

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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“LET US MAKE GOD IN OUR IMAGE”

by Randy Robinson

Does the above title sound like a case of Biblical dyslexia? Indeed the book of Genesis records the words of God as He contemplated the culmination of His creation, “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*” (Genesis 1:26). This was a straightforward statement. Indeed, the next verse confirms that God did create man as the pinnacle of His creation, “*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them*” (verse 27). The next chapter provides even more detail, “*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul*” (2:7). Mankind is the apex of God’s creation, because we were created in God’s image with the ability to contemplate and reason. God loves reason and desires to reason with mankind (Isaiah 1:18). When we reason with God, we heed and obey His commands without question. Reasoning with God does not involve compromise. He is the Creator, we are the created, we have absolutely no right to interject our whims into the equation.

However, there are virtually millions upon millions of people who wish to make God in their own image. Perhaps this is the true “extreme makeover.” They are not satisfied with God the way that He is.

They reject the Bible as His Divine instructions for mankind. When the Bible says something with which they do not agree, then the Bible must take a backseat to their point of view. This concept has been adopted by people in all walks of life. Several years ago, Oprah Winfrey was quoted on her highly rated television talk show as stating, “**My** God accepts gays.” It is obvious that Ms. Winfrey believed that she was taking some moral high road, when in fact she was taking the exact opposite. Also, we may infer from that statement, that **her** god is another god besides Jehovah, making her an idolater. May we surmise that Baal, Dagon, Molech, Chemosh, Ashteroth as well as the Greek and Roman “gods” all accepted homosexuality—so what? Those “gods” never existed and the god to which Ms. Winfrey pays homage does not exist either. Jehovah God, the Creator of the universe has weighed in on this subject through the Scriptures. Note that here we have an explicit, “*Thus saith the Lord.*” “*Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination*” (Leviticus 18:22). One may also correctly presume from this verse, that thou shalt not lie with womankind, as with mankind: it is also an abomination (compare with Deuteronomy 23:17). The apostle John stated that those who commit abominations will not be in heaven (Revelation 21:27); therefore, the only alternative is that they will be in hell. Since homosexuality is in fact a subset of a larger set of fornication

and whoredom we know *explicitly* that they will reside in hell (Revelation 21:8). One wonders why Ms. Winfrey even bothers appealing to any deity whatsoever. Perhaps she has decided that she is too rich, too famous, and too powerful to yield to the holy and righteous Jehovah. Her god will have to yield to her politically correct pseudo-wisdom. The fallacy is so obvious. In effect what she is saying is, “If it offends my tender sensibilities—then it cannot be God’s will.” What an arrogant, as well as spiritually fatal philosophy that is!

Speaking of hell, others have questioned the very concept of hell, refusing to reconcile a place of eternal torment, which is clearly defined in the Scriptures, with the God of love, Who is also clearly defined in the Scriptures. There are those, including the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who have concocted the doctrine of annihilation, which claims that even if one goes to hell, that it will only last as long as it takes for the soul to be consumed by the fire. This erroneous conclusion flies in the face of all that we read concerning hell in the Scriptures, including the words of Jesus, “*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*” (Matthew 10:28). If anyone questions the duration of hell in these words consider this: “*And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, **into the fire that never shall be quenched***” (Mark 9:43; emphasis mine, RR). How do we reconcile the God of love with the

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God that will send the wicked to hell? The apostle Paul provides that insight in his letter to the Romans, "*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*" (Romans 11:22). Human beings, created in the image of God, also possess this duality and demonstrate it in their various relationships. God demands obedience and has the right to expect it. If mankind refuses to supply that obedience, dire consequences will result.

We also witnessed this attitude among some Roman Catholics last year in the selection of their pope. Many expressed reservation at the selection that was made, out of fear that he was an individual who promoted objective standards and traditional positions on the most controversial issues of our time. One woman was quoted as saying, "I was devastated by this selection." No doubt, there are many Catholics who

would have preferred a pope who was less rigid about abortion, homosexuality, the roles of men and women, etc. These attitudes express the sentiments, in a larger sense, of society in general. While members of the Lord's church do not acknowledge the legitimacy of Catholicism; nevertheless, we can still be encouraged by anyone who takes a stand for moral absolutes.

That of course, is what this is really all about. Society has come to despise objective, absolute truth because it eliminates the "gray" area. As a society, we have become very comfortable in this area, where options prevail and where morals and ethics are situational, if they are present at all. Most people who wish to practice some semblance of religion want to do so on their own politically correct terms. The problem with this is: **GOD IS NOT POLITICALLY CORRECT** as defined by 21st century society! He is however, *religiously* correct as indicated by the Psalmist, "...for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172b); "*every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever*" (verse 160). That is the omnipotence of God—whatever **He** says is the way it is!

Sometimes we have to make difficult decisions, which test both our faith and our desire to please God. May we never subjugate God's will to our own will and let us recognize that when we obey God—even if we may not understand fully at the time, even if society declares it to be the wrong course of action—it is a demonstration of our faith, at is was in the case of Abraham who was willing to sacrifice the son of the promise (Isaac), because God told him to do so (Genesis 22:2). Those who wish to make God in their own image will ultimately be disappointed, because despite their reluctance to submit to God's will, His will will eventually be done in all things (Matthew 6:10).

SPIRITUAL CONTENTMENT

by Lee Moses

The apostle Paul was not one to worry about social status or financial stability. To the Philippians he wrote, "*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content*" (Philippians 4:11). Modern society has most certainly not learned what Paul had. Most people are constantly striving not only to "keep up with the Joneses," but to *surpass* the Joneses in their "standard of living"—materially, that is. It seems that virtually *no one* is physically content. However, *spiritual contentment* can be found everywhere one looks. There are a number of different ways this contentment is seen.

"I believe I'm fine, so don't waste your time."

Very few people today believe that they are lost. Recent polls taken reveal that while most people in the United States believe in heaven, they do not believe in hell. The designation "lost soul" no longer refers to one condemned to hell, but to one simply going through a period of uncertainty. Even religiously active people generally believe that there are "many roads to heaven," although the Bible conclusively teaches that there is only one (Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

With such a state of affairs, it is difficult to express to a person the importance of securing the welfare of his soul. Even though a person may be lost, others have told him that he is certain to go to heaven. Such a person will generally want to remain comfortable, rather than be urged to make drastic changes in his life.

"I'm outwardly whole, but devoid of soul."

Some have obeyed the Gospel in years past and continue to attend worship services regularly. However,

this is the full extent of their spiritual activity. They have no prayer life outside of the worship assembly; they have no time spent in Bible reading or study other than the prescribed times the church meets for this purpose; and they do not put into practice Biblical principles of living. Their motivation is not to please God; but to show respect to godly parents, to maintain friendships, or such like.

“I’ve done sufficient, to do more is not efficient.”

There are some who feel that they have done their duty in times past. They may have previously been very involved in the work of the church, but now feel that it is the responsibility of younger Christians to accomplish. Some even quit attending services altogether, arrogantly determining that they have “done enough” for a lifetime of service to the Lord. This is practical “once saved, always saved” doctrine. The apostle Paul said, *“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 3:13-14). There is probably not a Christian living today whose devotion to the Lord could be compared to Paul, yet he had not yet *“attained unto the resurrection of the dead,”* nor unto perfection (3:11-12). Yet he continued to strive that he might attain these things.

“No matter whether all else seems to fall apart, I do the will of God from the heart.”

There is a sense of spiritual contentment that can be genuinely achieved. *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ*

Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7). One who does not focus on the physical things, which can never satisfy, but on the spiritual, can find contentment in both (2 Corinthians 4:18-5:1). When one is committed to fulfilling the will of God, he no longer has any need for worry: *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”* (2 Cor. 5:1).

THE LORD’S ANGER

by G. K. Wallace (1903-1988)
[Reprinted from November 1974 **FCGN**]

Jesus became angry (Mark 3:5). We usually think of anger as a vice and not virtue, and yet Jesus became angry. We usually regard anger as littleness and not bigness, but Jesus became angry. The angry man is the likely man to sin. Anger is strictly forbidden in God’s word. In Psalm 37:8 the writer says, *“Cease from anger and forsake wrath..”* The teacher of old said, *“He that is slow to anger appeaseth wrath.”* Too, it is said, *“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty”*; and we are exhorted, *“Make no friendship with the man that is given to anger.”* In Ecclesiastes 7:9 we read, *“Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.”* Jesus said, *“Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment.”* One of the qualifications of an elder is that he be not soon angry (Titus 1:5).

When then is anger so severely condemned, and yet we read the startling statement that Jesus became angry? There is a difference between the anger manifested by man and that which Jesus possessed. There is a difference between the anger that is condemned by the Holy Spirit and

the anger by Jesus our Lord.

The anger that is ours is often produced by a purely selfish motive. Criticism against others does not make us angry; however, we let out howls of sheer rage when criticism is directed against us. We become indignant when we are not selected as the leader or made the head of a committee. If for some reason we are not invited to a party we feel insulted. Too, if we fail to get the glory or the credit for a deed, we become angry. This indicates that our motive is not proper and right. When Jonah went down to Nineveh and prophesied, *“Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed,”* the people repented and Jonah became angry. He should have rejoiced that they corrected their lives, but he perhaps felt his reputation as a prophet was ruined. He really did not care for the people; he cared for himself. He was utterly selfish, and nursing his wounded pride, he went out and sat down under a booth that he had made. In the shade of the booth he nursed his injured pride and was angry because he could not have his way. He was not angry because men were sinful and the heart of man was corrupted.

Such anger as we often have and that which was manifested by Jonah is wrong in its objective. The anger that we have prompts us to destroy, to hurt, to give pain. Sometimes we are like Samson when we give vent to our feelings. We destroy not only the building we pull down, but ourselves. If we see ourselves slighted, we break off diplomatic relations with the church. We resign the Lord’s work; and like the elder brother, we stay out at the barn and pout. The elder brother refused to go in and have a part in the feast prepared for his wayward brother. He did not shoot up the town, but he was trying to hurt someone. In his anger he did hurt his father and himself. Often the type of anger that we manifest is ridiculous

and silly. I have seen men who, when playing golf, become angry and threw away a golf club. I have seen mechanics beat an engine and swear when the engine would not respond as they wanted it to do. I have observed farmers cursing their mules when they would not respond to their directions. Jesus was not angry after any such fashion.

The anger of Jesus was born of love and not of hate. He became angry with the people because they were unwilling to help a man with a withered hand. Jesus did not become angry when he was mocked, spat upon, and even when he was crucified. His anger had the right objective. He desired to help someone and not to hurt. He opposed the sin of the people who were making laws to govern the sabbath that God did not make, but he loved the sinner. His anger was a righteous indignation. His condemnation of these people was not born in a fit of madness. His emotion was a holy indignation.

From this we see that any selfish anger must be destroyed. Too, we have an example that righteous anger needs to be stirred. We need to blaze with the zeal for which is right. Much that passes for tolerance today is indifference. One of the surest signs that the church is running down spiritually is the fact that it has lost its power to become indignant about wrongdoing. Some congregations are very indifferent about Sunday night services. The church building could be completely closed on Sunday evening and Wednesday night, and a vast majority of brethren would know nothing at all about it. Often brethren make the excuse that they cannot come to Sunday evening and Wednesday evening services, yet it is a well-known fact that they do not stay at home. Instead of staying at home they go somewhere else and

indulge in that which pleases them. I am sure that if Jesus were here he would do as he did in time of old, *“Then he looked round about on them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts.”* We need the type of anger manifested by our Lord.

NOTE

We included a piece in February’s issue of *FCGN* entitled “Give Me the Truth” in which the writer was listed as “unknown.” A brother has informed us that the writer’s name is Bill Crews.

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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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