its pagan origin. The Christian's stubborn persistence in celebrating Christ's birth on December 25th, with carols, Christmas tree, gifts, a special service at the church and a festive table at home, just as the pagans celebrated their god, prove that we identified ourselves with the paganism and borrowed from it in our worship to the true God. And in this respect, the Scripture is not silent at all, but repeatedly condemns the association of true with false worship, and teaches a complete separation from idols and their worship. The identification with paganism, the borrowing of pagan gods or pagan models of worship is expressly condemned in the Bible, both in the Old and in the New Testament.

The Orthodox and the Catholic Churches openly admit their lack of concern in the fact that the holiday and its customs are pagan in origin, because they say these were made Christian and purified by the sanctifying power of the Church. In their opinion, the Church has sanctifying power, which could be extended even upon paganism, which, once 'christened,' can serve God. This claim is false, unbiblical and illogical. It is rejected by anyone who believes Sola Scriptura (The Scriptures as the final authority for all we believe and practice)! No one faithful to the Scriptures can allow for the arrogance of such a claim. How can we answer then to the fact that we try to dress up a pagan holiday in Christian clothes, changing only the name of the person adored? The association with paganism in worship is not at all part of those things which the Bible neither approves nor condemns, but leave to us. The Bible says: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:16-17). This is totally true for Christmas!

4. "It is good to take advantage of the fact that the lost world is thinking about Christ and His birth in this time of year and preach Christ to them." But what kind of Christ do these people have and desire? Isn't it strange that the world hates Christ but loves Christmas? Why is that? Because they do not worship Christ! They really worship the sun god which they have become accustomed to calling Jesus Christ, and whom they called by lots of names before the fifth century. But the world is not willing to accept the true Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth! Our identification with them in this holiday does not help us to show them the true Jesus Christ, but rather it strengthens their conviction that we worship the same god as them, the one they falsely call Jesus.

5. "We should not judge anyone that observes Christmas, because 'One man esteemeth one day

above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it'" (Romans 14:5-6). The attempt to justify the adoption of a pagan holiday with this text is childish and it shows that people love this holiday so much that they will twist the Holy Scripture in order to excuse Christmas. The text in Romans 14 does not speak about pagan holidays, but about the Old Testament feasts, which were commanded by the Lord to Israel.

6. Finally, when those whom I have asked admitted that there is no biblical foundation for Christmas, they usually asked in return: "But what is wrong with celebrating the birth of the Lord, because we worship the true Jesus, and it is Him we adore in our carols? Even though the customs are pagan in origin, we changed them so that now Christ is in the center of the holiday." I asked myself the same thing. When I ran out of arguments, this was the last question thrown in the battle, the last line of defense for Christmas. My heart was desperately trying to hold fast to the feast, while upon my mind were working the convincing arguments of Scripture, logic and common sense. And this is the conclusion I reached:

Observing this holiday is wrong and harmful because:

It means to go beyond the Scriptures, to deny their authority, to doubt that God revealed in it everything that is good for me. It means rejecting the Sola Scriptura!

It identifies me with the lost world and not vice versa. The nature of Christianity is such that when it is combined with paganism, the latter will never become Christian, but Christianity will always end up being pagan.

The true worship is "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The false worship is in the flesh and in error. Is the Christmas worship "in truth," when we sing and say and preach that Christ was born on December 25th, when we know He was not? We lie in everything we do or say that associates the birth of Jesus Christ, directly or indirectly, with Christmas. The Christ of the Bible was not born on December 25th! Will God accept our worship if it is not in the truth, but is founded on a pagan lie?

I eventually surrendered to these arguments: they overwhelmed me. More than 10 years have passed since I quit celebrating Christmas. Some call me fanatic and narrow minded. Others doubt that I am a good Christian or a Christian at all because I don't observe Christmas. However, I felt like I was set free. I did not miss any spiritual blessing since I don't believe in Christmas any more. Quite the contrary. Serving God far from paganism, in freedom and within the boundaries of the Scripture is a far better experience than trying to serve Him as men see fit.

Christmas is a pagan holiday. Everything done at Christmas time is rooted in paganism. Paganism is drastically condemned by the Bible and pagan worship is an abomination before the Lord. But men want to keep it, thinking that they can get something good for us and pleasing to God from this pagan holiday. They judge me for not observing Christmas and for testifying against it. But judge for yourself whether it is right before God to obey men rather than God!

[Bro. Raul Enyedi is a pastor in Bocsia, Romania. You can learn more about the Lord's work in Romania and read article by Bro. Raul at: AdunaraBaptistaHarulsuveran.wordpress.com Keep in mind this site is in both English & Romanian.

"Real Peace"

By Bro. Todd Bryant



"There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked."
- Isaiah 48:22

There is but one place to find real peace. There are not many ways, as some wrongly suppose. True peace is found in the person of Jesus Christ and His substitutionary death for our sins. Paul said, *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1). The moment we trust Christ, we are reconciled to God. Prior to that time, we were *"dead in our trespasses and sins"* (Ephesians 2:1) and had *"no hope and without God in the world"* (Ephesians 2:12). In regeneration, God immediately draws us to Christ and gives us this peace which the world does not comprehend. Sin is often pleasurable. That's where the temptation lays. James says, *"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death"* (James 1:14-15). Sin can be

tempting. As believers, we have the Holy Spirit warring against the flesh. The world does not have this. Thank the Lord for His Holy Spirit that leads us and guides us!

It should be pointed out that the sin of the world is temporary. Moses chose *"...to suffer affliction with the people of God"* rather *"than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin"* (Hebrews 11:25). Moses understood that the pleasures of sin are *"passing"*. Can we not see this? Does not the drug addict have to repeatedly return to drugs to get high? Does the alcoholic not have to repeatedly abuse alcohol to find this temporary pleasure? Is this not the case with every human addiction? None of them produce real peace. The peace (or rather pleasure) which is produced by sin is temporary, at best.

As James pointed out, the ultimate end of sin is death. We know that Paul said, *"...the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). Yet, we often forget this truth when temptation is dangled in front of us. So, not only is sin temporary; not only can it not give real peace; but sin ends in death! Oh, how our text verse must ever ring out true – *"There is no peace,"* says the Lord, *"for the wicked"* (Isaiah 48:22). The wicked may enjoy a little temporary pleasure. But, it is not real peace. It is not God-given peace. Child of God, pause today and thank the Lord that His Spirit guides you and wars against your flesh! Thank Him today that He has shown you the Way of real peace! Thank Him that you *"have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1).

December reading list:

Though I had intended to read *"Hitler's Cross"* in November I haven't been able to finish reading it yet, Lord willing we'll get a complete review posted of it before the month is over.

If you're an avid reader with a large library of Historical, Political & Theological themes and would like to write reviews for the Baptist For Liberty blog please contact the editor at:
Worksjoanna@yahoo.com Thank you.