



The Voice of Truth

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What Manner Of Persons? (Part 2)

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The third chapter of second Peter is devoted to discussion of the Lord's second coming (**2 Peter 3:9-10**). When the Lord comes, the earth and the works therein shall be burned up (**2 Peter 3:11**). In view of His return, "WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS SHOULD WE BE?" We looked at one characteristic describing what manner of persons we should be: **HOLY**. Let us look at another characteristic.

God's people must be "**GODLY**"! "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness," **2 Peter 3:11**. The verb in the phrase "ought ye to be" denotes continuous being, and might properly be translated, "ought ye to be found"; found constantly engaging in all holy living and godliness. The people of Noah's day were ungodly, "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly," **2 Peter 2:5**. Peter tells us what happens to the ungodly, "reserved unto fire," **2 Peter 3:7**. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were populated by ungodly people and were destroyed, "making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly," **2 Peter 2:6**.

Godliness must be based on knowledge, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue," **2 Peter 1:3**. Godliness is a respect, a reverence for God that prompts one to do what God says (**Hebrews 12:28**). Godliness is an attitude which prompts one to place the emphasis in life on the spiritual instead of the material (**1 Timothy 6:6-8; Colossians 3:1-3; Matthew 6:33**). We are to exercise ourselves unto godliness. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," (**1 Timothy 4:7-8**). We must pursue godliness (**1 Timothy 6:11**). Those who dedicate themselves to the way of godliness will be persecuted (**2 Timothy 3:12**). How sad it is that some only maintain an outward form and deny the inner power of godliness (**2 Timothy 3:5**).

Let us ever grow in the knowledge of truth which is according to godliness (**2 Peter 3:18; Titus 1:1**).

Creation: Six Days or Six Million Years?

By Jonathan L. Perz

In **Genesis 1**, we learn that God created the world and its inhabitants in six days. There can be no basis for faith in God unless this simple fact is believed and affirmed! Nevertheless, some professing a faith in Christ simply will not accept this fact. For the atheist, who denies much of scripture based on the theorems and intelligence of science, this is understandable. But for one professing a faith in Jesus Christ, this is deplorable.

Indeed, as remarkable as it may seem, there are those who profess a faith in Christ, but say that it took God millions of years to create the earth as we know it today! This theory is based upon the idea that each "day" in the creation account represents millions of years. There are other theories as well, however all are set forth in an effort to unite the creation

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account—as set forth in the Bible—with the manifold theories and hypotheses of science. Therefore, we have before us the question: Does a “day” in **Genesis 1** represent a literal 24-hour day as we know it, or is it only a figurative day that could have taken millions of years?

To answer this question, our attention will be primarily upon the text of **Genesis 1-2**. Creation science has set forth a great deal of proof, or more to the point, reproof of the errors of theistic evolution, the gap theory, and so on. Yet, I believe the text itself is its own best defense against anyone who would seek to corrupt, change or discount it.

If the “day” of **Genesis 1** is not a literal 24-hour day, then why did God describe the evening and morning as the first day (**Genesis 1:5**)? This same definition for a day is used consistently throughout the account (**Genesis 1:8, 13, 19, 23, 31**). If this describes a span of millions of years, or even thousands of years (as some have set forth based on **2 Pet. 3:8**), then why does the account describe an “evening” and a “morning” as one day?

If the “day” of **Genesis 1** is not a literal 24-hour day, then how old would you say Adam and Eve were on the seventh day? If one says millions of years elapsed in a figurative day, then one says Adam and Eve were millions of years old. Nevertheless, Moses tells us Adam lived to be 930 years old before he died (**Genesis 5:5**). Thus, we have decisively eliminated the “day” of Genesis 1 from being a 1000 year long day (cf. **2 Peter 3:8**). Did not Adam have at least three children by the age of 130 (**Genesis 5:3**). If the “day” of Adam’s creation took millions of years, then the rest of Moses’ account is in error. I believe the Bible to be accurate and the day to be a literal 24-hour day. What about you?

Finally, if the “day” of **Genesis 1** is not a literal 24-hour day, then how long do you suppose that seventh day was in which God rested from His work? Was it 1000 years long? Was it one million years long? Was it millions of years long? We need to be careful how we answer this question, because there are consequences for our answer that will affect our understanding of the rest of scripture. How long was the Sabbath (Seventh) Day that the Israelites were commanded to keep under the Law of Moses (cf. **Exodus 16:23** ff, particularly **verse 26**)?

You see, the fact of the matter is this, it is not whether or not God could create the earth in six 24-hour periods (“days”) – He did! It is a matter of whether or not you are willing to believe this simple fact. Therefore, to those who would mock and deny, question not the integrity of the Bible—question the integrity of your heart!

Indeed, the problem is not one of words; it is a matter of faith (**Hebrews 11:3,6**)! Where does your faith rest: in the theories of men or the incorruptible word of God?

“For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day” (**Exodus 20:11**).

Lead Me To Some Soul Today

By Larry Rouse

One of the first thoughts bursting from the heart of a new Christian is how he might personally reach others for the Lord. Words cannot fully express the joy of salvation and the impact that joy has in creating a crystal clear sight of the real condition of this world. Just as our Lord did 2,000 years ago, anyone today can see this world as lost, dying and desperately in need of the gospel of Jesus Christ. “Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.” (**John 4:34-36**)

One of my favorite songs is “Lead Me To Some Soul Today.” This song reflects the thoughts of every Christian who sees these white fields. “Lead me to some soul today; O

teach me, Lord, just what to say; Friends of mine are lost in sin, And cannot find their way. Few there are who seem to care, And few there are who pray; Melt my heart and fill my life; Give me one soul today." How are you doing in this great work of harvest? Is your sight clear to see what this careless world cannot?

When I first became a Christian, I was blessed to be associated with a young man of great faith. Immediately after my baptism I was placed in a class he was teaching on evangelism. That class met three times each week and every student was expected to memorize 10 passages of scripture before the next week. We practiced together how to teach the lost. Within two weeks I was off and running. That semester a good friend obeyed the gospel. Within a few months my brother took the great step of putting the Lord on in baptism. These first steps led me to a life of talking with others with the goal of getting hearts opened around the word of God.

How can we accomplish having more Christians involved in this great work today? The answer is found in the ministry of Christ and that answer may disturb you.

Jesus had just encountered a man who was possessed by such a great number of demons that when Jesus asked the name of the demon they replied: "My name is Legion; for we are many" (**Mark 5:9**). The people of that area knew this man as one who "had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones" (**Mark 5:3-5**). Jesus has mercy on this man and casts out the demons that afterward went into a nearby herd of swine who immediately ran into the water and drowned.

The people of this area, having heard these things, immediately went to Jesus and begged Him to leave. They did this because they did not know Jesus and now they feared Him (**Mark 5:17**). How was Jesus ever going to reach this community?

The formerly demon-possessed man, was now "in his right mind" and very thankful to our Lord. This man seemed to have no future here, having a reputation that surely would keep him from having any significant relationship. He naturally began to beg that Jesus would let him into the same boat that He was departing on. Jesus had a plan for this man, a plan that you or I would have thought ridiculous and unworkable. Jesus instructed him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you. (**Mark 5:19**)" Did this man not need further instruction? How would he be effective without special classes on speaking, overcoming objections and the many other possible challenges that such a work might bring? How could a man with this little ability and with such a bad reputation accomplish anything?

Who would hear this man? "And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled (**Mark 5:20**)." Did these men need to hear more than this new convert could give? They did, and when Jesus returned He had an audience that was ready to hear Him. "So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him (**Luke 8:40**)."

There are some disturbing conclusions for us to draw from this account. First, the driving force behind one who is effective in evangelism is the realization of "what great things the Lord has done for you." A genuine understanding of that will melt the heart, put our bodies in motion and give us a message that will be effective. When these things are lacking in a Christian, you can rest assured that his heart is not filled with the joy and love of what Christ has done for him. One of the hard lessons I have learned over the years is that most of those who have their names on the church roles have become cold and stale. They are like the tongue-tied preacher who, while trying to quote **Matthew 20:16**, which reads "many are

called, but few chosen," instead said "many are cold, but few frozen." Sadly, I have discovered that there is no point in even mentioning evangelism to these people. They need to be converted themselves!

How about you? Do you have a clear view of what the Lord has done for you? It is time to get to work. By the way, remember to pray for more laborers!

MISSION OF THE CHURCH

By David J. Riggs

The primary mission of the church is to declare the divine message which will save the souls of men. Paul called the church: "the pillar and ground of the truth" (**1 Tim. 3:15**). It is the pillar and ground of the truth because it teaches and upholds the truth; it supports that which makes men free (**John 8:32**). It teaches and upholds the gospel—the power of God to salvation (**Rom. 1:16**).

Those who made up the primitive church were busily engaged in this great mission. "At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles...Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." (**Acts 8:1,4**). "For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything." (**1 Thess. 1:8**). This should be the primary mission for the church today - "Sound forth the Word of the Lord." In so doing, souls will be saved. There is no greater service which can be offered to mankind.

The church of the Lord is not a social club. Churches of today use all kinds of gimmicks and man made inventions in order to win and hold members. Instead of offering the Word of God only, as did the early Christians, they offer food, recreation or entertainment. This reduces the church to nothing but a social club or an entertainment society. The Bible says, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (**Rom. 14:17**). "If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home..." (**1 Cor. 11:34**). The apostles and early Christians never tried to win and hold members by offering food or entertainment. They simply offered "the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." (**James 1:21**).

The church of the Lord is not a social reform society. When the gospel is taught, society is reformed only as a by-product. When the Word of God changes the hearts of men, they reform their own society. They make their own community a better place to live. The primary concern, therefore, "sound forth the Word of the Lord." It will get the job done. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (**Heb. 4:12**). "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (**Isa 55:11**)

Many churches today, however, are going at this in reverse order. One well illustrated it by saying, "Churches today are more concerned about healing the sores of Lazarus than about changing the heart of the rich man!" Also, "Jesus didn't come to get the people out of the slums, but the slums out of the people!" If we reform and change society only, we haven't yet accomplished anything toward the saving of people's souls. However, if we preach the soul-saving message (the gospel of Christ), we not only reform society, but we prepare individuals to meet God in judgment.

Again, the mission of the church is to declare the divine message, and there is no greater service that can be rendered.