

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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WHO WILL YOU OBEY?

By Jim Stauffer

There is an old story used as an illustration of the answer to this question. A father had just purchased a large piece of land and as he planned to be away for awhile, left his son to carry out his plans for the property. He left detailed instructions on where to build the house, the barn and also where to dig the well. When he returned he found both the house and the barn in different locations than he had directed. The well also had been dug in a different place than he designated. He challenged the son about it and the question then asked by those who hear the story is whether the son obeyed the father. While it is true he built the house and barn as well as digging the well, he DID NOT obey his father since he chose differing locations for them. You see he agreed with the father on the house, barn and well, but had a better idea on the location of them. He did not obey in anything. He only agreed on some of what his father told him but disagreed on the locations and therefore actually obeyed his own desire.

We are capable of the same thing today. Much like the Captain of the Syrian Army, Naaman, who was a leper and inquired of the King of Israel about the ability of his prophet Elisha to cure his leprosy.

This story is told in **2 Kings 5**. Elisha told the King of Israel to send Naaman to his house and he would demonstrate there was a prophet in Israel.

When Naaman came to Elisha's house, Elisha sent a messenger to tell him to, *.....Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean.* (**2 Kings 5:10**) The Scriptures tell us Naaman was furious both about Elisha's refusal to even come out and speak directly to him but also because he told him to wash in the Jordan. Naaman preferred the rivers of Damascus to the Jordan. He was reminded by those close to him, "Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, *"My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?"*" (**2 Kings 5:13**) He then followed the instructions of the

prophet and was cleansed of his leprosy.

Leprosy is the physical equivalent in the Old Testament to sin in the New Testament. It required cleansing procedures given by God. The Israelites followed these procedures when someone was infected with the disease and they were cleansed. If they did not follow God's specific commands for cleansing they were cut off from the people, the congregation of God's people.

How similar is it today when men reject the cleansing power of baptism. Peter said when accompanied by repentance it provides forgiveness of sins. Saul of Tarsus was told, *"Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."* (**Acts 22:16**)

We have the opportunity to be redeemed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:18,19) but we cannot achieve that redemption unless we obey the command of God. We are in the same position as Naaman. Our ideas do not carry the power of God. His do. Who will you obey?

The Living God

God the Creator is sometimes viewed, in Scripture, in contrast to the idolatry that was so prevalent. The question is asked in **Isaiah 40:25**, *"To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One."* Then, in **chapter 41**, God challenges idolaters to make their case (**Isa 41:21-24**):

*Set forth your case, says the Lord;
bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob.
Let them bring them, and tell us
what is to happen.*

*Tell us the former things, what they are,
that we may consider them,
that we may know their outcome;
or declare to us the things to come.
Tell us what is to come hereafter,*

continued on page 2

*that we may know that you are gods;
do good, or do harm,
that we may be dismayed and terrified.
Behold, you are nothing,
and your work is less than nothing;
an abomination is he who chooses you.*

The need to see God in contrast to what is unable to see and save is still vital. The God we serve is the *"true and living God"* (1 Thess 1:9). Christians have turned from the worthless things of the world *"to the living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them"* (Acts 14:15). We have come to the city of the living God (Heb 12:22). The reason godliness is profitable is because *"we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men"* (1 Tim 4:10). We are the church of the living God (1 Tim 3:15), children of the living God (Rom 9:26), the temple of the living God (2 Cor 6:16), letters of Christ written with the Spirit of the living God (2 Cor 3:3), who put our trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God (1 Tim 6:17). We are to see to it that we do not depart from the living God (Heb 3:12), for our consciences have been cleansed from dead works to serve the living God (Heb 9:14), and we know that for those who have turned away it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31). The Scriptures stress this aspect of who God is. He is not just a god. He is the living God, the only living God.

In contrast to the idolatry of his day, Jeremiah said, *"But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure His indignation"* (Jer 10:10). As it was then, so it is now.

We are tempted to think that the world has something meaningful to offer apart from God. People look for meaning in power, in education, in money, or in other worldly pursuits. None of these can save or fulfill the true human need of being reconciled to God. All the world can offer apart from God are worthless objects, no more alive than the idols served by pagans. But the true, living God offers us what is far greater than the world can begin to give. This is why our treasures need to be laid up in heaven rather than in what can rot, rust, and be destroyed (Matt 6:19-21). Peter also reminds us: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you..."* (1 Pet 1:3-4).

Did you notice the phrase, *"a living hope"*? Hope is one of the great blessings of the gospel, and it is grounded in the character of God. This hope is a *"steadfast anchor of the soul"* (Heb 6:19), and we have strong encouragement to *"hold fast to the hope set before us"* (v. 18).

The reason God can give us a living hope is that He is the living God. Jesus is the Savior who *"always lives to make intercession"* for His people (Heb 7:25). As the living God, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matt 22:32). He has made us alive together with Christ (Eph 2:5), and if we continue to believe in the Son of the living God, no matter what else happens, we will live even if we die (John 11:25-26). Do we believe it?

So now we say with the psalmist: *"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God"* (42:2). *"My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God"* (84:2).

Doy Moyer

Let's Think This Through, Number Two!

If there is no God then what follows? Last week we pointed out the self-evident fact that if there is no God then we must believe the absurdity of the universe creating itself. This week's topic is just as simple and self-evident: If there is no God then He did not create man. Well, duh! (I said it was self-evident!) This is not just funny and obvious but it is incredibly important and had deep and far-reaching worldwide implications!

See, if God did not create man then I cannot be created in the image and the likeness of God. The Scriptures teach in Genesis 1:26 *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them..... God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."* All mankind, from the most innocent to the most wicked, are made in God's image – like it or not. Why is this important? If we lose this one point then ALL MORALITY falls to the ground. Every requirement of morality, and law and decency is based on the fact that we are not just animals, we are different! We are like God in that we have a moral side to our being and can choose to be like God. My cat, Merlin, has no such opportunity. He can never choose to act like anything but a cat.

Mankind does have a choice, but only because we are made in God's image.

Cleveland Reddinger

"Expertise" Evangelism

Jesus once told the Pharisees and scribes, *"You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God..."* (Mark 7:9). The bottom line was, they were setting aside a command of God. This is a much

repeated behavior. It reminds me of how some people will work harder at not working, than they would ever work, if they simply did the work. God gave a command in connection with the preaching of the gospel: GO AND DO IT! (Mark 16:15)

This command to "go" is for a specific purpose. But the "going" must be done. The means of travel is not specified, they could walk, ride, travel on land or by sea, but they must GO! Could you imagine getting so wrapped up in "fine-tuning" the method of going that you never actually went and preached the gospel? Consider the following story about fishing that makes this point:

Now it came to pass that a group existed that called themselves fishermen and there were many fish in the waters about them. In fact, the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes and the fish were hungry. Week after week and month after month and year after year the group that called themselves 'fishermen' met in meetings and talked about those called to fish, the abundance of fish, and how we might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing meant, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing be the primary talk of fishermen. These fishermen built large beautiful buildings for local fishing headquarters and their plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and that everyone should fish. However, the one thing they did not do, THEY DID NOT FISH!

In addition to meeting regularly these men determined to send out fishermen to places where there were many fish. This sending committee was headed by those who had great vision and had courage to speak about fishing and to promote the idea of fishing in faraway streams and lakes. They held meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, and to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the one thing the staff and the committee members did not do, THEY DID NOT FISH!

Large, elaborate training centers were built whose original and primary purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. Over the years courses were offered on the needs of the fish, the nature of the fish, how to find fish, and the psychological effects of fishing. Those who taught had doctorates in 'Fisheology'! But the teachers DID NOT FISH! They only taught about fishing.

Further, the fishermen built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. Presses were kept busy day and night to produce material solely devoted to fishing methods. A speakers' bureau was also organized to schedule special speakers on fishing. After one stirring meeting entitled 'The Necessity Of Fishing,' two young men left the meeting and actually went fishing and one of them actually

caught two fish! He was honored for his great catch and was scheduled to appear at all the big meetings to tell how he did it. So he quit fishing in order to have time to tell his experiences to the other fishermen!

Now it is true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and had to put up with the smell of dead fish. Some had to endure the ridicule of some who made fun of these fishermen's clubs because they claimed to be fishermen, but THEY DID NOT FISH!

And they wondered about those who thought it was of little use to attend meetings and talk about fishing. I mean, after all, were they not following the Master who said, "*Come and I will make you fishers of men*"? Imagine their dismay when someone actually suggested that they were not really 'fishermen.' Yet it did make sense. Can we rightfully call a person a fisherman if year after year he never fishes? Can a person really be following Jesus if he is not fishing?"

Jesus told His disciples, "*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest*" (Matthew 9:37-38). Evangelism relates to our stewardship as disciples. The gospel is God's. He has given it to us to handle faithfully. We have responsibility both individually and collectively. Our fellowship in the gospel is seen from **Philippians 4:15...giving and receiving**. Our fellowship in the gospel is active, not passive. Evangelism is to be "done", not just talked about. We need to follow through, not on our intentions, but on our responsibility. Laborers are needed. Let each of us examine our hearts that we are never found trying to evade the task of evangelism. An old hymn makes the point:

"When in the better land,
before the bar we stand;
how deeply grieved our souls may be.
If any lost one there,
should cry in deep despair,
'YOU NEVER MENTIONED HIM TO ME'!

We cannot 'outsource' our responsibilities in evangelism. The individual disciple and the local church are God's authorized agents to do the work of evangelism. To 'outsource' our evangelism amounts to nothing more than working hard at avoiding **our** work. As the apostle Paul said on another matter, "*Now therefore perform the doing of it...*" (2 Corinthians 8:11).

Roger Bruner

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Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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Brandon Jimison

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Joe Hurd

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A SPECIAL PRAYER FOR THE LIVER TRANSPLANT TO BE PERFORMED ON RODNEY BLOUNT.

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS: SEARCHING FOR A KING - RON PECK TEACHER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE BOOK OF JOB - JIM STAUFFER TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON: LET THE BLIND LEAD THE BLIND



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10