

Expository Files, 11.5

May 2004

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Front Page

Jennings on Jesus & Paul

Warren E. Berkley

The major television broadcast networks venture into the field of religion sometimes, often during a season the world identifies with “Christianity” (Easter, Christmas). Recently the viewing public had opportunity to see another Peter Jennings ABC documentary, “Jesus and Paul, the Word and the Witness.”

The show that aired on Monday night, April 5, was virtually a carbon copy of the previous Jennings work (In Search of Jesus, June 2000). In the former effort and in this one, Jennings did not find the Jesus Christ of the Bible. And he certainly didn’t come close to the real apostle Paul. (There is no reason to believe he was looking!)

The misinformation conveyed in these programs is a product of the mindset that gives more weight to human sources than inspired writers. To

Jennings, the speculations and pronouncements of mostly liberal theologians is more attractive than the actual words of Jesus and Paul (and less demanding morally). He is more concerned with how contemporary “experts” and “specialists” interpret tradition than attending to the writings left by the Holy Spirit.

The documentary ABC aired Monday night (April 5, 2004) was noticeably slanted toward liberal “scholarship” that questions, denies and re-writes biblical history; that assumes a human superiority above the divine text. Along with that, it was bold in identifying Catholic ritual and modern religious rock music with the story of Jesus and Paul. Scenes from Catholic ritual predominating the visuals, and religious rock was used as the primary musical background. The content of the documentary was formed based on what is religiously and politically correct; what is marketable and what is demeaning of Christianity. The show never came to terms with the simple teaching of the Bible; was an exercise in comparing what one “scholar” says to another; left out vital context in quoting what Paul wrote; portrayed Paul as a “nasty” anti-Semite and eventually claimed, “he was making it up as he went along!” And, according to the scholars, “he had no idea that his ideas would ever become a blueprint for the 20th century.” (I assume the “scholar” would extend that opinion to the 21st!)

I cannot offer any favorable recommendation of these major media religious documentaries, not even for some impractical academic purpose. Too much misinformation; too much distortion; too much bold unbelief in the biblical record. I agree with one reviewer on a website blog who said, “If even a fraction of what I mention [critical of Jennings] is true, then we’re looking at something more akin to intellectual dishonesty than simple omissions.”

The real Paul said: “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ,” (Gal. 1:11,12). And, “...the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord,” (1 Cor. 14:37).

The Peril of Sin
2 Tim. 3:1-7
Warren E. Berkley

¹But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The apostle Paul wrote these words to young Timothy to inform and instruct him in the perilous times he would observe. These are the conditions of the world Timothy lived in. These are the sins Timothy would need to confront and expose in his preaching of God's Word. These are the sins he would need to avoid in his own behavior. And these are the people he would need to guard against and turn away from (see verse 5).

These conditions continue to be the perils of our society, and each one represents the personal peril of sin every individual needs to recognize (for repentance and forgiveness to become reality). The perilous times are composed of these things.

“For Men will be lovers of themselves”

There were people in Timothy's time and there are people today who are utterly self-centered. They are “lovers of themselves.” What they think, what they say and what they do is driven by self-love. That means, nothing that interferes with the pursuit of self is allowed. They do not allow friends, neighbors or society to keep them from the pursuit of self-interests. They do not allow God through His Word, to call them out of the bondage of their sin. They are “lovers of themselves.” This is one of the basic vices of human ruin and rebellion against God; this misdirected love that lives for the pursuit of self-interests. Close behind this ...

“Lovers of money”

In the King James Version there is a single word: “covetous.” It means, to be consumed by the desire for more; to make material things the chief object of your affection. In Paul's first letter to Timothy he wrote about this, with these words:

⁶Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have

strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. – 1 Tim. 6:6-10

Lovers of money are never content; not ready to surrender to God; not appreciative of the sacrifice of Christ or the value of truth. Lovers of money fall into many temptations and snares; they make themselves the victims of many foolish and harmful lusts and pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

“Boasters”

Study these things in 2 Timothy 3, linked together. If I am in love with myself and my money, that inordinate love will breed arrogance, pride and result in boasting. Boastful thoughts, giving rise to boastful words will result. Only by responding to the Word of God and accepting the value of the death of Christ, obeying Him wholeheartedly, can one overcome the arrogance of sin.

“Proud”

The American Standard version says, “haughty.” This is the peril of thinking more highly of yourself than you should; self-assertive and bold in imposing yourself upon others. Diotrephes was such a man. John said about him, he “loves to have the preeminence among” the brethren, and “does not receive” the apostles (3 Jno. 9). The times are perilous when people love themselves rather than God; they love their money and boast in their vain pride.

“Blasphemers”

To blaspheme is to speak bitterly and abusively. This is not about subtle suggestions that may be insulting, or indirect criticism (not befitting Christians). This is direct, bold and malicious. Often this word is used in the context of rebellion against deity.

“Disobedient To Parents”

I believe it is noteworthy and should get the attention of every child and parent – that in two well-known New Testament passages where sin is detailed, there is disobedience to parents. In Romans chapter one, and here in 2 Timothy 3. To defy parental authority is to sin against God; to shun and neglect His plan for domestic order. Paul, when writing to the Ephesians, addressed himself to parents and children: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,” (Eph. 6:1). Parents should establish themselves as

the authority, and the children should respect their authority. When that plan is ignored, there is peril.

“Unthankful”

Ingratitude is always a sign of peril. In human relationships, when you presume on someone’s goodness; when you assume no gratitude is necessary, this is a sign of peril in character. God, the Almighty Creator, is deserving of our daily gratitude. We should express to God our gratitude, by our thoughts, our words and our deeds on a daily basis. 1 Thess. 5:18 teaches us what is right in this regard: “...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” We are living in perilous times – when men are lovers of themselves; lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful ... and another sign of peril is:

“Unholy”

To be holy is to be reverent toward God; to take God seriously; to appreciate and honor Christ by the obedience of your heart; to be deeply impressed by the awe of Deity. So, to be worldly, careless about the Word of God, profane toward Christ and irreverent, is to contribute to your own peril and become a part of the moral peril of our time.

“Unloving”

Joseph Addison once said, “The grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love and something to hope for.” Imagine the misery of the opposite: nothing to do, nobody to love and nothing to hope for. The personal peril of sin is defined by Paul in this letter to Timothy, and one word is: unloving. The American Standard says, “without natural affection.” This is more than just having a cold, distant personality. This is an absence of love, “without natural affection.”

“Unforgiving”

Isn’t it interesting, that the New American Standard reads, “irreconcilable.” Sometimes we hear this word applied to a troubled marriage. It will be observed by one or both parties, that the marriage died and the cause was, “irreconcilable differences.” Often this means, *not being willing to forgive*. Let me ask, what if God took this approach to you? What if God was possessed of no grace or mercy? But it isn’t that way. God – in His abundant love and mercy – has extended His grace toward us in Christ, and He awaits

our obedient response. One of the great perils of our time, and it could be – one of the personal perils you must confront is, being unforgiving.

“Slanderers”

I have no record of the source, but I read somewhere, this description of slander: *A verdict of “guilty,” given without evidence, in the absence of the accused, behind closed doors, without defense or appeal, by a prejudiced judge, and serving no good purpose.* The New English Bible makes this strong, with the expression “scandal-mongers.” This is about people who have no personal veracity; they are not sincere; they are quick to spin a story and supply missing details from their own imagination. It is a peril of our time, and a sin against God.

“Without Self-control”

The King James uses the word “incontinent.” This is the personal peril of thinking and living without good restraint. Uncontrolled. This is the realistic condition of many in our society. And you may detect this in your life, upon careful self-examination.

“Brutal”

The King James and the American Standard version use the word “fierce.” This describes the person who is wild, harsh, rude and bold in their manner. Again, as you go through the list in 2 Timothy 3, think of these things – not just as individual sins, but a composite; an ugly composite of bad character. The people who love themselves, love money, boast, are proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control and brutal are the people who are the peril of our time, and a peril to their own lives.

“Despisers of good”

In the New American Standard, “haters of good.” This is strong language. Good has been revealed by God and His Son, perfectly illustrated by Christ. Good is available. Through the gospel, we can be participants in the highest good, leaving that which is bad and embracing what is morally and spiritually good. Yet there are some who put themselves in peril by hating what is good.

“Traitors”

In one translation, The New Testament in Basic English, this is translated with this phrase, *“false to their friends.”* This is about one who betrays trust;

willing to break a promise; willing to turn on you, for their own perceived gain. Those who do this, contribute to the moral peril of society and stand guilty before God.

“Headstrong”

This kind of person is given to bold assertions of their own self-interests; recklessly filled with pride.

“Haughty”

Swollen with self-importance. These are people who are convinced of their own superiority, and they campaign to advance their own cause. Then Paul wrote to Timothy about another peril:

“Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”

Our society today places excessive emphasis on pleasure; having fun, with a variety of forms of entertainment and recreation – some illegal; some sinful; some questionable; some legitimate, if kept in good balance and perspective. The problem addressed by the apostle writing to Timothy is, not just putting pleasure above God – but *in pursuit of pleasure, excluding God!* Loving pleasure rather than loving God. Preferring pleasure with such abandoned passion, pleasure eventually becomes your God; and the real God is rejected. It is not the argument of this verse, nor the argument of the Bible anywhere, that all pleasure is corrupt or ill-advised. God has supplied every human need for our enjoyment. His moral law is for our pleasure. Jesus was sent, that we might be pleased to have the forgiveness of our sins and the hope of heaven. We can faithfully apply the law of God to our lives, be reverent, diligent in service and morally pure – and enjoy, without compromise, the pleasures God has supplied for our need.

But when the pursuit of carnal pleasure becomes our obsession, that pursuit becomes our personal peril. When we reach a point, where we prefer pleasure over God and we reject God to have a good time – we are overtaken by the tragedy of serving the devil, and setting ourselves up for eternal remorse.

“Having a form of godliness”

Concentrate on that word “form.” In this context, the word means the outward appearance or form of something. This is about the external, not the internal! Externally, there is the appearance of religion, “a form of godliness.” Internally, there is an absence of real godliness! They have the

form, but not the substance of godliness. They claim devotion to God. They may have some appearance of that devotion, but internally – there is no real reverence for God; rather, a pursuit of self-interests.

What should the response of Christians be, to those who have a form of godliness, but deny divine power in their conduct? How should God's people respond to the kind of people described in this passage? These are lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. *The question: How should God's people respond to these kind of people?*

Look at the last phrase in verse 5 for Paul's answer: ***“And from such people turn away!”*** I would hope, we would naturally be repelled from people who live like this; that we would not seek association with them; that we should have no interests in their fellowship. Paul makes it plain: “And from such people turn away.”

Then, in verses 6 & 7, Paul goes further to describe the kind of people who live in personal peril: “For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Stop and think about the kind of people, the kind of men, who would do what Paul describes. Creeping into households; making captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts. And notice he describes both the victims and the perpetrators as “always learning,” but “never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Unable to come to the knowledge of the truth, because of their corrupt, self-centered heart.

What would Paul want Timothy to do about such conditions? What would Paul have Timothy do, in view of the peril of these sins? Look into the next chapter of 2 Timothy. In chapter 4:2, there is a single phrase – showing what Timothy needed to do, in perilous times: “Preach the Word!” The only remedy is the Word of God. The only message that can well inform people of their sin, then offer forgiveness, is the Word of God, the gospel of Christ. Listen again to our text.

Give Thanks For The Judgment

Ps. 75

Jay Horsley

This is one of four psalms that are according to, or set to, “Al-tashheth.” This word means “do not destroy.” Three other psalms (**Ps. 57, 58, and 59**) are also formed in this way. The best conjecture as to the meaning of this is that these are psalms or warning to the enemies of God not to become too proud in their own power because it is God’s people that they are going up against.

1 (For the choir director; *set to Al-tashheth.* A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.) We give thanks to Thee, O God, we give thanks, For Thy name is near; Men declare Thy wondrous works.

We should praise God again and again. Partial gratitude on our part is in fact ingratitude. We praise God who is wondrous and mighty in works. He is not asleep as we suffer or as evil is done. The previous psalm was set in a time of horrible suffering, yet there was no complaint. How can we keep our faith and our composure when things go so horribly against us? We continue to remember God, and remembering His nature, His work and what He has promised to do, so we praise Him.

Such praise to God is common in the psalms, but we do not normally associate it in our own minds with the final judgment. But the world ending, punishment on the wicked pronouncing, judgment is what this psalm cites as reason for praise of God for His mighty works. We like to avoid thoughts of judgment and retribution, but they are a mighty and proper work of God. *“For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”* (**2 Thess. 1:6-8**)

The Lord Rules The World In Righteousness

2 When I select an appointed time, It is I who judge with equity.

3 The earth and all who dwell in it melt; It is I who have firmly set its pillars. Selah.

4 I said to the boastful, 'Do not boast,' And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn;

5 Do not lift up your horn on high, Do not speak with insolent pride."

In His own time and by His own righteousness God will judge the world. It will as melt, "*with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.*" Peter adds. (**2 Pet. 3:10**) Peter said that because of this the righteous should consider "*what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness*" (vs. **11**). Asaph says that the wicked should not be boastful and proud. The certainty of the judgment should immediately and continually impact the conduct of all men. Thoughts of judgment compel the righteous to continue in righteousness and, when such thoughts occur to the wicked, it should cause them to cease their evil.

Further Warning To The Proud

6 For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert *comes* exaltation;

7 But God is the Judge; He puts down one, and exalts another.

8 For a cup is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs.

Man so often thinks that place and position come either by chance or are completely controlled by men. But God is in charge. He oversees the rise and fall of empires and houses. He also judges the same. When ascendant, man thinks only of his own power and position. When cast down, man thinks only of the power and position lost. Because man in both positions forgets God and His will and His way, they are judged and condemned. But the righteous remembers God in all stations and situations of life.

Anticipation Of Glory

9 But as for me, I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10 And all the horns of the wicked He will cut off, *But* the horns of the righteous will be lifted up.

Asaph, a righteous man, speaks and sings of God with the confidence of a man who "*knows whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.*" (**2 Tim. 1:12**) This confidence remains in the heart of the righteous man in spite of the fact that every indication is that this psalm was written when the proud and wicked

were ascendant. Confidence remains because he knows the final and ultimate outcome of the wicked and the ultimate glorious of the righteous.

Let "We give thanks to Thee, O God, we give thanks, For Thy name is near; Men declare Thy wondrous works" (vs. 1) also be our cry song and cry when depressed or oppressed and when in need of deliverance. Praise God, for He has an ultimate cure for every evil that is not repented of, the judgment.

Captured by the Enemy!
(Colossians 2:8-12)
By Jon W. Quinn

The poor souls were led away in chains. It had been a trap. They had not listened to the warnings. They had scoffed at those who had pleaded with them not to go. They thought they had been clever. But now they were trapped.

Some of their own number had assisted the Enemy in springing the trap. The Enemy had made certain promises and had offered rewards for such betrayal. But the final state of those who conspired with the Enemy would be no different than from those they had deceived. A captivity so dismal it could best be described as conscious death.

The above is not a section out of some fictional novel or "docudrama." It is real. The process described is going on today; right now, as you read this. Men and women suffering from a spiritual void are looking for answers. There is an increasing fascination with cults and the occult. Those who become captives of these empty philosophies and deceptions come from all sorts of backgrounds, save one. You'll find the non-religious taken captive as well as the nominal church member. But you'll be hard-pressed ever to find a knowledgeable, dedicated Christian falling victim to these delusions.

The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote of such captivity, and gave us information on why we want to avoid such captivity and how to do so. The Scriptures say, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in

Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." (Colossians 2:8-12).

The Weapons of Enemy

"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ." (Colossians 2:8). The religious environment of the first century was similar in some ways to our own. Those forces which seem to be gaining ground today were in vogue then. The difference is that at that time, Christianity was the newcomer. Today we see instead an abandonment of the very ideals and principles of Christianity that helped make us a great nation and a return to the empty philosophies of men.

The Enemy uses the "traditions of men" as one of his weapons. These teachings are not new. That is why they are called "traditions." Many pagan beliefs are being resurrected again. The "New Age" is as old as sin. The creeds of men are being elevated above the word of God, and because of this many are being taken "captive."

The Enemy also uses the "elementary principles of the world." Some think that this refers to astrology and similar occultic practices. The ancient world was dominated by the idea that the stars and planets control our lives. The Bible calls it "empty deception."

The Godhood of Christ

"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form," (Colossians 2:9). Remember who it is that the Enemy is opposing! It is Christ. He is God incarnate, or "Deity in bodily form" (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1-3; 20:28; Philippians 2:5-8). On the one side is the horoscope, Ouija board, tarot cards, spiritism, reincarnation, and all kinds of occultic mysticism. The Enemy has marshaled his forces well! But he is facing Jesus Christ. We need nothing of the philosophies of men. They offer nothing genuine. They are not "according to Christ." He is the answer to our needs.

The Enemy offered our first century counterparts the world. Vast, wonderful powers were supposedly placed in their hands by the occultic leaders of the first century.

The Caesars ruled by the decree of the stars; Julius, Augustus, Tiberius and Vespian. Even Alexander the Great waged war by the stars. He did pretty good too... but died a very young man. His armies nor the stars could help him. And the Caesars? Their mighty empire was crumbling. It would soon disintegrate into dozens of splinters and then fragment further until nothing was left. So why are so many today so intent on returning to such a hopeless philosophy?

The Authority of Christ

"...and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;" (Colossians 2:10). Jesus meets all of our needs. In Him there is nothing lacking. He is in control. The tomb could not keep Him. If He says, "I will come again.." then we can certainly believe Him.

Do you believe that you can be "complete" in Christ? This is what it means to "trust" in Jesus. It means that I am willing to submit to His authority because He is adequate to supply every good thing. It means that even when faced with heavy consequences, perhaps even physical death, that I am able to say, "Even in death, Christ Jesus is adequate because He has 'the keys of death and Hades.'" (Revelation 1:18).

If I am unwilling to follow Christ with such devotion, then He says I cannot be His disciple. To turn my back on Him, even to "gain the whole world" will cost me the loss of my soul. If I deny Him, even to save my life, I will only lose it eternally (Luke 9:23-26).

The Cutting Away of Sin in Christ

"...and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ;" (Colossians 2:11). Circumcision was the sign of the covenant God had made with His people Israel. But under the New Covenant, there was a new kind of circumcision. The "circumcision of Christ" involves cutting away the love of sin from the heart (Romans 2:29).

This, too, is a needful part of our winning the victory in Christ Jesus. When there is a love for sin in the heart, it is time for surgery! This is also

called "repentance" in the Bible. It is what Simon the Sorcerer was told to do (Acts 8:20-24). Even though a baptized believer, Simon was in danger of losing it all and his only recourse was to repent and seek God's forgiveness.

The Working of God

"...having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." (Colossians 2:12). Submitting to baptism is not a dependence upon ones own works or merit. Rather, it is the act by which we place our faith in God's working. By submitting to baptism, I am placing my trust in the very same power that "raised Him up from the dead." One who has not yet been baptized has not yet been "raised up with Him through faith in the working of God."

Just as God "canceled" Jesus' death when He was raised, God "cancels" our spiritual death caused by our transgressions when we are "raised up with Him" from baptism; "And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us of all our transgressions." (Colossians 2:13).

The outcome of being "raised up with Him" is wonderfully described in the next chapter. There comes a freeness of mind, a confidence and a bright expectation of a glorious future. Don't let it be captivity in the hopelessness and empty deceit of the world when it can be the following instead:

"If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him." (Colossians 3:1-4).

“Bitter Tears”
(John 21:15-19)
By David A. Beck

John 21:15-19, So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to

Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." (16) He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." (17) He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep. (18) "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." (19) Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!"

Many look at this passage with wonderment. Why did Jesus ask Peter the same question over and over? Peter responded to each question, assuring the Lord of his love for Him. And, didn't the Lord already know Peter's heart? Why did He ask Peter these questions? Why was Peter "grieved" when the Lord asked him the third time, "Do you love me?"

Peter's "grief" was much more than just dismay or disappointment that the Lord asked him three times, "do you love Me." Grieved (??pe' - lupeo) is a word that literally means to be "distressed." It also means to "be in heaviness; sorrowful; to be made sorry."¹ Lupeo is sometimes translated "exceeding sorry" or "very sorry" (Matt. 17:23; 18:21; 26:22); or being "in heaviness" (1 Pet. 1:6).

Why was Peter so "grieved?" We need to remember that Peter had denounced his friendship with Jesus with "cursing and swearing" (Matt. 26:74) shortly after he declared "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You" (Matt. 26:35). In Matt. 26:74-75 we read, "Then he began to curse and swear, 'I do not know the man!' And immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, 'Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly."

Now with these things in mind, let's look at the dialogue between Jesus and Peter in our text. We can only imagine how "out of place" Peter now felt being with Jesus. Where he had once been comfortable and self-assured as one of the chosen apostles; he now is before Jesus as one who had

failed Him so miserably. Self confidence and faith had withered to self-doubt and a feeling of being an utter “failure.” How could he even bear to look into the face of the resurrected Son of God?

I know of no passage that fails to express the English meaning from the original language more than this one. In the Koine Greek, the language of the New Testament, there are different words that are translated “love.” Agape is the kind of love that is perfect and pure; selfless and active. Agape is looking out for the interest of the one being loved, putting them ahead of self. (see John 13:35; 15:9-13; Rom. 5:8.) There is also a lesser kind of love that would describe the affection that we might have for a friend. That word is (phileo). It is described as “to be a friend to (fond of [an individual or an object]), that is, have affection for (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling).”²

It is vital to the understanding of this passage to keep these two Greek words in mind while noting their meaning and usage in this passage.

Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love (agape) Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love (phileo) You." [How could Peter say, unequivocally, I love (agape) you, after he had so miserably failed him?] He said to him, "Tend My lambs." (16) He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love (agape) Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love (phileo) You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." (17) He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love (phileo) Me?" [notice that the Lord changed the word from agape to phileo] Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love (phileo) Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (phileo) You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep. [Peter was “grieved” not because Jesus asked him a third time, but because Jesus lowered the standard.] We can only imagine the heartbreak Peter was feeling. Before fear and isolation enveloped Peter during the crucifixion he would have boldly said, “Lord, how could you ask such a thing? Of course I love (agape) you!” But his actions showed how miserably he failed to agape the Lord. He even denied friendship (phileo) with the Lord! Now he is truly “grieved” (lupeo) as he comes face-to-face with the Lord and what he has done.

The rest of this passage shows the compassion for, and continued confidence in, Peter that the Lord had. (18) "Truly, truly, I say to you,

when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." (19) Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God.

He told Peter that he was going to die for the Lord. Was that a horrible thing to hear? Would it be for you if you were in Peter's place? NO! What a wonderful piece of prophecy! Jesus was telling Peter that he was going to have faith great enough to be the kind of man he thought himself to be when he said, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You" (Matt. 26:35). He didn't die WITH Jesus, but he knew now he was going to be allowed another chance; to LIVE FOR Him, and that he would eventually die FOR Jesus. We can only imagine the joy and relief that he felt!

And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!" And Peter did just that. He became one of the greatest apostles and servants of Christ that has ever lived. He was given the "keys to the kingdom" (Matt. 16:18-19) and allowed to preach the first gospel sermon to both the Jews (Acts 2) and the Gentiles (Acts 10).

What does this mean for you and me? It means that, even though we may have failed the Lord miserably, it is not too late. Isn't that great news? We may have failed the Lord in the past, but with *lupeo* (Godly Sorrow that leads to repentance - 2 Cor. 7:11) we have another chance to prove to the Lord, and to ourselves, what kind of Christians we really are. After their repentance of the things mentioned in the first letter Paul said to the Corinthians, (2 Cor. 7:10-11) For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. (11) For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow [*lupeo*], has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

1. *G3076-Strong's Greek & Hebrew Dictionaries*

2. *G5368-ibid*

Does One Sin Really Matter?

Steve Harper

After the children of Israel conquered the land of Canaan, it was divided amongst the brethren, and they were all sent to their respective territories. The Reubenites, Gadites, and a half tribe of Manasseh had claim to territories east of Jordan, so they returned and began to settle into the land, just as did the other tribes. Being separated, by the Jordan river, from the rest of their brethren, they felt it necessary to erect an altar as some sort of testimony to other people that they indeed had a part with the rest of the nation (*Josh. 22:21-29*).

The rest of Israel, however, not knowing their intentions, feared that their brethren had already strayed from God's will and, as a result, were about to bring His wrath upon the nation as a whole. Leaders from each of the other tribes quickly gathered together and confronted the eastern tribes regarding what they had done. Fearing the possibility of the eastern tribes having already turned away from God, they were reminded of the sin of Achan and the consequences of his actions. As part of the warning to the eastern tribes, they asked, "*Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity*" (*Josh. 22:20*). They feared that if the eastern tribes were already going into idolatry, as a result of the sins of a few, the rest of the nation would suffer.

God no longer works in the same way He did in Old Testament times, but is not the principle of sin's consequences still the same? Isn't it true that sometimes we are not the only ones who have to suffer for our sins? Don't get me wrong, now. I'm not trying to say we inherit sin from our parents, or anything like that; rather, the results of sin sometimes affect more than just the sinner.

Achan is a good example. Here was a man who, unbeknownst to anyone else, took some of the spoils from the city of Jericho and hid them in the ground under his tent. "*...Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: when I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.*" {*Joshua*

7:20,21} His family might have known about it after the fact (it would be hard to dig a hole under your tent without someone noticing), but none outside his family knew about it. Joshua didn't know. The army that gathered to fight against Ai didn't know. The rest of Israel didn't know.

But God knew. *"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we give account. {Hebrews 4:13} Nothing gets past the eye of an all-seeing God!*

And when the Israelites took just a few men to fight against the small city of Ai, 36 men lost their lives because Achan had sinned against God. No, Achan did not die alone in his iniquity.

And when his sin was discovered, still more joined Achan in death. *"Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had" (Josh. 7:24) were brought before the whole congregation of Israel and stoned with stones and then burned them with fire (v. 25).*

Occasionally, when we hear of others who are determined to live in sin, or sometimes to commit just one particular act, the excuse is given, **"It's not going to hurt anyone,"** or, **"It's my choice, and it doesn't affect anyone else,"** the implied meaning being that we should not try to stop them from acting out their sinful intentions because "no one's going to be hurt" by it. Do you see the deception in such statements? It sounds as if the devil has again changed just one word, this time from "EVERY" one to "NO" one.

First of all, it is a lie to say "no one" will be hurt, and, second, others may also be affected by the sinner's sinful actions. EVERY sin affects someone in a negative way, because sin separates us from God and, if continued, causes us to no longer be walking in the light as He is in the light. Why would anyone want to knowingly commit an act that would cause spiritual harm? Try walking in darkness for even a short period, and you quickly learn how easy it is to stumble, trip, and fall.

Without going into an extensive or comprehensive list, we should understand that many sins DO affect others and may cause them to die, either physically or --- more importantly --- spiritually. Sins such as drunkenness may cause us to drive while under alcohol's influence and cause an accident, which could literally cause another person's death. Sins

such as fornication may lead to pregnancy, which many have ended by abortion, the death of an innocent, unborn child. But EVERY sin presents the danger of causing others to cease from living godly lives or hinders their coming to God in the first place. The two conditions--abandoning God for sin, and never coming to him at all--have the same result--spiritual death.

Yes, sin can --- and often does --- affect others, so we cannot close our eyes to the consequences of our sins, regardless of our positions in life. God brought King Ahaz down because he had encouraged moral decline in Judah. *"For the Lord brought Judah low because Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the Lord."* (2 Chr. 28:19) His own sins were enough to influence the nation to practice sinfulness, and he will someday have to answer for that. Our national leaders will someday also have to answer for their influence on the nation, but remember that you don't have to be a national leader to affect the rest of the nation. Achan was certainly no national leader in Israel, and look at the effects of HIS sin!

So, if you are simply strolling through life and have not obeyed the words of Jesus Christ, and you think your refusal to obey won't harm anyone, think again! Or, if you have decided you can participate in "just one" sin without causing harm, think again! Your refusal to obey may cause your friends to believe that obedience is not important because YOU do not think it is important. And when you commit even one sin, it may be that someone will die spiritually because of your influence.

I cannot help but think of the husband and father who is now living without Christ, and who has nothing to do with God. He probably thinks he's "OK," and that it's a personal decision that won't affect anyone else. But what about his children? His wife? *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."* {Gal.6:7,8}

Do you still think you're the only one affected by your sins? None of else lives on an island. Our lives have some effect on others -- good or bad. Think again! ***

The Plan of Salvation

By Jon W. Quinn

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Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (ACTS 2:38)

Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

The Sinner's Prayer:

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

Final Page 11.5; May, 2004

Islam and Jesus
By Jon W. Quinn

The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, spoke God's will for us. He said, "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should speak to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8). Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me." (John 14:6). These are things that faithful Christians believe and accept because they are the words of the Lord, the Son of God.

In the year 570 A.D. a man entered history and began preaching a gospel contrary to that which had already been delivered to us by Jesus and His apostles. He instituted many religious reforms and correctly taught there was one God. His followers still use the Arabic word that means “one God” today to talk of Him... that word is “Allah.” The name of the religion he founded is “Islam” which means “submission” and refers to submitting to God. The Scriptures they use consists of the sayings of the founder written down by others and gathered together in the Qur’an. The man’s name was “Mohammed.” He is esteemed by Muslims as God’s greatest prophet. His teachings evolved somewhat through his life. His early teachings were much more peaceful and tolerant than his later teachings. Perhaps this is why Muslims have such different views of the things he said.

Mohammed erroneously thought that Christians worshipped three Gods; the Father, the Son and Mary. He believed that Jesus was a great prophet, but not the Son of God. He rejected the foundation of the gospel, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Christians ought to have good will toward Muslims everywhere, and hope and pray that one day they might come to accept the truth about God’s Son Jesus; Savior of the world. It is sad that in many places on earth, just speaking these things could result in death.

Jesus became the Son of Man that we might become the sons and daughters of God. He came to our world from heaven - where there is no fear, cold, darkness, pain or death. Here He lived in poverty. He never attended a prestigious school of theology. Yet even His enemies remarked , “Never a man so spake.” (John 7:46). He laid aside His heavenly robes and perfect splendor to take upon Himself human form. He left majestic heavenly courts to be born in a stable. He left adoring myriads of angels and other wonderful creatures, mighty, beautiful and wise to be welcomed by a small band of shepherds. The Scriptures say, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” (2 Cor. 8:9).

The teachings of Scripture is that Jesus is “the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:17-18). When Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by Me“, He meant it (note again John 14:6). If what Jesus said was a lie, then He cannot be a pathway

to God, nor a prophet of God, at all. If what He said was true, then He is the only pathway to God.

Yes, there are sincere, dedicated worshippers of the Islamic faith. But neither sincerity nor the intensity of a belief can make a wrong idea right. It does not matter how strongly or sincerely I may believe that $1+1=3$... it still equals 2. And Jesus still equals the only way to God.

Jesus came to prepare a lost people for spiritual riches and ultimate heavenly glory - and in all the universe He was the only one that could do it. He died, then conquered death, and has ascended back into heaven promising to one day return. At that time, He has promised that the tombs will open, the dead will rise and be changed from corruptible matter into spiritual, judgment will take place, and He will take His people home. Every tomb will empty itself of its contents at the sound of His voice... that is, every tomb except for one. It is already empty.