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THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

VOLUME XXIII ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 20, 1999

‘HOW CAN THIS BE SO?’

The Eternal Son of God became the Incarnate Son of God. He was born of a virgin named Mary in a town called Bethlehem. He grew to manhood in a place named Nazareth. He taught for some three and one half years throughout the villages of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Decapolis, Perea, and Gaulanitis. At the Feast of Passover, midway of His thirty-third year, He died, being crucified

*“..this world
does not appear
to be any the
better for the
coming of the
Christ of God.”*

(Continued on page 3)

I'll Say It Again: A Reprint. I DO NOT CARE TO LIVE HERE ANYMORE

The America, which I knew growing up, was a nation of sinners who were confined, albeit grudgingly and as perfunctory as possible, by the Ten Commandments. By no means were the majority of the residents of Connersville, Indiana in the 1940's and the 1950's heaven-bound, God-fearing, Christ-honoring, Spirit-led, Bible-believing citizens. Even so, very few of the some twelve thousand souls who lived there were openly defiers of God. The Ten Commandments were unquestion-

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this and that

EDITORS: Jerald Manley
Gary Roland
Dorothy Gundersen

Recently, I wrote many of the pastors receiving The Baptist Heritage requesting that you consider one of the young couples from our church for potential mission support. Shortly after I sent that letter, the following correspondence arrived from Bro. Burkholder.

Dear Pastor Manley and Heritage Baptist Church,

I first want to thank everyone for your prayers. The Lord used our trip to confirm His calling for us to Tanzania. We are doing great and are very busy as we get ready for traveling.

Natalie and I have made a decision to move our membership from Heritage Baptist Church to Canton Baptist Temple. We have made this decision not because of doctrine or finances, but be-

This paper is sent in the hope that it will encourage and strengthen the hands of those engaged in the battle for truth.

cause we believe this to be the Lord's will. Canton Baptist Temple is the church which I grew up in, was saved at, and also called to preach at. The Lord has been good and has provided housing for us in the Canton area, and Canton Baptist is where we have been attending. Because Canton Baptist will

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this and that

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be our home church, it will then naturally be our sending church for our future work in Tanzania.

Please know that Heritage Baptist Church will always hold a special place in our hearts. We are thankful for the time, training, and finances which the church has given us. We pray that we will be able to keep close contact and fellowship with Heritage Baptist in the future. We look forward to seeing everyone in November when, Lord-willing, we will be able to give a report about our trip and first month of meetings.

In Christ,

Steve and Natalie Burkholder

All future communication with them should be directed in care of Canton Baptist Temple, Canton Ohio.



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I'LL SAY IT AGAIN: A REPRINT

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Who has never broken any promise and it came on the very "selfsame" day that He had promised. Recognize that simple truth--their praying did not bring the deliverance, even though God answered their prayers in giving them deliverance--and realize that God brought circumstances that "led" His people to pray for what He desired to give them, indeed exactly what He had promised to provide.

Make no mistake, the Lord Jesus Christ is coming. The exact time is known only to the Father. The rapture will be on schedule, His scheduled schedule. The "time" for the coming return of Christ to call out His Own is determined by the God of Heaven, not by the conditions on this world. Having stated that, I declare without hesitation that I firmly believe that the Lord is moving the political, social, material and physical circumstances on this earth at this very time to bring His people to their knees, praying for the promised return of Christ. I am not a prophet, and I have no desire to be "sign-pointing," but I believe with all my heart, that the blood-bought people of God are going to be "compelled" to cry, *"Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus."* God will, I believe, cause His children to desire to receive what He desires to give them. The hope, the blessed hope, of the believer is the rapture.

Come today, Lord, I really do not care to live here anymore. ✠

Pastor Manley

Permission to reprint is granted. Acknowledgment appreciated.

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just outside of Jerusalem, and was hastily buried in a nearby garden tomb. On the third day, He arose from that sealed and guarded grave. Forty days later, having been verified to

“..the ‘effect’ of Jesus Christ does not appear to affect the present world.”

be alive from the dead by many infallible proofs before multiplied witnesses, He ascended to the Throne Room of the Heaven of Heavens, where He is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. In Him all the prophecies of the word of God and all the hopes of the people of God find substance and meaning for “in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” He is the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the World.

Even so, after all this—actually, in spite of all this--the world is in far worse shape today than it was before those events occurred.

HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

It is fact. It is a matter of indisputable record. As we approach the official acknowledgment of twenty centuries from the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, this world has far more sinners openly living lives flaunting aggressive, active, involved wickedness than lived in all the generations before He was

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HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

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born. Not only is the actual number of those so involved vastly greater but the collective sinfulness of humanity has intensified. It may sound

*The darkness
has not turned
to glad morning.*

strange to many ears; however, that fact stands indisputable. Therefore, it may be stated, and that accurately, that this world does not appear to be any the better for the coming of the Christ of God.

It is true, that at His birth, angels shouted "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men." It is true that rough shepherds glorified the God of Heaven for having heard that news and for having seen the newly born baby. It is true that kind Simeon and gentle Anna rejoiced to hear of His birth. It is true that wise men journeyed vast distances to kneel before Him and to acknowledge Him worthy of worship. It is true that, nearly thirty years later, the last of the Jewish prophets pointed at Him and declared, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." It is true, that after walking with Him for nearly three years, His closest followers looked Him directly in the face and unhesitatingly called Him "The Christ, the Son of the living God." It is true, that immediately after His death, one to the executioners affirmed, "Truly, this Man was the Son of God." It is true, that in the interven-

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believers do not "love His appearing;" instead, as Demas, they love living in this present world.

Now, consider this line of thought with me.

The Lord God Almighty promised Abraham that his descendants would be in Egypt serving in affliction for four hundred years (Genesis 15:13-14). The God of Israel kept that promise to the "selfsame day" (Exodus 12:40-41). The time when the deliverance was established before the time in Egypt began. The bondage did not commence at the entrance to Egypt, but only after a Pharaoh was on the throne who did not know the debt Egypt owed to the Hebrews and began an oppression, growing in intensity, that lasted a very long time. Apparently, for considerable time, the Hebrews were content as a people to accept this lot in life. However, a time came when the government began to hate the people of God, who began to cry to God for deliverance. It is only then that the Lord Jehovah came down to visit His people and to send Moses to deliver them. *God moved through the political structure to bring such heavy persecution to the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that they began to want what God had promised them--deliverance.* Jehovah had not forgotten His people. He was not ignoring their burdens and cares. He knew their sorrows. He used the temporal political situation to cause His people to desire the very thing He intended for them to have. Please take note that their praying did not bring deliverance--*the deliverance had been promised by the God*

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conditions as I have described; however, in these days approaching 2000, there is no place to emigrate. If I desired to be disobedient to the teachings of Scripture, I might flee to some remote area or find an island in the far seas and there take refuge in isolation. It is, however, impossible to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" from isolation. If I did not know of the biblical alternative, I would just lay down and die. None of these concepts are solutions and, really, none of these are valid escapes. There is, however, a clear Bible answer. I will begin praying in earnest, not simply as a technical formality, for the Lord Jesus Christ to come quickly, because I do not care to live here anymore.

Face it, fellow believer, if the average Baptist church called a special prayer meeting where the single request was to be a pleading for the Lord Jesus to come "tonight," the main auditorium would not be needed to hold the attendees. The janitorial closet most likely could contain the crowd, even with the mop bucket remaining. We believe it. We preach it. We sing about it. We *cautiously* mention it in our prayers. But, we do not "love His appearing." We are like a certain man, that I know, who having received an inheritance, remarked that "it would be just like the Lord to return before I can spend it." Years ago, I can remember hearing preachers say that the Lord would return and wipe out all their debts. Now I hear them moaning that He will likely come just as they get the kids through college and pay off the mortgage. American

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HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

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ing years, multiplied millions of individuals have placed all hope of heaven in Him and have continued their faith even to death.

Notwithstanding these approbations, the 'effect' of Jesus Christ does not appear to affect the present world. The darkness has not turned to glad morning and peace does not reign from pole to pole. Kinder, gentler men and women do not rule the nations. The percentage of humanity that kneels to worship Him obviously grows smaller with the passing of each year. The beastly natures of men and women have not changed since the days of His flesh, nor has humankind improved since His resurrection. Integrity is not the common denominator among the residents of this planet. Uprightness does not mark the conduct of the masses. Piety does not identify the religious, even alleged Christians. Goodness does not flow freely in the marketplace. Civility does not stride the political stage. Fairness does not describe life in general, and certainly not life in particular. Decency does not adorn the arts. Mercy and

Knowledge without wisdom produces intellectual aberration, social decadence, and moral perversions.

truth do not walk the streets of our cities. Righteousness and judgment do not sustain the judicial systems. Instead, honor and majesty lie violated in the street. In short, it

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HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

(Continued from page 5)

would seem that, if the inhabitants of this world have changed since the days of His dwelling among us, they have not changed for the better. It seems a safe assertion that the world is not a better place today in spite of the birth, the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

Certainly, one may direct attention to the western world's educational systems, which were founded with 'original intent' to educate individuals so that they might read the very word of God for themselves. However, out of those same institutions has flowed the intellectual authority for the repudiation of the founders' sincerest intent. Unquestionably, the hallways of academia have not made the world a better place, only a craftier place. The Nazis of Germany and the Cold War Communist leaders (both products of such institutions) vie for the title of the most cultured and educated butchers of all history. Knowledge without wisdom produces intellectual aberration, social decadence, and moral perversions. Education without discipline enables sophisticated, well-reasoned anarchy. Genius, without

moral restraint, results in

the hallways of academia have not made the world a better place, only a craftier place.

Frankenstein. Education may elevate the immediate comfort level of civilization, may exalt the esteem of the individual,

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forced to apologize or be labeled a bigot. America was never a Christian nation in the full and true sense of the term; but old C'ville at least respected Christianity and admired those who lived the Christian life. This America hates biblical Christians I do not care to live here anymore.

Where immorality is permitted to spread preventable disease and go uncondemned, while decent folk cannot afford simple care, something is terribly wrong with the heart of the land.

I do not care to live in an America where the suffering of disease is rampant in the very land that invented good medical care. Where immorality is permitted to spread preventable disease and go uncondemned, while decent folk cannot afford simple care, something is terribly wrong with the heart of the land. I do not care to live in a nation where the "old folks" are warehoused, instead of respected and loved. When

a governor (now former) of Colorado (but notice what position he now holds) may say that the old just need to go ahead and die to get out of the way so the young are not burdened by them and not be "lynched" by the press, I do not care to live here anymore.

I do not care to live anymore in this America as she has become. If I were living in a world such as existed in the 1600 or 1700's, even the 1800's, I might emigrate as did thousands of believers who came to America to escape the very

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truth is an option under oath, I do not care to live here anymore.

I do not care to live in an America where to be a biblical Christian requires an apology. *(There is a pseudo-Christianity, wide spread and more widely respected, that is not biblical, which finds complete unequivocal acceptance.)* This land was founded on religious principles and declared at her inception that God brought her to be and that God had granted to her citizens inalienable rights. Prayer was even requested by old non-Christian Benjamin Franklin. Today the next step for Christians might well be the reservation; if it is not the gas chamber. A teacher may read obscenity in the classroom, but not a Bible. A coach can curse at his team, but cannot pray for them. A preacher may recite a prayer in a civic setting, but he may not close it *"In the Name of Jesus Christ."* Biblical Christianity is blamed for racism, environmental destruction, poverty, violence, spousal and child abuse, and wars. One can claim to have visited Mars with nine-headed green creatures from Venus as companions and be welcomed on national talk shows to spread the news; however, for one to state that God was manifested in the flesh and dwelt among us in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and that He lived sinlessly, died vicariously, and rose triumphantly is to be thought mad. Shirley McLain may say on national television, "I am god" and receive a standing ovation for her strength of courage; but let a preacher say that only those who come to God through Jesus Christ will be in Heaven and he will be

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HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

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Medical progression has only led to moral regression.

and may, at times, eliminate some forms of human misery, but it is incapable of changing the base debased nature of humanity.

One may remind of the medical provisions that have resulted from the preaching of the Gospel. Historically, it is quite true that where the Gospel has been preached in truth the sanitation and dietary changes and cleanliness that naturally results from such preaching have greatly improved the living standard of the people at large. Many hospitals and humanitarian efforts, even the Red Cross, began with a Christian emphasis. Yet, medicine has made the world neither better nor safer. David Suskind was quoted in the 1960's as having said that the appearance of penicillin voided the Ten Commandments. Too many intellectuals, philosophers, and trendsetters came to believe that morality was actually governed by effects. Control the effects, according to them, and immorality could be transformed to morality. The transformation accomplished by these revisionists was so complete that even the word 'morality' itself became improper. Medical progression has only led to moral regression.

Additionally, much, if not most, of the world's

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ably broken, knowingly broken, even regularly broken; but the Ten Commandments were mostly broken in the darkness of the midnight by individuals who did so with a guilty conscience. Brazen contempt for godliness was not the normal, everyday occurrence. Old C'ville residents had thieves among them, but few screen doors were latched. (Screen doors and their latches are

ancient relics now. I wonder if they are still manufactured?)

I do not care to live in an America that defends recognized depravity because of perceived ability.

Rapists lived in old C'ville; however, not for very long; as did murderers, they soon departed the community. Children safely played outside, even after dark. Grandparents walked the streets any time they chose without fear.

Women went as they needed, without armed guards. There was no market for home security devices, other than the pet collie. Few yards were fenced. Any neighbor could, and often did, drop in uninvited--usually by opening the screen door and calling out "Anybody home?" Do not misunderstand, old C'ville was not Paradise. Sin abounded; but sin was neither honored nor respected. I would move "back" to *that town as it was* in the 1940's and 1950's willingly and without hesitation. I would like to live there, even somewhere "kinda like" that place, again.

I have decided that I do not care to live any longer in the America that I find today. The Ten

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nothing, and I mean nothing, remains of the legal foundation of the society. Sure, everybody lies—that is why an oath is required for giving testimony. The oath declares that this is not "just talking," this is speaking the truth, nothing less and nothing more.

There is no "legal lie" until an oath is administered. That oath says, "I am telling the truth and you can trust me." When a person is proven to have broken that inviolable trust and has "legally lied," he/she is adjudicated to be a felon (with all of the penalties attached) and never again are they to be granted trustworthiness. It is dangerous to live in a society where a person's word is not guaranteed to be good by simple speech; however, it is deadly to try to exist where his/her word under oath is allowed to be a deliberate lie. When this occurs, that society has,

there and then, lost the connecting thread of its moral fiber and will unravel since the violation of the inviolable is validated and not adjudicated. When

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Presidential or Congressional "liaison" has an altogether new definition. Political prostitution is no longer a hyperbole. The White House has apparently been treated as if were entered via the alley off Bourbon Street. Old Harry cussed, I know that he did, even while Bess refused to allow liquor in her White House home. The parties there now would leave Harry speechless and might well drive even Bess to drink.

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I do not care to live in an America where the hallways of Washington are used as passages for encounters--*the code word for fornication and adultery*--rather than pathways of entrance. The term "Houses" of government has taken on an entirely new meaning. Presidential or Congressional "liaison" has an altogether new definition. Political prostitution is no longer a hyperbole. The White House has apparently been treated as if were entered via the alley off Bourbon Street. Old Harry cussed, I know that he did, even while Bess refused to allow liquor in her White House home. The parties there now would leave Harry speechless and might well drive even Bess to drink. Individuals holding high positions in the government, both elected and appointed, today would have been considered unfit to have been dog catcher in old C'ville. And, the pundits and commentators warn us that if we seek only men and women of moral character to serve in public office that no one will qualify. If America has come to that, I do not care to live here anymore.

I do not care to live in an America where perjury is 'accepted' as justified, *if the motive is good*. The only thing deemed sacred in a secular society is a statement given under oath. "Inviolable" is the secular word, but, among its synonyms is the word "sacred." When a man or a woman raises the right hand and promises to tell the truth, his/her testimony is to be *"the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."* When that inviolable wall is breached and left unchallenged and unpunished,

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Commandments no longer have any influence, let alone exert a guiding force, in modern America. I have never been on the band wagon for "returning prayer to the schools." Conducted at its very best, school prayer times were not exercises in biblical praying except in the rare classroom. What needs to be returned to the American

public schools are the two essentials to any "good" society; these are respect for authority and respect for others. Somehow, some way, somebody removed the Ten Commandments from the schools. Just as the Pledge of Allegiance has disappeared (taking with it the pictures of George Washington on the front wall, Abraham Lincoln on the back wall and the flag in the front corner) from the daily routine, so have the Ten

Commandments vanished. The latter theft is the far more heinous crime. With, in my view, malice aforethought, the political history and the religious heritage of America are now denied the children of America. That denial has borne a terrible harvest in our nation's moral and political character. Both Senator McCarthy (*Joseph, not Eugene!*) and Chairman Khrushchev were right. Sen. Joe was right when he suggested that there was a *socialist/commie/pinko sympathizer* under every pumpkin in

Sodom and Gomorra would be afraid to visit this place. Potifer's wife would blush to see what has become of womanhood. Jezebel would stare in amazement at her counterparts. Pharaoh and Herod would tremble at what we do to babies.

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the patch (*pity the young do not know of the honor of Whitaker Chambers and the treason of Alger Hiss and the story of the pumpkin patch*) and the Chairman, though removed in disgrace, had it right--the socialists have buried us.

The America being left for our children and grandchildren to inherit is rapidly becoming a place fit only for the pigs to live in. Look around--pick any direction, this land has the order and the appearance of a hog-lot. This America has suffered

The language of the gutter has become the vocabulary of Main Street; but even worse, the morality of the alley is paraded down Broadway.

more than the loss of screen doors. More than homosexuality has come out of closets. God-haters, God-mockers, God-defiers have popular national television and radio "sleaze shows." Ma Perkins's soap opera has been replaced with the slop-bucket.

(*A slop-bucket was the container kept behind the stove into which what now goes into the garbage disposal was placed so that Pop could "slop" the hogs.*) What was then hidden under the counter in the back room is today plastered on the billboards along the highway. What was whispered behind the hand is now shouted on the streets. What brought embarrassed silence now produces raucous applause. Subtle innuendo has been replaced by brazen deed. Sodom and Gomorra would be afraid to visit this place. Potifer's wife would blush to see what has become of womanhood. Jezebel would stare in amazement at her

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Street; but even worse, the morality of the alley is paraded down Broadway. The Grand Marshals of the event are those that the old C'ville would have called disgusting perverts, too filthy to be mentioned in public; *they might have been at the front of the march down Central Avenue, but it would be astride a rail, dripping tar and sporting feathers.* Name the athletics that you know who are men and women of moral integrity and who have honorable character; can you name a handful, five? Name the politicians that you respect; you will not have to use your toes. Name the members of the Entertainment Industry that you would trust with your son or daughter. Name the television preachers that you would like to have as a neighbor--*if you could afford the neighborhood.* Where have the decent and good gone? They are not living

among the heroes of this new America. I do not care to live here anymore.

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HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

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We will gladly live in the palace with David and Solomon but we have no stomach for deserts and mountain dens and caves. We have heard so much of the so-called victorious Christian life that we have forgotten there can be no victory unless there is a battle. We have no stomach for spiritual conflict because we have an appetite only for temporal, carnal terrestrial 'things.'

We long for prosperity, leisure, comfort and, of course, perfect, healthy bodies, but we have lost the prospect of the eternal. Our affection is firmly set upon things below and not on those things which are above. We pray that the prayer of John might not be answered for us: "Beloved I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as they soul prospereth."

The message is not popular, but it is true. The Great God of Heaven has promised no one that he/she will be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. Jesus Christ was not nailed to that old rugged cross so that we could have air conditioned, seventy-two inch surround sound entertainment, Epicurean meals and lounging chairs. This world is not intended to be our final home, we are just passing through. We are pilgrims and strangers sojourning in a strange and doomed world. This world is destined to face the fullness of the wrath of God.

He bled and died to save us, thereby separating us from the destiny of this world.

Pastor Manley

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I'LL SAY IT AGAIN: A REPRINT

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*If I did not know of
the biblical
alternative, I would
just lay down and die.*

counterparts. Pharaoh and Herod would tremble at what we do to babies. No, I do not care to live any longer in the America that now is. I do not wish to turn the clock back (*I resent having to do that once a year as it is*) for I know that what once was will never be; but how I grieve for what now is and I do not want to live here anymore.

I do not care to live in an America where the murder of babies is a growth industry. Hitler is rightly described as a maniacal monster for his responsibility for the deaths of fifteen million "unwanted" souls. What responsibility lies upon the legal profession, the judicial officers, the voices of support, the weak-spined politicians and the professional medical men and women involved for the murders in medical facilities (*and increase that number by a half dozen or more babies since you started reading this article--an estimated 4000 daily, three every minute*) in this blood-drenched America in which we live? It would require a Hitler and a Stalin combined to equal the bloodbath conducted by this nation. I do not care to live here anymore.

I do not care to live in an America where the perverted is extolled and the proper is ridiculed. The more weird, the more queer, the more abnormal, the more erratic that the conduct is, the more applauded it is. Things unspoken in the old C'ville are open topics in the new America. My Dad

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I'LL SAY IT AGAIN: A REPRINT

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operated a service station and I heard wicked, bold men say rough, raw things in old C'ville. In new America, women speak in tones more vulgar, with words more obscene and purposes more blasphemous than the vilest rake in old C'ville. I have hear words today from the mouths of pre-schoolers that the most debauched back then would not have said in mixed company even when "dead drunk." Wickedness is considered a virtue and righteousness is termed a vice. I do not care to live here anymore.

I do not care to live in an America where Dr. Jack Kevorkian can practice medicine. No person of Christian character wants to sustain life only so there might be a breathing lung and a beating heart. Such a concept is that of a mad Frankenstein. But, there comes a time when mechanical means should be unplugged. The time comes when enough is enough. I recommend that every believer have a living will. Having said that, I also affirm that such a decision varies from situation to situation. However, the "doctor" from Michigan does not unplug machines nor does he withdraw food. The doctor kills people whom he says want to die. They would commit suicide, says he, only they lack the means. What they lack, in some cases, is the will power and in others, a sane mind. Why he considers only the physically ill is a mystery to me. He could set up practice in Pensacola and "help" the two hundred plus who attempt suicide for various social and emotional reasons locally every year. How can the same Americans who cry when a barbaric murderer

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HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

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*"..we stop before
we finish the
passage. We do
not wish to read
about the
'others'.."*

satisfied. We delight in reading the great chapter eleven of Hebrews where all the unbelievable victories are recorded—

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained

promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again:

except we stop before we finish the passage. We do not wish to read about the 'others' who were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. (33-38).

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HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

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had priorities in right order, she did.

However, she left empty.

Nearby stood the One Who took note of her action. . He could have sent the disciples to minister to her need, but He did not. He could have filled her purse with gold, but He did not. He could have sent her out with a basket full of provisions, pressed down and running over, but He did not. He, Who owns the cattle upon every hill and the wealth of every mine, let her leave poorer than when she came in. He permitted her to go out empty. She left poorer than she came in. Our romantic nature wants to believe that some wondrous benefactor was designated to care for her; however, the truth is that she may have spent the night shivering in the darkness and might well have starved to death the next day. There is no further mention of her in Scripture. We do not know what became of her—except that He Who sees the sparrow fall did not overlook her. If not in this life, then in the life to come, her real needs will be met. That is what we need to see. Our needs, as we might see them to be, are not promised to be met in this world.

We modern, frail saints delight in reading of the faith warriors of the past. We relish hearing that prosperity is ours for the taking, that God wants us to be healthy, wealthy, and

*He permitted her
to go out empty.
She left poorer
than she came
in.*

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is executed clap when Jack executes his victim? I do not care to live here anymore.

I do not care to live in an America where Dennis Rodman can be a hero.

He is not eccentric. His coach, Phil Jackson, is eccentric (as well as a dangerous theologian). Rodman is the antithesis of decency, morality and integrity. "Oh, but he knows how to play basketball." I do not care to live in an America which defends recognized depravity because of perceived ability. America has lost all sense when it comes to choosing heroes. Michael Jackson, the alleged singer, Madonna, the alleged female, Charles Carlin, the alleged comedian--what a pathetic list I could compile, but you must already get the point. The vulgar, vile and vain, those without a trace of virtue are revered as they revile virtue and extol vice.

The more profane and obscene a person is the higher his/her popularity seems to be. Nobody wants to wear a white hat in this new America. The language of the gutter has become the vocabulary of Main

I am not a prophet, and I have no desire to be "sign-pointing," but I believe with all my heart, that the blood-bought people of God are going to be "compelled" to cry, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." God will, I believe, cause His children to desire to receive what He desires to give them.

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HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

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Too many intellectuals, philosophers, and trend-setters came to believe that morality was actually governed by effects.

acknowledged greatest literature, most marvelous art, grandest architecture, noblest laws and most sacrificial deeds have risen from the ranks of Christianity. While I do not deny all of these facts, I steadfastly affirm that quite apparently neither one nor all of

these effects have affected an improvement on this world. That statement may sound strange to read. It may not be what one would like to read. It is, however, the truth. From every observation, the world seems much worse today than it was before the Lord Jesus was manifested in the flesh.

One can speak of the atrocities of the ancients. The Assyrians were ruthless, the Egyptians cruel, the Babylonians ferocious, the Greeks harsh, and the Romans merciless; but one cannot find in the annals of the ancients the equal of the Nazis or the Communists in the brutality used or the quantity who were tortured and butchered. Where the pre-Christian world murdered multitudes in hand-to-hand combat, the modern world slaughters by the tens of thousands with one blow. If the ancients burned their hundreds, the moderns have torched their millions. Only modern humanity could invent

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food item to buy was a sparrow. Two sparrows sold for a farthing (Matthew 10:29), and she lacked the necessary three additional mites to buy a single sparrow. A mite was roughly one hundredth of a day's wage. This was a poor woman. She was also a widow—meaning that she was dependent upon others to provide for her. Further, we are specifically told that she “cast in all her living.” When she gave her two mites, her purse was empty. She was financially insolvent. She was flat broke.

It is important to take note that the widow came into the court of the Temple poor. It is more important to notice that she left poorer. She came in with nearly nothing and left with absolutely nothing. When she arrived that morning her prospects were dim, when she left, they were dismal. When she walked away from the Temple, she went away with no ‘living’ and no prospects of finding any.

When she arrived that morning her prospects were dim, when she left, they were dismal.

Pay close attention to the fact that she did not give in order to get. She was not seed sowing, expecting to receive a hundredfold in return. She gave a free-will offering to the maintenance of the Temple and she left. It was more important to her that the Temple is kept than that she be fed. If ever a woman

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all they which have cast into the treasury: For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast

Some came with much to give a little, but this widow came with little, very little, to give much.

in all that she had, *even* all her living.

Luke 21:1-4

And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

On this day, after a lengthy time of teaching, the Lord Jesus Christ remained in the area of the Temple sitting near the treasury. From His vantage, He easily observed those who came to deposit their freewill offerings in one of the thirteen receptacles placed in the outer court of the Temple. As individuals dropped their gifts in these trumpet shaped instruments, the amount given was announced by a Levite standing near for that very purpose. Some came with much to give a little, but this widow came with little, very little, to give much. To place the amount she brought in perspective, the cheapest

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places such as the "killing fields," Treblinka, Auschwitz, Bataan, Singapore, Dresden, and Nagasaki. The ancients may not have been 'angels,' but the moderns seem to be well described as 'devils.' If human nature has transformed since the coming of Christ, it has been a transmogrification. It is, if anything, more brutal, more inhuman, and more grotesque than it was.

For long generations, sincere Christians have sung of a story to tell to the nations that shall turn their hearts to the right, that shall lift their hearts to the Lord and shatter the spear and sword, and that was given so that all of the world's people might come to the Truth of God--for the darkness shall turn to dawning and the dawning to noon day bright and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth. Well, if that were the purpose of the birth, the life, the death and the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, it certainly seems to have failed. That result has unquestionably not been accomplished. The darkness has not turned to light; it has become midnight. The dawning has more the appearance of a

From every observation, the world seems much worse today than it was before the Lord Jesus was manifested in the flesh.

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setting sun. There is no noon-day bright, not even 'moon bright.' Christianity has not ushered in the kingdom of Christ. When He came the world rejected and crucified Him, and the world is more anti-Christ today than it was then.

In that light, the question does seem proper. How can this be so?

To provide a sound scriptural answer one must begin by affirming a negative. Because of the sorry level of preaching and the dismal level of Bible study on the part of Christians, the answer is hard for some to accept. The Lord Jesus Christ did not enter this world to make it a better place in which to live. While that statement may conflict with much of what was presented in centuries past and is being propagated in the present era as truth, it is as much a Bible fact as is the virgin birth, the vicarious atonement, and the bodily resurrection. Jesus Christ came neither to improve the world nor to make it a safer, better home for His followers. The Lord Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin and laid in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, to solve the problems of the world. He Who was rich did not become poor

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*If the ancients
burned their
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HOW CAN THIS BE SO?

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so that we could become rich in worldly possessions. He did not endure the agony of Gethsemane and the horrors of Calvary so that we might find ourselves and elevate our self-esteem. He neither lived a sinless life nor was He nailed to a rugged Roman cross, so that He might "meet my needs or yours." He did not endure the spittle and the shame, the mockery and the beatings, the slander and the lies, so that we might better find our way in this world. He did not die so you and I could live a life of ease this side of Jordan. He did not shed his blood so that we might set our affection on this present, evil world. He did not rise from the dead so that we might be at ease in this sin cursed world.

There is a very simple story, related twice, in the New Testament that illustrates this so very well.

Mark 12:41-44

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two

*mites, which make a far-
thing. And he called
unto him his disciples,
and saith unto them,
Verily I say unto you,
That this poor widow
hath cast more in, than*

*Jesus Christ came
neither to improve
the world nor to
make it a safer, bet-
ter home for His fol-
lowers.*

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