



The Voice of Truth



January 3, 2010

The Bible Is the Blueprint for Human Conduct

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The word of God, the scriptures, offers to mankind principles to help them make decisions in all areas of human conduct. For many years, atheistic, pagan philosophers have assumed the duty to teach what they feel is right for human conduct. "...every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (**Judges 21:25**). These men have failed every time because they have failed to consider what God has said in His words on a given conduct pattern. "...they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" (**Jeremiah 8:9**). "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death" (**Proverbs 14:12**). The Bible offers a clear voice, and throws light on how we are to live.

Listen carefully: there can be no morality without God! Why? Because God is the absolute standard of good (**Matthew 19:17; 1 John 1:5; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalms 147:17; Isaiah 45:19; Hosea 9:11; Habakkuk 1:13**). We are told that the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared unto all men, "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (**Titus 2:11-12**). Peter added: "According as his divine power hath given 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**). Man cannot know right and wrong by reasoning on his own: "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (**Jeremiah 10:23**). "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (**Isaiah 55:8-9**).

The world about us makes little effort to follow the blueprint of the word of God. People have rejected God's standard. We are living in a time when little attention is given to the word of God and much attention is given to doing what pleases the desire of men. Many have no regard for the moral teachings of the Bible. There is simply too much of "Hell" in the world today. The sinful world has always condoned evil practices, such as dancing, immodest dress, profanity, gambling, fornication, and the use of alcohol. We must return to the teaching of God's standard found in His word (**Galatians 5:19-21**). It must be taught what God has said about the sins of adultery, homosexuality, fornication, immodesty, drinking and any form of loose living. People believe they have the right to act as they wish. Wrong! What we do in word or deed we are to do all in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ (**Colossians 3:17**). "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (**1 Peter 1:16**).

The word of God provides us with righteousness (**Proverbs 14:34; Psalms 33:12**). "Every word of God is pure" (**Proverbs 30:5**). There is a standard of behavior that God expects men to follow, and it's in His word, the blueprint of human conduct. All men everywhere need to return to the wholesome purity Jesus stressed in **Matthew 5:8**. God's word is man's light, lamp and path (**Psalms 119:105**); it is man's hope against sin (**Psalms 119:11**); it sanctifies (**John 17:17**); it cleanses (**Ephesians 5:26**); it gives us understanding (**Psalms 119:130**); it has the power to produce godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**); to produce a new life (**James 1:18; Romans 6:17-18**).

Notice what Ezekiel told the children of Israel, "And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane,

and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (**Ezekiel 44:23**). God's word does that for us today; it is our blueprint for human conduct. The Bible moral code is wonderfully practical; every moral rule that God has given is for our good. The gospel changes the heart or thinking; the mind is renewed (**Romans 12:1-2**).

Man is incapable of directing his steps in life. The Israelites had attempted to direct their lives; they had forsaken God's way: the result is captivity! The scriptures must be the foundation of any moral restoration. The Bible alone is our answer! It is past high time that God's morality found its way back into the lives of men and women. ♦

"Time is Running Out ..." By Jarrod Jacobs

Today begins a week that some might have wondered would ever arrive. This week, Lord willing, is the last week of the year 2009 A.D. Some people we know did not make it to see this first day of the week in the last week of 2009, but those reading this paper did. Can we remember back to January 1? Can we remember the promises and intentions we had for this year? What has been the result? Have we realized that whatever positive changes we have made has come as a result of doing more than "intending," but from actually being active in making the change? Has 2009 been the year that **Proverbs 27:1** became real to us? Did we realize that things don't just happen to "the other guy"? Have we learned this year that we are the "other guy"?

Whatever plans we had for 2009 will either be accomplished in the next few days or they will never happen. Like water down the drain, or "sands through the hourglass", so also our time in this year is running out! What can the living bear in mind when thinking about this week?

The Brevity Of Life

Time is traveling way too quickly for me, even at my young age! Truer words were

never said than the words recorded by such Bible heroes as James, Moses, and Job, who wrote by inspiration that our days are "... even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (**Jas. 4:14**). Moses said, "*We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away*" (**Ps. 90:9-10**). On one occasion, Job proclaimed, "*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not*" (**Job 14:1-2**).

Did you notice the divinely-inspired description of our life? It is "a vapor," "a tale," "soon cut off", "few days", "like a flower" and like "a shadow"! Seeing we have these and many other similar Bible statements declaring what we know to be true, why is it that men often act like they will live forever? Solomon declared that "*the living know they shall die*" (**Ecc. 9:5**). Times like this week of the year remind us of the brevity of life and how our lives are fast passing away! What have you done to prepare for eternity, friend? Don't squander what time you have left! Don't leave this world with the lament of the people in Jeremiah's day who said, "*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved*" (**Jer. 8:20**). The apostle John also helps us in this study with the statement: "*The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever*" (**I Jn. 2:17**). This brings us to the next thought when reflecting on the last week of this year.

Our Soul Is Our Most Important Possession

Once we accept the truth that life is fleeting, then we will begin to assess just what it is in our lives that has value. What is the most important possession we have? It is nothing material. It is our soul (**Matt. 16:26**)! The apostle Paul wrote to the brethren in Corinth, reminding them of what is most important. He put it this way: "... *though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is*

renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:16). Nothing else can be described in that way. With this life passing away (I Jn. 2:17), what are we doing to prepare our souls for eternity? Time is running out, not only for 2009, but for this world and for our own lives! Moses once requested that God "teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). Let us do that, ourselves. The way we apply our hearts to wisdom is by making sure our souls are prepared for the future. How can we be prepared? This leads us to the final point

Don't Waste Any More Time

In truth, we are not guaranteed to see the end of 2009 or 2010 (Jas. 4:14a; Lk. 12:20). So, what can we do? The way we can best use what time is left of our lives is by becoming a Christian and living for the Lord.

Become a Christian by believing in Christ, repenting of sins, confessing Him and being baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:35-38; etc.). Then, begin a new life in Christ (II Cor. 5:17), and live faithfully for Him for the rest of your days (I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10)!

In so doing, you can redeem the time (Eph. 5:16), and prepare for when we will not worry about clocks and calendars, because we will be in eternity with our Father! 2009 is almost gone, don't wait any longer! (Heb. 3:15; II Cor. 6:2). *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com* *

Who's Judging Whom? By Gordon Skinner

Satan has had a field day among believers when he introduced among them the "It's wrong to make judgments about another individual or group" concept. Satan has so deceived some that they seem to have the idea that **Matthew 7:1** is their "Get out of hell free" card. They fail to look at the context. For example, how would I know if I have a beam in my own eye without judging? How would I know who is bearing good fruit and who is bearing bad fruit without making a judgment (v. 15-20)? How would I know who is doing the will of the Lord or not with-

out making a judgment (v. 21-23)? How would I know whose house is built upon a rock and whose is built upon the sand unless I make a judgment (v. 24-27)? How can YOU make a decision whether you agree or disagree with this article unless YOU make a judgment? It is hard to suppress a laugh when I hear some person go on and on judging about how some individual or church is judging. They are oblivious to their own hypocrisy. Their attitude indicates they believe it's acceptable for them to make judgment about whatever issue they're discussing but wrong for somebody else to disagree, and God forbid VOCALIZING that disagreement and even worse to point someone to the Bible regarding that issue!

Many believers have been taught it's wrong to "judge" by preachers in denominations who have good reason to not want to hear disagreement or be judged. Their adoption of the doctrines and commandments of men (**Matt. 15:9**), written in their man-made creeds, they realize, places them in a very condemned position in light of God's word. Sadly, a number of churches of Christ, rather than continuing a call to return to the Bible, have also adopted such human reasoning, to their shame. Of course this is why some of the New Testament epistles were written. Some of the early Christians weren't content with the gospel or doctrine of Christ and began to judge it was OK to introduce their own judgments of what God should accept. These letters were written, in part, to correct this misconception and to sound the warning bell that unless they repented, they would be lost. Jesus himself sounded this warning to the seven churches of Asia in **Revelation 2** and **3**. **II Thessalonians 1:6-9** and **II John 9** make it clear that those who walk not according to the gospel or doctrine of Christ are lost.

The Bible makes a distinction between personal judgments, i.e. opinion, and the doctrine of Christ, (**Rom. 14**). However, even opinions must be made in good conscience before God (**Rom. 14:22-23**).

A missing element, and thus a major

problem for the “Judge not” crowd is that if one simply repeats what God said in His word, God is making the judgment, not man. We well understand that one must rightly divide the word of truth and keep things in their proper context or error is promoted, not truth (**II Tim. 2:15; II Pet. 3:15-16**). Jesus, the Judge of mankind, (**Jn. 5:19-22, 12:46-50**), made it clear His word, i.e. the Bible, would judge mankind. He also made it clear that what His apostles’ taught was inspired and had His approval and authority behind it (**Matt. 28:18-20; Jn. 14:26, 15:26, 16:13**). Paul, an apostle born out of due time (**I Cor. 15:1-11**), wrote a major portion of the New Testament and was approved of God and the other apostles (**Gal. 1-2; II Pet. 3:15-16**). Thus the apostles’ doctrine is just as binding as the words Jesus spoke while upon earth. To reject them is to reject Him!

A local issue that garners many letters to the editor of the local paper is that of homosexuality. A number of believers have written their judgment of approval for same sex marriage among those practicing this abomination (**Lev. 18:22-30**). Indeed, God hasn’t changed His mind about this sin (or any other, **Rom.1:26-32**).

All the human reasoning and judgment in the world will not change what God has decreed regarding this sin. Many, unwilling to take “no” for an answer, point out what Jesus *didn’t* say while ignoring what He *did* say.

Jesus in addressing the issue of marriage and divorce to the Pharisee’s took them back to the creation of man and woman and God’s intention (**Matt. 19:4-6**). Nowhere in the Scriptures has God ever joined male and male or female and female in a marriage bond. He has spoken plainly His condemnation of that abomination and will bestow the wages of the impenitent at judgment (**Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:8**). Silence isn’t license (**Heb. 7:14; Matt. 7:21-23**) and many will learn this great lesson too late. The fact Jesus didn’t specifically state “Man shall not marry man and woman shall not marry woman,” doesn’t mean the evidence that He disapproves of same sex marriages is not evident in God’s word. Other, equally binding, passages reveal His disapproval and condemnation. Many other false doctrines of men could be addressed in the same manner.

What many are actually saying when they say “Judge not,” is, “Let me have my say about the matter but if you disagree with me, keep your mouth shut!” These are the ones who have much to fear (**Jn. 3:19-21**).

I don’t mind you disagreeing with this article. You will have made a judgment as you read it. I just hope you will point out any error for my spiritual benefit and judge righteous judgment (**Jn. 7:24**). For we all have a judgment day coming (**Heb. 9:27**).

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3**

Believe - **Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24**

Repent - **Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30**

Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21**

Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27**

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17**

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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