

Expository Files 11.7

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Front Page -

“Preach To The People”

Warren E. Berkley

Ronald Reagan was the Great Communicator, not because he hired good speech writers; not because he was trained as an actor; not because his policies were relevant and sound; not because of political achievement. **He was a Great Communicator because he talked to people.**

Mr. Reagan wrote and broadcast his own radio essays in the 1970's. In one of them he offered his misgivings about modern translations of the Bible, the “Good News” version in particular. One opinion he expressed in the essay was, instead of changing the language of the text and diminishing the beauty and richness of the English language (cultural accommodation), we should take “the people to religion” by “lifting them with the beauty of language that has outlived the centuries.” (**Reagan, In His Own Hand**: p.#410).

Likewise, our task is to take people to the gospel; to connect with people by using the Word to show them their need and God's answer. Throughout the New Testament, this communication to people is given priority. This is the work of evangelism. Are you a participant?

“Pursue peace with all people,” (Heb. 12:24).

“...having favor with all the people,” (Acts 2:47).

“...they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead,” (Acts 4:2).

“Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life,” (Acts 5:20).

“And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead,” (Acts 10:42).

“So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch,” (Acts 11:26).

“Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on,” (Acts 13:15).

“Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,” (Acts 19:4,5).

The Promises of God To Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3

Warren E. Berkley

If you want to understand the Bible, start reading. There is no better place to start than in the beginning, Genesis. Commit yourself to a personal journey throughout the entire Bible. Begin in Genesis. Read the entire Bible (perhaps based on an annual schedule). When you finish, read it again. If you will do this, year after year – with all perseverance and diligence - you can develop a good working (practical) knowledge of the Bible to use in your life.

Begin in Genesis because that is the beginning. If you skip Genesis you will come to text after Genesis that will make no sense. There will be statements in the New Testament you cannot deal with if you have not read the book of Genesis.

One passage you will come to in this good pursuit is Genesis 12:1-3. Being familiar with this passage will provide good insight into the book of Romans and Galatians, for example. This has to do with the origin of the Jewish nation, the disposition of the land we now call Palestine, and the spiritual blessings we can enjoy in Christ today.

*“Now the Lord had said to Abram: *Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*” {Gen. 12:1-3}*

In the New King James, the New International Version, and the King James, this is written as ***an explanation and in past tense***: “Now the Lord **had said** to Abram.” In the genealogical account in the last part of chapter eleven we are introduced to Terah, the father of Abram. We are told the family moved from Ur to Haran, and at Haran Terah died. Genesis 12 begins by explaining

why they moved: "...the Lord had said to Abram: Get out of your country....."

In this communication from God to Abram, we discover three distinctive promises and we may refer to the three as – *the land promise, the national promise and the spiritual promise.*

1. The Land Promise: "A land that I will show you."
2. The National Promise: "A great nation."
3. The Spiritual Promise: "All the families of the earth shall be blessed."

In order to understand these promises, we must follow them through the text of Scripture to the points of fulfillment. We should not just read the promises, forget them and go on. In reading the Old Testament, when we come to a prophecy or a promise - we need to keep reading to find the point or points of fulfillment. If we neglect that there will be a hole in our Bible knowledge. Our task is to track these three promises.

The Land Promise

God called Abram out of his homeland, "to a land" that He would show him. That's in Gen. 12:1 (the last phrase). Also in Genesis 12, observe the statement in verse 7. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So, a land would be given to the descendants of Abram – *that's the essence of the first promise.*

When you read this promise of land to the descendants of Abram (or Abraham), one thing immediately comes to mind. If you have read the Bible, you know something about the history of the Old Testament. When you come to this promise of land to the descendants of Abraham, one thing enters your mind and that is → **the children of Israel entering into the land of Canaan!** That conclusion is correct. It is taught in Scripture.

The Bible says, *that the promise of land to the descendants of Abraham was fulfilled when God gave them the promised land.* Consider this reality as revealed in these places:

Ex. 6:2-8

²And God spoke to Moses and said to him: “I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD I was not known to them. ⁴I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. ⁵And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. ⁶Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ⁷I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.’”

This is what God said to Moses, the leader of Israelite nation. At the time God said this to Moses they were not there yet. But this statement adds testimony and confirms that the land promise to Abraham’s descendants has to do with the Israelite nation entering the promised land, Canaan.

Deut. 1:6-8

⁶“The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: ‘You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. ⁷Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring places in the plain, in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates.

Moses was speaking to the nation of Israel in the land of Moab, east of the Jordan.

Joshua 1:1-6.

¹After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, saying: ²“Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. ³Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. ⁴From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. ⁵No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. ⁶Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

This was “after the death of Moses.” God said to Joshua, “Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, **to the land which I am giving to them...**”

Acts 7:2-5 & vss. 44-46

²And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, ³and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' ⁴Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. ⁵And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him.

⁴⁴"Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, ⁴⁵which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, ⁴⁶who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷But Solomon built Him a house.

Psalms 105:7-13, 42-45

⁷ He is the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.
⁸ He remembers His covenant forever,
The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations,
⁹ The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
¹⁰ And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel as an everlasting covenant,
¹¹ Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance,"
¹² When they were few in number,
Indeed very few, and strangers in it.
¹³ When they went from one nation to another,
From one kingdom to another people,

⁴² For He remembered His holy promise,
And Abraham His servant.
⁴³ He brought out His people with joy,
His chosen ones with gladness.
⁴⁴ He gave them the lands of the Gentiles,
And they inherited the labor of the nations,
⁴⁵ That they might observe His statutes
And keep His laws.
Praise the LORD!

God did what He said. He said this land would be given to the descendants of Abraham. The Bible says God did that. He fulfilled that promise. Joshua believed this, for just before his death he said to the people: "...not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you," (Josh. 23:15).

The Second Promise: A Nation

God fulfilled the second promise when He formed a great nation from the descendants of Abraham. The following passages show the fulfillment of the second promise.

In **Gen. 46:3**, God spoke to Israel, the man also called Jacob, and God said: "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there." This is what God said to Abraham's grandson Jacob (called Israel after Gen. 32) and the descendants of Abraham were called **Israel, the children of Israel; Israelites – who went down to Egypt as the family of Joseph, but came out – a great nation.**

After the family arrived in Egypt and were cared for by Joseph, he died, and the family grew. **Exodus 1:7** says: "But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mightily; and the land was filled with them."

In Deut. 1, Moses is addressing the nation of Israel, east of the Jordan, with these words:

1:8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD swear unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.

1:9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone:

1:10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

1:11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!)

Already in Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy there are these statements leaving no doubt, when God formed the Jewish nation, ***He was fulfilling His promise to Abraham – multiplying his seed into a great nation.***

Hebrews 11:11-12

¹¹By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

God formed a nation out of the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and gave them the land of Canaan in the days of Joshua. This is the fulfillment of two of the promises God made to Abraham: *The land promise and the national promise*. We have one more promise, but something needs attention first.

When we talk about God forming a nation from the descendants of Abraham and giving them the land of Canaan there is something else to be considered: ***God told this nation, God told His people – if they sinned, they would be driven out of the land He had given them:***

Lev. 26:27-39

²⁷ *‘And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me,*

²⁸ *then I also will walk contrary to you in fury;*

and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

²⁹ *You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.*

³⁰ *I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols;*

and My soul shall abhor you.

³¹ *I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas.*

³² *I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it.*

³³ *I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you;*

your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.

³⁴ *Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies’ land;*

then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths.

³⁵ *As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—*

for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.

³⁶ *‘And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies;*

the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee;

they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues.

³⁷ *They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues;*

and you shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

³⁸ *You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.*

³⁹ *And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands;*

also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away.

Deut. 30:17-20

¹⁷*But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."*

Let's put all this together: God promised Abraham that a great nation would be formed from his descendants and they would be given the land of Canaan. But God said clearly, sin would result in their being driven from the land. Bible students know that is exactly what happened! The Israelites sinned grievously, and although Jehovah was patient and longsuffering with them – He eventually did what He said.

The northern kingdom of Israel was carried away into Assyrian Captivity in 733 B.C. (2 Kings 17:5-6, 22-23).

The southern kingdom of Judah was carried away into Babylonian Captivity in about four stages of expulsions (2 Chron. 36, Dan. 1, 2 Kings 24).

God said this captivity would last seventy years, then only a remnant would be restored to the land, not the whole nation (Isa. 10:20-25; Jer. 23:3-4).

Now back to the promises to Abraham, revealed in Genesis 12.

We know about the fulfillment of two of those promises: God formed a nation from the offspring of Abraham; that nation was Israel; the land promise was fulfilled when they came into the land of Canaan under Joshua. We have one more promise:

“And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

We started our study in Genesis in chapter eleven and twelve with our focus on Abraham and his family; then Isaac; then Jacob or Israel; then the nation formed, called Israel, and the giving of Canaan to that nation.

Now in this third promise the statement is not confined to an immediate, single family or a single nation, but “all **all the families of the earth!**”

What did God do that holds opportunity for “all?” What did God do - what offer, what gift that is available to bless “all the families of the earth?”

This is about Christ!

Acts 3:24-26.

²⁴Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. ²⁵You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ ²⁶To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

Gal. 3:7-9

⁷Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” ⁹So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Gal. 3:13-18

¹³Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), ¹⁴that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

¹⁵Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. ¹⁶Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ. ¹⁷And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Isn't this clear? God fulfilled the third promise when He sent Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the world. Today – anybody can respond to the Good News of Christ and be saved. The gospel is God's offer of salvation in Christ – to “all the families of the earth.”

Whoever you are; whatever your blood line or national origin – you can hear, believe and obey the gospel. And thus become a participant in the spiritual promise God made to Abraham. All three promises to Abraham, in Genesis 12, **fulfilled!** God formed a nation from his offspring – gave them the land of Canaan. Then Christ came. Paul said, in Galatians 3:26-28 ...

²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Does God have a nation today? He does. **Peter wrote this to Christians:** “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Pet. 2:9.

I need to deal with one more matter that concerns all of this, and is relevant to things you may hear in our time. God had a plan. In bringing His plan to completion, He chose and used various people. He formed a nation from the offspring of Abraham and God did everything that He promised. To use the language of Joshua in Josh. 24 – “not one thing has failed.” God had a plan ... it led to Jesus Christ ... so that today, “whosoever believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.”

This means the Biblical nation of Israel has served the purpose for which it was divinely created, and there are no obligations we have as Christians to hold the modern nation of Israel above other nations; no biblical grounds to esteem the modern nation of Israel above others! (See Acts 10:35)

Now I should be careful here, in what I say and you should read carefully. We may feel great sympathy toward the modern nation of Israel. We may be in favor of political friendship. We may observe how those people have been mis-treated and want to help.

There is little doubt – the Israelis have been the victims of terror. So – we may feel great sympathy toward the modern nation of Israel, and we may agree that the United States should maintain a good relationship with them. But all of this cannot be argued on Biblical grounds. **We have no instructions from God** – to maintain higher loyalty to modern Israel, above other peoples.

In Romans chapters 9-11, Paul argues against any theocratic definition of Israel. He acknowledges the role Israel had before Christ came, but denies any theocratic definition of this nation. He says, “whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.”

Let me illustrate what we need to guard against.

Jerry Falwell: “God has raised up America in these last days for the cause of world evangelism and for the protection of His people, the Jews. I don’t think America has any other right or reason for existence than those purposes... to stand against Israel is to stand against God.”

A pro-Israeli Kansas journalist: “As a gentile American, as a Christian who considers loyalty to God above all human commitments, if the choice ever comes between loyalty to Israel, I have no choice. I must stand by Israel.”

The bible doesn’t teach us this! The religious doctrine called pre-millennialism *demands this position* – but the Bible doesn’t tell us to stand with Israel, no matter what! God did everything He said to Abraham. And the modern nation of Israel is not the same as the biblical nation, used by God before Christ.

When people talk with you about: Israel’s biblical right to the land ...protecting them today, so that future purposes can be fulfilled - that’s the language and teaching of premillennialism not the Bible. The only thing left for the Jews today is – to believe and obey Christ. Jews or Gentiles – “whosever!” Our loyalty must be directed to Christ, who is our only hope of peace.

*Based on article by Kevin Kay,
and material by Ferrell Jenkins.*

The Meaning of Faith from Hebrews 11:30

John Hagenbuch

“By Faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.” – Hebrews 11:30

There is no denying that the Bible teaches us that we are saved by faith. The apostle Paul wrote: *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1). Paul could also write, as he did in Ephesians 2:8-9: *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”* So we recognize that it is by faith that we must live in order to receive the eternal life that God has promised to those who have been faithful to Him. (See also: Hebrews 11:6; Revelation 2:10)

Many cannot understand how there would be anything for us to do (apart from believing) if salvation is by faith. But the faith that Paul is speaking of is not just a belief in Christ. It is a trust in God that moves us to obey Him. That was the point that the Hebrew writer was making about faith...

At Jericho, the walls fell by faith AFTER they were encircled for seven days. When did faith avail for Joshua? When did his faith give him the victory? It was AFTER he obeyed the Lord! We are saved by our faith, but when? Is it the moment we believe, and before our faith causes us to obey God's commands? No!

Listen to what James wrote about our saving faith:

“But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?” - James 2:18-22

Our faith saves when it moves us to obey God's commands! A case in point is the conversation Jesus had with a wealthy young man in Matthew 19:16-22. The young man came, recognizing Jesus as a good teacher who had the words to life. The young man asked the question, "*Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?*" His confidence in Jesus was great. However, Jesus response was too much to ask of him. Jesus said, "*If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me*" (v. 21). The young man's faith was not strong enough to impel him to make such a sacrifice. The next verse records, "*But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions*" (v. 22).

A principle is established here that is actually repeated time and again in scripture: **A man's faith is sufficient only if it leads to obedience to the commands of our Lord.** Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23:

"Not everyone who says to Me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Here were people who were not doing what Jesus had commanded. Their faith did not lead them to submit to His direction and His authority! Jesus also went on to say, that the one who is recognized as the person who is wise is one who not simply hears His word, but who also DOES his words, because of the faith he has in Him.

When was the city given to Joshua? After he had completed ALL the things that God told him to do. What if Joshua only marched once around the city and then thought, "This is foolishness," and so ceased to fully obey God's command? What if he only marched six times around? If he failed to comply with all of God's instructions he would have demonstrated **a lack of faith**. There is no way he could have trusted in God if he failed to hear **and** obey the Heavenly Father.

"**By faith** the walls of Jericho fell down, **AFTER** they were encircled for seven days." There is no question that faith is important, but faith will never stand alone without obedience. From works of righteousness – works that

manifest the faith that is pleasing to Him, we must fully obey God's commands if we are to demonstrate the meaning of faith.

John Hagenbuch

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Do Not Be Bound Together With Unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) By Jon W. Quinn

The word “fellowship” means “joint participation toward a common goal”. Though not a religious word in and of itself, much like other words (church, faith, etc.) it takes on a specifically spiritual connotation when used in the Bible. Not all religious fellowship is pleasing to God. It displeases God when fellowship involves the wrong people (1 Corinthians 5:2), the wrong actions (Acts 15:24) and/or the wrong motives (3 John 9).

Consider the text from which the title of this article is taken:

”Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' Says the Lord Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

What About Marriage To An Unbeliever?

“But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the lord, that the wife should not leave her husband....” (1 Corinthians 7:10; cf. vs. 12,13).

Paul taught that the believer was not to leave his/her (unbelieving) spouse. This being so, then our text forbidding being bound to unbelievers does not necessarily apply to marriage to unbelievers. The text does not say “Do not become bound to unbelievers...” but “Do not be bound to

unbelievers...” This means that if marriage were the application, then Paul would tell Christians married to unbelievers to leave them, to not to continue being married, or bound to the unbelieving spouse they are with. But he does the opposite; he tells them to stay, so to make this passage speak about marriage is incorrect. There are an eternity of reasons that makes it unwise for a Christian to decide to marry an unbeliever. A good rule to consider in marrying another is this: “Will this person help me and any children we have to go to heaven?” If this question cannot be answered with an honest “yes” then marriage should be out of the question, whether the person claims to be a believer or not! It may be unwise, but it is not necessarily sinful to marry an unbeliever.

Paul's Five Synonyms

“Therefore, do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.” (Ephesians 5:7,8).

In our text, Paul uses five synonyms as he talks about the matter which helps us to understand what fellowship is.

a). Partnership (6:14). What partnership does righteousness have with lawlessness. The understood answer is “none!”. The child of God must not engage in lawlessness, whether by himself or in partnership with another who will take him in that direction and exercise that kind of control over him (Romans (6:13,19).

b). Fellowship (6:14). What fellowship does light have with darkness? “None!”. The two do not mix. We must not involve ourselves in a relationship that will darken our light! (Ephesians 5:5-12; John 3:19-21).

c). Harmony (6:15). What harmony exists between Christ and Belial? “None!”. Christ and Satan are as opposed as can be. You'll never find the two harmonizing together.

d). In Common (6:15). What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? “Nothing!”. Spiritually speaking, they have different everythings. Purpose, goal, hope, lord, standard, and finally, eternal destiny.

e). Agreement (6:16). What agreement does the temple of God have with idols? “None!”. Idolatry, in whatever form, is a horrible insult unto

God. Believers are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). We must not be a part of a partnership that would require us to erect an idol in our heart.

What Does It Mean To Be Bound Together With Unbelievers?

“And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them.” (Ephesians 5:11).

Being bound (being “unequally yoked” in the King James Version) has to do with joining an unbeliever in sin. It means to be in partnership, fellowship, harmony, having in common, being in agreement with an unbeliever in that which is sinful. To involve myself in a relationship where sin will, or probably will, occur is worse than a mistake!

Exactly what kind of human relationships do we apply this teaching to as faithful children of God? All of them! Whether business, marriage, family, friendship, recreation, political, social, or whatever. We must join in no partnership that will involve us in sin. Earlier, we pointed out that this text does not necessarily apply to marriage to an unbeliever. This is so, but it could apply. For example, Jesus said some marriages would constitute adultery (Matthew 19:3-9). If my marriage to an unbeliever constituted adultery, which is a sin, then I must not marry (or remain married) to that person. But the principle also applies to any other human relationship I may enter.

Are All Relationships With Unbelievers Prohibited?

“I wrote to you before not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean the immoral people of the world... for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person...” (1 Corinthians 5:9-11).

Not all relationships with unbelievers are forbidden; just those that would compromise our faith. We certainly can eat, help, play with, work with and even marry unbelievers without committing sin, though not all these partnerships may be the wisest things we have done. Jesus, in fact, ate with sinners, but did not participate in sin with them (Mark 2:16; Hebrews 4:15).

As we look at our text again, we will see that the partnership with unbelievers that Paul is forbidding is participating with them in something sinful, or “unclean”.

I can be married to an unbeliever and can remain so, but I cannot join with him/her in something the Lord condemns. I can run a business with an unbeliever, but should the choice be forced upon me to practice dishonesty, then I must refuse. At any social or recreational gathering, I am free to participate unless participation would bring about a violation of the law of Christ. Then, I must withdraw and “not be bound to unbelievers.”

It is just as Paul said, “Therefore, come out from their midst, and be separate,” says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean.’ The prohibited “bounding” is in the touching” that which is unclean.

The Unclean Spirit
(Mark 1:21-28)
by Wayne S. Walker

During His earthly ministry, Jesus performed many different kinds of miracles--He healed the sick; He made the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the mute to speak; He stilled tempests; He turned water into wine; He caused a few loaves and fishes to feed multitudes; He even raised the dead. While unbelievers deny the truthfulness of all these miracles, perhaps the most controversial kind of miracle that Jesus did was casting out demons. One such incident that occurred very early in His earthly ministry is recorded in Mark 1:21-28. According to the Biblical record, this is not a myth, legend, or fictional account. It is presented as an actual fact. So what can we learn from the story of the unclean spirit?

First, this man did have what is called an unclean spirit. "Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit" (Mark 1:23). The modernistic view is that there is not now and never has been any such thing as unclean or evil spirits. To the modernist, this was just the ancient, superstitious way of explaining natural phenomena such as epilepsy, mental illness, or other physical conditions. It is true that in the Biblical accounts being under the influence of an unclean spirit may sometimes have had various outward manifestations such as mental or physical illnesses in certain cases. However, if we believe the Bible, we must accept the fact that

at least in Bible times, unclean spirits did exist and were active. The Bible also refers to them as demons (compare Matthew 8:28 to Mark 5:1-2).

What or who were these demons? The word itself in the Greek language refers to the concept of the spirit of a dead person come back to haunt the earth, evidencing what many in ancient times may have believed demons were. While the Bible does not teach this concept, the fact is that we really do not know exactly who or what they were. Many believe that perhaps they were fallen angels (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6). We do know that the devil is said to have had his angels to do his bidding (Matthew 12:22-29, 25:41). So, it is at least within the realm of possibility that demons might have been fallen angels who were allowed in Bible times to be on earth and inhabit people. There is a lot about them, their exact identity, and their origin that we do not know, but, again, Bible believers must accept the fact that demons or unclean spirits did exist and do the things recorded about them in the scriptures.

Second, this demon knew who Jesus was. "And he cried out, saying, 'Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!'" (Mark 1:23-24). Therefore, we can say that the demon obviously believed in Jesus, because He called Him the Holy One of God. This shows that true, saving faith is more than just believing in Jesus and acknowledging Him as divine. "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!" (James 2:19ff). Rather, the Bible teaches that true, saving faith is something that works in harmony with God's will, that obeys God's teachings in all things (Galatians 5:6, Hebrews 5:8-9). Thus, we can understand that we are not justified by faith only but by a faith that acts, that works, that obeys, as illustrated in Hebrews 11:4-8. Each of the individuals named was blessed because "by faith" he DID something. If all it takes to be saved is just to believe that Jesus is divine and acknowledge Him as being from God, then this unclean spirit will be saved!

Third, Jesus had the power to cast out the unclean spirit. "But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be quiet, and come out of him!' And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him" (Mark 1:25-26). The fact is that Jesus used this same power on many other occasions (Matthew 4:23-25, 8:16-17; Mark 1:32-34, 3:7-12; Luke 4:40-41). Furthermore, Jesus gave His apostles and others this power also (Matthew 10:8; Mark 16:17-18; Luke 10:1-17; Acts 19:11-12).

What was the purpose of all this? The Bible says that it was to confirm the message being preached so that people would believe that Jesus is the Christ (Mark 16:19-20, John 20:30-31). Thus, we conclude from what is revealed in the scriptures that demons were allowed to be on earth and do what they did in Bible times in order to show the power of God, Christ, and their inspired messengers over Satan, thus confirming the message of the gospel as being of divine origin.

Fourth, the casting out of this demon led to the conclusion that a new doctrine was being taught. "Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, 'What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey Him.' And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region of Galilee" (Mark 1:27-28). The Bible teaches that the scriptures, which were revealed and confirmed by the inspired men who had the power to cast out demons and perform other miracles, are complete and provide everything that we need in our relationship to God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, we conclude that we have all things that pertain to life and godliness because the faith has been once for all delivered to the saints (2 Peter 1:3-4, Jude 3).

However, there are many in the religious world who still believe that miracles are being performed, including the casting out of demons, and they have been known to practice supposed exorcisms. Remember the movie "The Exorcist" of a few years ago? Yet, if that were true, then it would be evidence that new doctrine is being revealed. What did Paul say about anyone who would come and claim to be preaching new doctrine? "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8-9).

The fact is that the casting out of demons was part of that miraculous activity in Bible times related to the revelation and confirmation of the word. Miracles were involved with revelation in part, and Paul said that what was in part would be done away when that which is perfect would come (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). And we do have the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). If demons are being cast out today, then we should have new doctrine. However, since the Bible says that there is no new doctrine being revealed after the New Testament was completed, and in fact forbids

preaching any such new doctrine, then we have to conclude that demons are no longer active in the same way as they were in Bible times and thus there is no casting out of demons today.

Jesus talked about those who claim to cast out demons in His name but are not acting by His authority. "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:22-23). Those who claim to be casting out demons today fall into the category discussed by Paul as he described the great apostasy and said, "The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9). They are "lying wonders" that the devil uses to deceive people.

However, there are some important lessons that we can learn from the Biblical accounts of unclean spirits who did actually exist in the first century. One such lesson is that the power of Christ is greater than the power of the devil. Satan may not operate directly as he did in the Bible times through demons, but he is still active. He has his false ministers (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). He is the source of every temptation (1 Thessalonians 3:5, James 1:13-15). He is as dangerous as a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8). He wants to lead us into sin and keep us in sin so that we can be lost. Yet, Christ has the power to forgive our sins so that we might be freed from Satan's control (Romans 6:3-18). And He has the power to help us overcome the influence of the devil in our daily lives (1 Corinthians 10:13). "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Topic Page

What is Spirituality?

Mark Roberts

The term "spiritual" and "spirituality" are being tossed about quite a bit these days. Almost anything can qualify as "spiritual." Phil Jackson, coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, a NBA basketball team, has authored *Sacred Hoops*, a book about his spiritual journey in coaching ball. Art exhibits proclaim they are part of an emerging "new spirituality." Many books have been written,

with authors making the talk show circuit, that discuss how to find one's spiritual center or be a truly spiritual person. Everyone seems to be more interested than ever in finding spirituality. Yet few seem to be asking for a definition of exactly what they are looking for. Just what is spirituality?

In our society, spirituality has come to mean three or four key ideas. First, much of today's spirituality movement is certain **no one source holds all truth**. Elizabeth Lesser has written one of the most popular books on today's spirituality, *The New American Spirituality: A Seeker's Guide*. In it she speaks of how she has discovered a "deeply personal religious path—one that wandered through Zen Buddhist monasteries, meandered through Christian churches, dabbled in African and Native American traditions" Thus "using her own journey as the road map, Lesser discusses why so many Americans are coming to a deeply personal form of religion — one that does not prescribe to a specific doctrine or definition of God." To find your own spirituality you need to wade through all sorts of different ideas and traditions to find what appeals to you, what you like and what makes you feel good. That leads to the second key idea, which is **do what you want, how you want, when you want**. American spirituality really is Home Depot spirituality — it's do it yourself religion. For example, one fellow has written a book about the spirituality of eating, saying that "eating connects us to the mystery and source of all living things." Others are practicing vision quests, nature hikes, or just about any thing else any one wants to do. Do what you like and then just call it a spiritual experience. Of course, a big part of this will be **no condemnation of any kind**. No one should judge any one else's spiritual experience, regardless of how silly or sick it may be. You do what you want, I will do what I want and we will all just agree that we are all very spiritual people. If this sounds ridiculous, remember that there is **no objective reality**. God doesn't really exist — we create Him. In this new spirituality there are not absolute standards of right and wrong that apply to all people in all times. Ethics fluctuate and change with every situation. God is not a real Being, an objective reality that has factual existence. No, instead God becomes something we make up, and that we can craft to suit ourselves.

A close examination of American spirituality reminds one of Romans 1 doesn't it? Today's spiritual gurus claim wisdom but are only leading people deeper and deeper into paganism and immorality of every kind.

The Bible offers a very different definition and idea of spirituality. 1 Corinthians 3:3 tells us "for you are still *carnal*. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and *behaving like mere*

men?" To be carnal is to behave like men, thus its opposite (spirituality) is simply to behave like God. **Spirituality is simply being godly, or possessing godliness.** A fine working definition of spirituality is knowing God so I can please God. That is what godliness (spirituality) is all about. Paul makes this clear: "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). Spirituality is forever tied to knowing God and doing God's will. Let's break these ideas out.

First, I must know God. Paul writes "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8). This first step must be taken very seriously. We need to know God, to understand Him, to love Him for all that He is. To go past this to obedience runs the risk of failing to have relationship with our Creator. God wants us to be His children, to know and love Him (see John 1:12). Do you know God? Spiritual things are those things that are in harmony with God's character. Do you know His character? Spirituality is being like God. Do you know what God is like? The spiritual person behaves and acts like God behaves and acts. Do you know how God behaves and acts? The beginning of spirituality is the determination to know God.

If you are wondering how to come to know God like this then I must tell you the only source of such information is God's word. Most people want to have some sort of experience, to feel something, to have a mystical encounter of some sort. Yet God never tells us that such experiences are the stuff of which truly knowing Him is made. God never says "feel this way" but instead "know me through My word." Titus 1:1 simply says "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the *acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness.*"

Secondly, this knowledge of God must lead me to please God. So many want spirituality to be an excuse to be free of restraint, to do as they please. Yet the Bible shows us that the truly spiritual person obeys God. "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar" (1 John 2:3-4). My knowledge of who God is, His character, love for me, mercy extended to me changes me, causes me to do things, be things. Isn't this the pattern of Jesus' life? Who can deny that He was deeply spiritual person? Yet it is Jesus who said "I can of Myself do nothing. . . . *because I*

do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me" (John 5:30).
Like it or not, real spirituality is rooted in obedience.

Judges 21:25 tells us of a time when people were interested in spirituality but not interested in God. So we live in those times again. Sadly, sacred exercise plans and the art of the inner meal simply cannot deliver what people are questing for: a genuine relationship with God. That is the essence of spirituality: to know and please God. This will only come from the Bible, as we allow it rule our lives. May God bless as we pursue true spirituality.

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, sinner 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.

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John Wesley Turns Over in His Grave
By Jon W. Quinn

The Methodist Pastor's name is Karen Dammann. A jury of fellow pastors have decided that she can continue in her position even though she is "married" (understand that the term "married" used here has absolutely nothing to do with the Biblical definition of what marriage is) to another woman. It took the jury of Methodist pastors ten hours to come to the decision that such is allowable under the denomination's social principles even though their creed book (The Methodist Book of Discipline) labels such to be "incompatible with the teachings of Christ."

The trouble is that pastor Karen and her fellow pastors have abandoned the Scriptures of God in favor of social trends they see within their denomination. The founder of their denomination, John Wesley, believed that the Scriptures were the infallible word of God. He was right about that. These pastors no longer believe that. They say, "We need to be careful about creating rules that exclude people." I agree. We ought not to be in the business of creating rules at all. That is God's business. But we had better be obeying His rules, or we are in sinful rebellion against Him!

The conservative wing of the denomination stands against such moral relativism. They see such as rebellion against the Lordship of Jesus Christ. They are right about that. It is time for them to wake up and understand that the making of human religious creeds is not their business either. If the Scriptures are inspired by God and able to equip us unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16,17) and if God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3) then a creed book of rules is at best redundant and at worse an alteration of the gospel of Christ.

There is one course for people of all denominations. The Scriptures says, "Come out from among them and be separate" (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Our thanks to Pastor Karen for so graphically illustrating the dangers of allowing human councils make up the rules. What arrogance to think that man has the right to sit in judgment over God's Law! There is only one Lawgiver (James 4:12; cf. Romans 1:25-26; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Tim 1:10; Jude 7).

