

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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JEHOIAKIM'S KIN

PART TWO
by Ted J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION

Last month's article discussed the situation leading up to the contempt that king Jehoiakim of Judah showed toward God's word, when he cut up and burned the prophecies of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:1-32). We closed that article noting that there are those in the New Testament times and in our present day who are "Jehoiakim's kin," related to him, in that they too attempt to destroy God's word, even though they may not literally cut it up and throw it in the fire as Jehoiakim did.

Our concern in this article is not to discuss those who do not even consider any part of the Bible as God's word. Rather, we will look at some who claim to be believers in God, who, for one reason or another, reject part of God's word as being genuine and authoritative.

JEHOIAKIM'S NEW TESTAMENT KIN

One of the lessons Jesus taught early in His ministry is that so-called "religious" people sometimes follow their own direction rather than God's (Matthew 7:13-14). Additionally, there are false teachers who, setting aside God's word, teach their own doctrines instead of His (Matthew 7:15-20). Also, not everyone who professes to believe in God actually hears and follows God's will, even though supposedly they do works in the Lord's name (cf. Matthew 7:21-23).

One such group was the Pharisees, whom Jesus said worshipped God in vain, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7). In their adding to God's word, Christ condemned them for "laying aside the

commandment of God," and further said, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:8-9). Jesus went on to say that adding their traditions to God's revelation was equal to "making the word of God of none effect" (Mark 7:13). These same rebukes and condemnations are applicable to those today who add to God's word, putting the word of men over the word of God!

Another group of Jehoiakim's clan was called the Sadducees. These Jews were more likely to take away from God's word, than to add to it, for they denied some of the essential teachings from God's word. Regarding the resurrection of the dead, the Sadducees "say that there is no resurrection" (Matthew 22:23-33). When they tried to trap Jesus on this matter, He frankly told them, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). Christ then told them of some passages that necessarily implied (taught) a resurrection of the dead, quoting Exodus 3:6, 16. The Sadducees would have just as soon cut out and burned those parts of God's word, like Jehoiakim of old, but God's word would still stand as a testimony against them in every other copy of the Law of Moses (cf. Jeremiah 36:32). Luke, the writer of Acts, states that the Sadducees also denied the existence of angels and spirits, which is simply a further taking away of God's revelation to mankind. The Sadducees had no right to disregard the plain teachings of God's word in these areas (Genesis 3:24; Exodus 3:2; 14:19; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zechariah 12:1).

I have heard of some who have cut out of their Bibles every passage which teaches that baptism is essential to salvation, but God's word on that topic cannot be destroyed (cf. Mark 16:16; Acts

2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:1-7; Galatians 3:26-27; 1 Peter 3:20-21; and others). Those passages are still in my Bible, and my guess is that they are still in yours, unless you are part of Jehoiakim's kin. Please note, however, that even if those passages are still in your Bible, unless you obey them you are treating them like Jehoiakim would - as though they do not exist.

No one has the right to **add to** God's word nor to **take away** from it. Read Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Jeremiah 26:2; Revelation 22:18-19. To add to or take away from God's word is destructive, for it either puts man in an obligation to do more than God requires or requires less of man than God has commanded. The apostle Paul said that in his preaching and teaching he "kept back nothing that was profitable unto you," boldly declaring, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all the counsel of God**" (Acts 20:20, 27). Jehoiakim's kin might not do so, but faithful Christians will believe and obey all of God's word and teach "**the same**" unto all others (2 Timothy 2:2).

CREEDBOOKS BY JEHOIAKIM'S KIN

Religious creedbooks, manuals, disciplines and catechisms are supposed to be authoritative representations of what the various denominations believe and practice. However, as an authoritative source they fail to bind anything they teach, for they are not inspired of God and therefore are useless endeavors, creating much of the division that exists in the religious world today. If a creedbook contains more than the word of God, it contains too much; if it contains less than the word of God, it contains too little; if it contains exactly what the Bible does, then it is not needed, since we already have the Bible. In

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general, creedbooks are exercises in adding to or taking away from God's word. Jehoiakim would be proud of the men and groups of men who have produced these books, for they remove much that people find objectionable in God's word or add the doctrines and commandments men find pleasing, that God did not see fit to include in the revelation of His word. Consider two examples out of many.

In "The Book of Discipline" of the United Methodist Church, there is the statement, "Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort" (Article IX. - Of the Justification of Man). The truth is that no doctrine can be "most wholesome, and very full of comfort," unless it is taught in Scripture. First, the number of Bible passages that say we are saved or justified by faith are numerous, **but not one of them says that, "we are justified by faith, only"!** Second, the fact is that there is one verse which says the exact opposite of the Methodist creedbook. James 2:24 states, **"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."** What comfort can be drawn

from a doctrine of men that absolutely contradicts the teaching of God's word? James 2:24 does not say that nothing else is involved in our salvation, nor that we can earn our salvation, but he does say that works have a part in our being justified. Only a kin of Jehoiakim would seek to excise that passage and say otherwise.

A second example of Jehoiakim's style of handling the Scriptures can be found in some Baptist church manuals. One such manual says, "Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of 'baptismal regeneration'; but it [baptism] is essential to obedience, since Christ commanded it" ("The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches," by Edward T. Hiscox, 1951). A second creedbook says, "Regeneration is an act of God, not of man (John 1:13). Since it is by grace, it obviously cannot be produced, aided, or completed by baptism" ("What Baptists Believe," by Herschel H. Hobbs, 1964).

Jehoiakim's knife has been sharpened and used by the authors of these supposed church manuals! Mark 16:16 says, "He that believeth **and is baptized shall be saved.**" Jesus placed salvation **after baptism**, not before it. Thus, the Lord Himself implies that baptism is **"essential to salvation,"** even if a thousand thousand Jehoiakims say otherwise! With this, consider the apostle Peter's statement regarding the Flood, that "eight souls were saved by water, The like figure whereunto even **baptism doth also now save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:20-21). These passages plainly state that baptism has a part in one's salvation! Therefore, God's grace is not nullified if one is baptized in order to receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), because baptism is a part of God's plan to save mankind through Christ. When one ignores baptism as being essential to salvation, one is rejecting the grace

of God! The apostle Peter said that "baptism doth also now save us," and he also said that what he wrote about in his letter is "the true grace of God" (1 Peter 5:12). A part of "the true grace of God" is the role God assigned to baptism as a part of one's salvation. One does not receive God's grace of salvation if one rejects the essential nature of immersion in water in the name of Christ in order to receive forgiveness of sins.

Also consider the statement by Hiscox that while "Baptism is not essential to salvation . . . it is essential to obedience, since Christ commanded it." Dear Friend, think of the logical conclusion to such a ridiculous claim. The author of the creed is saying that obedience is not essential to salvation; that one can be saved without obeying God. This is another case of Jehoiakim using his knife to destroy the word of God. However, in at least three passages of Scripture we are clearly told one must **obey the gospel** or be lost (Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17). One must ask what will drive a person to deny such plain declarations of Scripture? The answer must be that such a person has the spirit of a Jehoiakim, desiring to destroy any Scripture that one does not like. We imitate Jesus when we are obedient to God's commands. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, **he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him**" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Those whom Christ saves are those who obey Him. Do you not see how hopeless it is to say baptism is not essential to salvation, but it is essential to obedience?

We could extend comparisons between creedbooks and the Bible in great numbers, but these are sufficient to illustrate our point. Jehoiakim's kin live on today and continue his example of attempting to destroy the parts of God's word they do not like.

CONCLUSION

Being some kind of "religious" person is not enough to please God. Faith alone will not save anyone. Even doing supposed good works using Jesus' name will not save. The Lord said that those who are saved will be those "that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21-23). Calling Him, "Lord, Lord" is not sufficient (Luke 6:46). Jehoiakim wanted to tailor his religion to suit himself, not God. When people today cut and paste from God's word to suit their own desires rather than the Lord, they declare that they are kin to Jehoiakim in spirit, adding to or taking from the full revelation God has given to us.

These are serious matters that affect the salvation of souls. Is there anyone who is willing to affirm in a public discussion on these matters that the Scriptures teach that salvation is by faith alone? I deny that, and I am willing to affirm that the Scriptures teach that God has given baptism an essential part in our salvation through Christ. I would be happy to hear from any responsible person willing to take up the challenge, for I have great faith that the truth of God's word will be the ultimate victor.

Dear brethren and friends, do not let a Jehoiakim control your faith. Do not follow the doctrines and commandments of men imposed over the word of God. Study the Scripture references in this article for yourself and determine to "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, ASV). We stand ready to assist you in any way we can to help you know God's will for you. Contact us if you desire to study further and we will put someone in touch with you. Remember, Jesus said His word will not pass away, it cannot be destroyed (Matthew 24:35). It will be the standard of judgment you and I face in the last day (John 12:48-50). Be ready by putting on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27), and accepting all that His word teaches.

WWJD?

by Farrell Nicholson

Oftentimes, we notice these four letters on bumper stickers, wrist bands, or on t-shirts that children wear. The letters stand for "What Would Jesus Do?" This has caught on with many in this country. In itself, this question, "If Jesus was faced with this certain subject, how would he respond?," is a valid and helpful method of dealing with life's problems. We, as children of God should always mimic the life of our Lord and Master. Notice these words: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, **leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps,** (1 Pet. 2:21).

Many of our friends in the denominations have adopted this **WWJD?** statement as well as many members of the Lord's church. We see them proudly displaying the WWJD? necklaces, bracelets, and shirts. In buying the products and in wearing the jewelry and the t-shirts, we infer that they are attempting to "follow His steps" and live as He lived.

Let's look at some questions that people asked Jesus in inspired Scripture. Notice what the people asked Him and His answers to their questions. Once, our Lord was asked if it mattered how the worshipers of God conducted their services: to which Jesus answered, "God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). That is, they that worship the Almighty must do so in a spiritual manner, according to Divine truth. Many today get one half of it - they claim to be worshipping in a spiritual manner, yet they fail to follow the Divine order of worship which the Holy Spirit has set forth in Scripture. "Does it matter to God?," someone asks. Does it matter to Jesus? Hear Him again, "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. **But in vain do they worship me,** teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:7-9). Anytime someone "goeth onward" (2 John 9-ASV) beyond what God

has authorized, and brings something into the worship service which is not prescribed by God in His Word, they are preferring the commandments of men over the commandments of God. According to Jesus, their worship is in vain. Again, what would our Lord say when faced with a question concerning the ever-increasing problem of marriage, divorce and remarriage which plagues our country and even the Lord's church? What would he say? Some men came to Him once and asked if it would be lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason. He answered them in this way, ". . . I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commiteth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery," (Matthew 19:9). What would Jesus do when faced with members of society who wanted to know what to do about their adulterous marriages? We just heard Him.

Once more, what would Jesus say if He was asked how to enter the kingdom, which is the church (Matthew 16:18-19)? Hear His answer. "Except a man be born of **water** and of **the spirit**, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Great numbers, who claim to be followers of Christ, might follow up such a declaration with, "But, must one be baptized in order to be saved?" How would Jesus answer? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). Who will be saved, Lord? "He that believeth **and** is baptized . . ." Of course, whenever Jesus spoke, He spoke "the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). He loved the souls of men enough to tell the truth. Is it proper to ask how many of the folks who promote and propagate this WWJD? logo actually want to know and do what Jesus says. Our hope is that every one will learn of Jesus and of His Word, and that they will obey Him today. Why ask, "What Would Jesus Do?," if you do not plan on obeying Him? "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

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SAINTS WHO STRENGTHEN US

by James Burns

The Bible, to a great extent, is the story of people, men and women, young and old, good and evil, in a variety of life's circumstances. It is their stories we first learn and longest remember.

Some would prefer God to have given us a list of "do's and don'ts", with index, so we can look up what to do in every situation. Certainly, there are laws in the Bible of which we need to be knowledgeable.

By relating for us the lives of people, the Bible gives us some examples, people in circumstances we can identify with. In so doing, we can benefit from their strong and weak points.

Let us notice some saints whose examples can strengthen us in circumstances in which we may find ourselves.

"I have to work with ungodly people." If this is your case, think of Daniel (Daniel 6). His co-workers were not only ungodly men, but plotted against him and his religious beliefs. Over 120 of his peers were against him, yet he remained faithful to his convictions.

"I face such strong temptations." If so, think of Joseph's temptation by Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39). As a young man away from family influence, a servant in a foreign land, he was in a vulnerable position for temptation to sexual indulgence. But Joseph resisted, with, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

"So few stand for the truth." This was Elijah's feeling, too, when he challenged the 450 prophets of Baal, with no support from the people of Israel (I Kings 18:17-40). Later, he became depressed over his feeling that he was the only person faithful to God. But God informed him that there were 7000 others who had not bowed the knee to Baal (I Kings 19).

"I can't do much." One of limited ability or resources may feel this way. But think of the poor widow who could only give her two mites (Mark 12:41-44). Jesus commended her. Think, too, of how she has influenced others of greater means to give follow her example of generosity. Of another woman Jesus said, "She has done what she could

(Mark 14:8), and he expects no more of us.

"I tried and failed." So did Simon Peter. After affirming his allegiance to his Lord, and defending him with a sword, Peter thrice denied the Lord (John 18:15-17, 25-27). Peter failed on that occasion, but his life was not a failure, as can be seen in later events of his life.

I am glad the Bible is filled with people facing situations common to us all, and telling how they met these situations. We can learn from them.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In the June 2000 issue of FCGN brother Neal Pollard had a fine article entitled, "We Are The Army Of The Lord." One reader wrote to say he was offended at the use of some of the terms brother Pollard used when he compared some military terms (MIA, AWOL, POWs) to some in the Lord's church today. We assure our readers that there was no intention at all to slight or insult any who served in the armed services. We are thankful for every sacrifice made to keep our country free and pray that God may continue to so bless us. We apologize to any others who received the wrong impression from the article.

-TJC

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GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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