



Bible Believers' Bulletin

Vol. 44 No. 2 "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17) February 2020

Lessons for the Bible Believing Preacher

By Brian Donovan

There is a chapter in the Bible that contains more lessons for today's preachers than can be found anywhere else in the scriptures. Some might immediately think of one of the chapters in the pastoral epistles to Timothy, especially chapter 3 where the ideals for the bishop are listed, or perhaps II Timothy chapter 2, where Paul exhorts the young preacher to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; or even chapter 4 of the same letter when Paul gives his last charge after having fought a good fight, and as a result, found himself ready to be offered. Another chapter that may come to mind is Acts 20, where Paul gave his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, or another great chapter, II Corinthians 11, where the defense and description of the true New Testament ministry is given with all of the oppositions, persecutions, denials, doing without, watchings, painfulness, infirmities, and numerous

perils (verses 23-30). Yet while each of those chapters contain important lessons for the preacher today, there is a chapter in the Old Testament, that has not only more numerous, but very important lessons for the perils that a Bible-believing man who is called to preach will have to face in these days of Laodicea.

The chapter is I Kings 13, with the story of the "**man of God**" called out of Judah, and then commissioned to go to Bethel in the northern kingdom of Israel, to preach against the altar that King Jeroboam set up in that city. Once there, he had to deliver his negative message in the face of the king, and then resist numerous temptations presented by both the king, and more dangerously, the old prophet. We will look at the many lessons found in this one chapter, and the reader can decide for himself whether or not the opening statement of this article is the truth.

There was a time in the not too distant past, that a young man called to preach, would have to face an onslaught from the Alexandrian "Christian" scholars, who were constantly attempting to ridicule the preacher out of his belief in the King James Bible.

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The Second Commandment

By Dr. Peter S. Ruckman

We are covering the Ten Commandments. As we saw in last month's article the law has certain purposes God wants to accomplish in the heart of a lost sinner. The Ten Commandments show the unsaved man what sin is and to make it just as rotten and putrid as they can for him (Rom. 7:13—**“that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful”**). Having done that, it brings the sinner to the only man who kept the commandments so He could redeem us to God—Jesus Christ.

The Ten Commandments were given by God so that men could have an orderly society. There are over 500,000 laws on the books here in the United States, and 90% of them can be traced back to the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are fixed by God because *He* wrote them, not Moses. So if you break them, you pay a penalty, and if you don't believe them, that means absolutely nothing at all.

Now, even though no saved person is **“under the law”** when it comes to salvation (Rom. 6:14), he is **“not without law to God, but under the law to Christ”** (1 Cor. 9:21). The Ten Commandments are still **“holy, and just, and good”** (Rom. 7:12), and **“spiritual”** (Rom. 7:14). They are the standard by which we can judge the **“good works”** to which we were **“created”** when we trusted Christ by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8–10). That is why you will find Paul constantly referring his converts to them throughout his epistles (e.g., Rom. 13:9; Eph. 6:1–3). The difference is that Paul not only tells what *not* to do (**“Thou shalt not . . .”**), he tells you what to *do* (see

Eph. 4–5). So the Ten Commandments are important for the Christian to know and to practice within the New Testament context of the Christian life.

So here we begin our discussion of the second commandment in the “Ten.”

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exod. 20:4–6).

Notice in verse 6 that back there before the giving of the law that there were **“thousands”** of people who loved God and kept His commandments. That means those Gentiles God ever wrote them down on tables of stone. With no written Bible of any kind, Job said, **“I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food”** (Job 23:12). God spoke to men before any part of the Bible was written, and men like Abimelech the Philistine knew **“Thou shalt not commit adultery”** over 200 years before Moses was born. The passage deals with the sin of *idolatry*, and it is the only sin in the Bible which God promises to visit on great grandchildren and great, great grandchildren.

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Now if you went to the average college or university here in the United States and took a class on comparative religions, you would get the theory of evolution as applied to religion: primitive man starts out as an animist worshipping the spirits in the rocks, the waters, the trees, the animals, etc.; then he becomes a polytheist worshipping idols; then the Hebrews came along and picked out one god to be the Supreme God ("Yahweh" according to Gesenius) and then under the reign of Josiah, the sole God. The final "stage" in this evolution of religion is secular humanism and atheism. Of course, that's not where it ends at all. It ends with the whole world worshipping a man connected with the "sky brothers" who came down in Genesis 6: it ends up in *satanism* and *demonism*.

The whole "evolution" of religion is a lie. No polytheists show up until *after* the flood of Noah. Everyone before that was a *monotheist*: they all believed in one God. False gods don't show up until "**the sons of God**" show up in Genesis 6:1-4. The first time idols show up in the Bible is in Genesis 31:19, 34-35, where Rachel steals the images of her father Laban and hides them in her luggage. That was hundreds of years after the flood.

Now what is forbidden in this passage? When Moses is up on Mt. Sinai, Aaron makes a golden calf, and God judges the people for it. But later on in the wilderness wanderings, the people get to murmuring, and God sends fiery serpents to bite them and kill a bunch of them. When the people repent, God tells Moses to make a serpent out of brass and put it on a pole, and who-

ever looks to that image will live. Of course, the children of Israel keep that thing as a "religious relic," and later on, when they get in the land, they begin to burn incense to it and pray to the thing. Hezekiah has to come and break it in pieces because it's "just a piece of brass" ("**Nehushtan**"—2 Kings 18:4). So not every image is necessarily an idol, but it can be, depending on what you do with it.

There is one church in particular that doesn't believe in the second commandment. They will get rid of the second one and make two of the tenth one so they get ten commandments. That's because their church is full of images. For example, you take that brazen serpent: that's a picture of the death of Jesus Christ for sinners (John 3:14). If you want to be saved, you have to look to what Jesus did on the cross in faith and accept His sacrifice as the complete atonement for your sins. That's why it's called a "**propitiation**" in the scriptures (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2, 4:10): it is the only sacrifice that will satisfy the demands of a holy God.

But just as those Jews turned something God told them to make into an idol, Catholics do the same thing with the cross of Christ. They make graven images out of it and bow down before crucifixes and "stations of the cross."

Here is *A Catechism for Inquirers* by the Rev. Joseph Malloy and the Rev. Edward Peters of the Paulist Press—an official Roman Catholic publisher. It is designated "*nihil obstat*"—nothing objectionable to Roman Catholic doctrine, and it has the imprimatur of Monsignor James Hughes,

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an archbishop. What is the second commandment according to the Revs. Malloy and Peters, and according to Archbishop Hughes? Page 62—“*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.*” That’s a lie! That is the third one in Exodus 20:7.

Quote—“God does not forbid the making of images.” So when the Paulist Press printed the “Ten Commandments,” they moved the second one in with the first one and removed the word “**image**.” This bunch of fine spiritual people say, “Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven THING.” That is, they got rid of the word in Hebrew (*pesel*—“a carved or graven IMAGE”) and the word in English so they could pray to their statues and pictures of Mary, the “sacred heart of Jesus,” St. Peter, St. Jude, etc.

You want to put the Ten Commandments back in the schools, do you? Which set? The right set from the Bible or the wrong set from the Catholic catechism. There would be a big squabble over that, wouldn’t there?

Page 70—“There is a difference between the Catholic and the Protestant numbering of the commandments: the Protestant arrangement divides our First Commandment into First and Second, and combines our Ninth and Tenth into their Tenth.” So if you are a Roman Catholic, the ninth commandment is: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.” The tenth is: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods.” Why would you need the Catholic ninth commandment when there is already a commandment not to commit adultery?

Contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church in its official cat-

echisms, the making of idols is forbidden. Buddha said, “There is no such thing as a sacred idol.” He had enough sense to know that, and he wasn’t a Christian and didn’t believe the Bible. If a Buddhist could get that, a professing Christian could get that, but people are superstitious: they think these “dollies” are sacred and holy. To the contrary, they are “**nothing**” (1 Cor. 8:4). They are a big fat ZERO, with the rim knocked out.

You don’t see many St. Christopher statues in cars anymore, but there used to be a lot of them around. I got one, one time, and hung it upside down from my rearview mirror on a spring. Whenever I was at a stop light, I would flip that thing. If looks could have killed, I would have been murdered every other stop light. Why? Because a bunch of dumb, stupid, college-educated Americans think there is something holy about a little plastic figure. Some Roman Catholic will say, “That’s my belief, Ruckman.” Then check yourself into a mental institution; a lot of people have crazy beliefs.

I have never done this, but I have been sorely tempted to at times. I’ve always wanted to get a life-size rubber statue of Mary and tie it to my rear bumper and drag it down the streets of Pensacola with that thing bouncing behind me. If I did that, though, the *Baptists* in this town would come apart at the seams. Oh yeah, man! A lot of Baptists are just as nutty as any Catholic when it comes to “sacred images.”

When God gave Moses the instruction for the tabernacle, and later on Solomon the instructions for the temple, the Lord allowed those Jews

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to make images of cherubim and palm trees and lions, but *none* of those images were of *Him*, and *none* were to be *worshiped*. If you stepped into the Holy of Holies, you would see the ark with the mercy seat on top and the two cherubim facing each other. But God wasn't the ark or the mercy seat or the cherubim. God said He would meet with those Jews and commune with them **“from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark”** (Exod. 25:22). There was no image of any kind between those cherubim and over that mercy seat: it was empty space. But that is where the presence of God was when He met and communed with them.

When that ark was to be moved, the Lord commanded those priests to bear it on their shoulders like a “palanquin.” A palanquin was a seat with a tent over it with poles at the bottom so servants could pick it up and carry whoever was seated in the chair. It was usually a king or some nobleman or high-ranking religious figure or someone with more money than he knew what to do with. That's how the pope used to be carried around Rome—in a palanquin. You could see old fatty sitting in his chair as he was carried by. Not so the ark. Those priests carried that ark as if they were bearing the presence of God, but if you had looked under that blue veil that covered it, you would have seen *nothing* above that mercy seat. Why not? Because, **“God is a SPIRIT: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”** (John 4:24).

A missionary named Mary Kingsley

once reported seeing a witch doctor who lived near the ocean in west Africa, go down to the beach with all his herbs and spells and beads and idols, and throw them into the sea. When she talked to him about why he had done that, she found out he was dying. He had tried all of his spells, incantations, dancing, prayers, etc.; and he didn't get well. He realized how worthless all the junk was and threw it in the ocean. He told her, “Now I will be a man and meet my God alone.”

Good common sense. That is exactly how every man, woman, and child will meet Him. You can take all that religious paraphernalia and leave it right where it is, because you aren't taking any of it with you.

Did you know that we saved people, in the eyes of orthodox Israel, are idolaters? I'm a friend of Israel. I **“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”** (Psa. 122:6). But I have no illusions about what the Jews believe. Modern Jews are practical atheists. They don't obey or believe what God gave them in the Old Testament. The average Jew doesn't believe his own prophets. He is a religious liberal and has no use for Jesus Christ at all. He thinks Mary was a harlot and Jesus was a bastard (see John 8:41). He believes we Bible-believing Christians are idolaters because we worship a man, and man can't be God. But my Bible identifies the Messiah who fulfilled Old Testament prophecy as God (see Isa. 7:14, 9:6; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 12:10) and says He is **“the image of God”** (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3).

Sure I worship an image; it's just not a graven image made by man. It is a living image made by God (Heb.

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10:5; Phil. 2:6–7). I'm with old "Doubting Thomas": I bow down before "**the man Christ Jesus**" (1 Tim. 2:5) and say, "**My Lord and my God**" (John 20:28). I'm with His best friend here on earth who called Him "**the true God**" (1 John 5:20). That's idolatry if He weren't "**God . . . manifest in the flesh**" (1 Tim. 3:16). If Jesus Christ weren't "**the fulness of the Godhead bodily**" (Col. 2:9), then He was guilty of sacrilege and blasphemy and deserved to be crucified (John 10:30–33 cf. 19:7).

Amen! Any man who would let you call him God and not correct you is a dirty scoundrel—unless he is God. Any fellow in a Halloween costume, with a half a grapefruit on his head, who lets you bow down to him and kiss his ring and call him "Holy Father," is a God-defying blasphemer if he doesn't have the "goods" to back it up.

Now what is forbidden that makes a statue or a picture an idol? Well, the commandment is not to "**bow down thyself to them, nor serve them**" (Exod. 20:5). If you bow before a statue or a picture or a "station of the cross," that is exactly what you are doing. When a Catholic kneels or bows before the "tabernacle" or "monstrance" containing the consecrated wafer, that is an act of idolatry. Do you know why Catholics do that? *Because they believe the priest turns that starchy cookie into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ.* When I was attending St. Michael's here in Pensacola before I was saved, Father Sullivan would stand with his back toward the congregation and say to that communion wafer (in Latin where no one could get it): "*My Lord and my*

God."

Utter sacrilege! You don't swallow your God and then go back to eat Him next Sunday.

Back in the eighth and ninth centuries, there was a split between the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church called the "Iconoclastic Controversy." The Greek church has always bowed down to *pictures* rather than statues (Num. 33:52). A couple of those Byzantine emperors realized that what they were doing was a violation of the second commandment and ordered all the images destroyed. That's what an "iconoclast" is—a breaker of images. This did not set well with the holy pope in Rome who continued to bow before statues. It was a *woman* (you might have known—see Rev. 17:4–5) who brought back the "veneration" (that's a "ten-dollar word" for *worship*) of pictures ("icons") in the Greek church. So today you will find all your Eastern Orthodox members bowing before pictures of Jesus, Mary, and the saints just as any pagan Roman Catholic would before a statue.

Now I bow before an image, but it is no statue or picture or cookie or gluttonous drunkard. It is "**the image of the invisible God**" (Col. 1:15), Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:4), who is "**the express image of his person**" (Heb. 1:3), because He is "**the fulness of the Godhead bodily**" (Col. 2:9). I bow before "**the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**" (Eph. 3:14), and I bow before His Son, whose name the Father has exalted "**above every name,**" "**that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father**" (Phil. 2:9–11). Don't

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you ever get down on your knees to Mary for anything.

If you bow down to an idol, you will eventually *serve* it. I have talked to missionaries who told me about cases of leading pagan idolaters to Christ by calling their attention to the fact that their god couldn't save himself if the hut caught on fire. Sure, man, if the dolly can't do anything for himself, he sure can't do anything for you.

Of course, Catholics will deny that they are worshiping images. Rather, they say the images are "aids" to worship. I say they have *religious AIDS*—"Ancient Idolaters and Degenerate Sinners." I don't "hate" Catholics when I say that because I have a reason for saying it. Before I was saved, I was undergoing Catholic convent courses. That "veneration of images" as an "aid to worship" did nothing to take away my liquor, my cigars, my dirty women, my filthy language, or my sinful habits. It took faith in the finished atonement of Jesus Christ to do that.

Here is a prime example. This degenerate sinner not only had religious AIDS, he ended up getting *literal AIDS*. His name was Rock Hudson, a famous actor made into a god by the media. He was born Roy Harold Scherer Jr., and he lived from 1927–1985. He was born Catholic, sprinkled Catholic, raised Catholic, and confirmed Catholic. While the media made him the "heartthrob" of women in his movie and TV rolls, secretly he was a *faggot* (that's the proper word; a faggot is a bundle of sticks to be *burned*—see Gen. 19 and Jude 7). He shackled up with another faggot named Marc Christian for two years, and during that time contracted AIDS

from elsewhere (not from Marc Christian, who sued Hudson's estate after he died for Hudson not telling him that he had AIDS). When Hudson died, the queer community "canonized" him as a saint, and Hudson's death caused \$189 million to be given to queers so they could lie about each other and spread the disease with each "hook up" (in some cases as many as 900 "encounters" in a year's time).

(Don't get mad at me about my plain talk. Don't kid me; go kid yourself. If you don't know what is involved in the so-called "gay lifestyle," don't blame me for you being brainwashed by the news media. We live in a day and age where nearly everybody is trying to "tell it like it *ain't*.")

Although he had been raised Catholic, Hudson later professed to be an atheist, but he didn't really have the courage of his "convictions." He allowed a Catholic priest in before he died to hear his confession, let him eat his "God" one last time (the Mass), and administer "last rites" to him. And just to hedge his bets, he let Shirley Boone in to pray over him and get him speaking in tongues. That's your "Ancient Idolaters and Degenerate Sinners" exemplified.

Someone will say, "Ruckman, don't you draw images in your sermons?" Yes, I do; but nobody bows down to them, prays to them, or serves them. My chalk drawings, as well as the flannelgraph and flashcards used to teach Bible to the kiddies here, are merely sermon illustrations. They don't aid anyone to venerate or worship anything or anyone.

Now what are the results of breaking the second commandment? The

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results can be seen in Mexico, South America, Spain, Italy, the Philippines, and India. They are poverty, third-world conditions, and political unrest.

Idolatry is mentioned in the Bible more than any other two sins combined. God has something against those images, and He curses a population for up to three and four generations because of it.

Why is it that all these nations that continually suffer from plague, famine, earthquakes, floods, civil unrest, etc., either worship Allah, Karl Marx, or Mary? Every one of these nations that hates America's guts because of the money it has, is either Islamic, Marxist (communist or socialist), or Catholic. Quite a "coinky dinky," don't you think? I mean, if Islam, Marxism, and Catholicism are so wonderful, why is it most of the people are leaving nations where those are predominant and trying to get in here? The reason is that America is still living off the blessings of God from a time before 1950 when it wasn't Islamic, Marxist, or controlled by Catholics. This nation did really well for about 150 years without Allah or Marx or Mary. Why should we let Allah in here? Look at what he did to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Why do we need Karl Marx? Look what he did for Russia, China, East Germany, Cuba, etc. These professors and politicians have a funny idea that the only reason that socialism and communism haven't worked yet is because neither one has been "done right" yet, so one more country tries it again and *fails again*. *Socialism never works* unless it has *capitalism* to keep it from completely falling to pieces.

This bunch of Mary worshipers are

just as pagan and superstitious as any Greek in Athens in A.D. 60 (see Acts 17:22–23). Bill Rice tells the story of visiting Rome and seeing this long line of pagan idolaters going up to a black metallic statue of St. Peter and kissing its big toe. So many people kiss that toe until it gets worn off every few years and has to be replaced. Imagine being so superstitious that you kiss the toe off a statue. Well, Bill Rice wanted to get a closer look, so he got in line. When he got up to that statue, he wiped his mouth before he bent down to look at that brass toe. Do you know what he saw when he left that line? He saw every person behind him wipe his mouth before kissing that toe. You talk about a bunch of superstitious dolly worshipers—that's it. That's a real "spiritual" outfit.

Now, a lot of you might not worship at the feet of a statue; but do you worship at the feet of a television set or a radio or a newspaper or a magazine or a sports team? The modern counterpart of idolatry for the average American is *covetousness*, which is said by the Apostle Paul to be *idolatry* (Col. 3:5).

The purpose of both radio and television is to get you to want what you don't have. Television is better at it than radio because television sets the images before your eyes. Every generation from about 1960 onward has been trained by television to want what they want when they want it. If they can't get it, then they will blame somebody else. That's why they have no respect for authority and will not take responsibility.

There was a man once who had a son whom he had spoiled rotten. Like

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most young people raised like that, the young man got into some bad trouble because he had never been denied anything. That father was talking to a friend about the trouble his son was in and the dad's buddy said to him, "Maybe you gave the boy too much to live *with* and not enough reason to live *for*." That's the result of modern American idolatry.

A Christian said one time, "Anything that dims my vision of heaven or hell, anything that takes away my taste for Bible reading, anything that cramps my prayer life, or anything that makes worship hard for me is wrong. I will reject it." What is it that we as believers should want?

When Rudyard Kipling lay dying, someone asked him, "Mr. Kipling, what do you want?" "I want God," he replied. Amen! That's what you should want. Now as Christians, we know we already have God with us in the person of the indwelling Holy Spirit. But when the time comes to die, you are going to want the presence of God to be real to you. You are going to want Him to show up and get you through death.

When I get up to preach, I always do it under the assumption that *I* can't supply what you need. Now God called me to preach, so I preach. But you need something more than what I can give you: *you need God*. You need God to answer your prayers. These stupid charismatics say, "All you need is faith in God." No, you don't! You need God to intervene and help you out after you have believed Him for it. If you want to covet something, covet *that*.

You need to find the God that *made you* rather than the god *you made*.

You need to find the God of that Book who made the world and everything in it, and who is described therein. You don't need the one constructed in your own noodle; that god's no good.

Back there in the Old Testament, you are told that "**stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry**" (1 Sam. 15:23). There is a difference between *persistence* and *stubbornness*. Persistence is keeping at a thing until you achieve a desired goal: as long as the goal is what God wants, persistence is a good thing. But stubbornness is an obstinence to get your own way, no matter what the consequences. That is idolatry because you are serving the greatest false god of all: SELF!

Be tenacious in doing *right*, not in doing *wrong*. It is said that Thomas Edison performed a thousand experiments to get his light bulb. Someone asked him what he learned from all those attempts. His reply was: "I learned 999 ways not to do it." But he persisted in the thing until he got it right.

Pharaoh was tenacious, but he sure wasn't tenacious for what was right. He kept on until the bitter end, and I do mean *bitter*. He went after those Hebrews even after they left, but all it got him was a watery grave. Adolf Hitler was the same way. He kept his troops fighting until all he had were kids. He kept the fighting up until Berlin was being invaded by the Russians. He sealed his "convictions" with a bullet through his skull, man. That was being stubborn.

William Cowper, the hymn writer who gave us "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood," wrote:

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“The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee.”

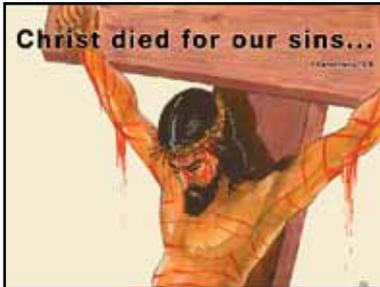
(Excerpt from “O For a Closer Walk with God”)

Ezekiel 14:3 says, “**Son of man, these men have set up their idols IN THEIR HEART.**” The Lord repeats it twice more in Ezekiel 14:4, 7 so you get the message. You might not have a statue or a picture to which you

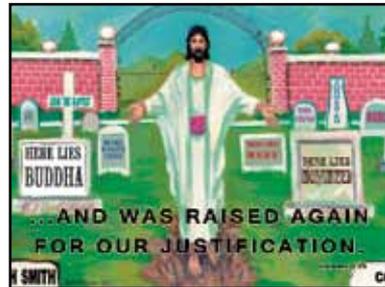
bow or which you serve. The problem might be the idol you've erected in your heart, about which only you and God know. You need to boot it off the throne and have it nailed to the cross. The old saying is: “In my heart there is a throne and cross. When I am on the throne, Christ is on the cross. And when Christ is on the throne, I am on the cross.” The same can be said for any idol you have placed there. May God help us to tear the idols off the throne and give Christ the place of worship He deserves.

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O.T. COMMENTARIES

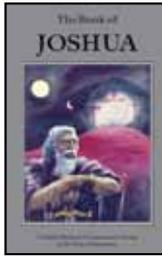
The Bible Believer's Commentary Series was written by Dr. Ruckman to comment on the Scripture without criticizing, correcting, or revising the AV 1611.



RK-01 \$21⁹⁵



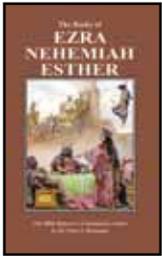
RK-02 \$22⁹⁵



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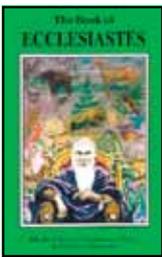
RK-19 \$19⁹⁵



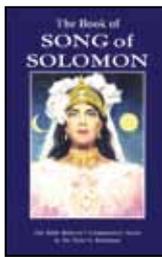
RK-19-2 \$21⁹⁵



RK-20 \$20⁹⁵



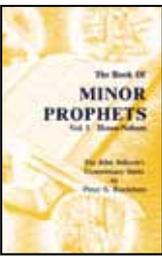
RK-21 \$15⁹⁵



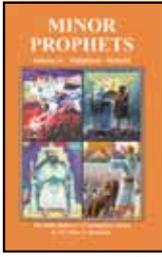
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Lessons for the Bible Believing Preacher

Continued from 1

To offset this satanic attack on the scriptures, the Lord raised up a man who would almost single handedly over the last half of the 20th century, provide the ammunition that would bolster the young man of God to stand by the Book. Dr. Ruckman personally taught hundreds and hundreds of students in the classrooms of the Pensacola Bible Institute, besides the thousands more who are still being taught through his writings. Many pastors, missionaries, and Christian workers ministering the scriptures today, found their confidence in the KJV 1611, thanks in large part to the greatest Bible teacher this country has ever known, period.

Yet it is becoming more evident that the young men being called to preach today, are facing a much more subtle temptation than what was presented by the Bible correcting scholars of fifty years ago, and a new phase has been entered, where the young man is now being ridiculed by the "old prophets" of the KJV crowd, who make the similar claim of the old prophet to the young men that, "I am a Bible believer as thou art" (I Kings 13:18). They proceed to let the young preacher know that, "Things have changed since Dr. Ruckman first started, and a ministry like his no longer works", or that "street preaching was okay back in older days, but we minister to a different generation now", or that "there are more modern ways to build a church than going door to door", or that "this is the way things are, and you need to learn to adapt to your new audience", etc. The

"old prophet" then begins to give his personal opinions about everything from politics to ethics to church building and the "correct way to minister", all the while wooing the young man to come under his wing and follow his week-long "seminars" while subtly correcting what the young preacher already received from the "**word of the Lord**". Of course, this is nothing more than the Lord using an old preacher as a test for the young man to see if he will stick with the reproach that comes with the "**word of the Lord**". We will see more of this as we begin to study the chapter in I Kings 13.

The first lesson of the chapter can be found in the very first verse, where the man of God has "**the word of the Lord**". The young preacher will find complete confidence in preaching the scripture, regardless of his youth and inexperience (I Timothy 4:12). The young man of God in our chapter comes in and goes out, standing only on "**the word of the Lord**" (verses 1,2,5,9). The God-called preacher is given boldness as he preaches "**the word**" (II Timothy 4:2), and there is no other message that the preacher can lean on and have confidence in. The next two lessons are that his message will be negative ("**against the altar**" verse 2), and will automatically bring opposition (verse 4 the king "**put forth his hand**"). Before ever entering the God called ministry of preaching, a young man should be taught that the truth he must preach will be negative, and it will be against a generation that is full of themselves and who will not

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Lessons for the Bible Believing Preacher

Continued from 12
take a rebuke. The opposition will come from older preachers, fellow Christians, family, friends, upstanding religious folks, foes, and his own government. The young man will be tempted to hold back his sword from drawing blood (Jeremiah 48:10), but should he resist the temptation and wield that sword, he will experience

the truth of lesson number four from our chapter, namely, that the Lord will intervene and protect him as he delivers the negative message he was given from the **“word of the Lord”** (verse 4). The minister of God finds that though opposition abounds and the many enemies he makes will not give up in their attempts to try to stop
Continued on 14

Bro. Donovan's Meeting Schedule

February 7-9

Gospel Light Baptist Church
1225 N. Washington Street
Enid, OK 73701
Pastor Steve Meier
(580) 237-4300

March 13-15

Red Lion Bible Church
105 Springvale Rd.
Red Lion, PA 17356
Pastor Steve Schmuck
(717) 244-3905

Bad Attitude Baptist Blowout

— **February 20-23** —

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- David Haveman
- Daniel Haveman

Evening Services—6 P.M.
Morning Services (Beginning Fri.)—10 A.M.

Bible Baptist Church
1175 Jo Jo Road Pensacola, FL 32514

For more information call (850) 477-8812 / 476-2945

Lessons for the Bible Believing Preacher

Continued from 13

him, **“the word of God is not bound”** (II Timothy 2:9). The man of God in our chapter found an immediate and visible help from the Lord God, and the preacher today will experience the same hand of protection, though not always immediate, and not always visible to others. The next important lesson is that the temptations to compromise the message will come from the young man's brethren, and most likely, an older one that he looks up to (verse 18). Many of these will be harder to resist than the open temptations that the world will offer (verse 7). In the passage, this young man is set on accomplishing his mission, and refuses the king's rewards and goes about following exactly what the **“word of the Lord”** instructed him to do (verses 8-9). Right up through verse 10, this man of God remained true to his calling.

This brings us to the next lesson for the young preacher, which is, you are not done until you get home (verse 14). The young man left town after having faithfully discharged his burden given by the Lord, but then sat down under an oak. Many a young preacher will sit down and attempt to relive and bask in the joy of having delivered a good message, or a spot where the Lord intervened on his behalf, unaware that there is someone else in the room with him, or at least headed his way (verse 13). The preacher is in danger once he begins to sit and look back at his past victories. This brings us to the next lesson, which teaches that the security of the preacher is only

in completely obeying and carrying through on the **“word of the Lord”**, not in his past victories (verse 4 and verse 10).

Now enters the **“old prophet”** (verse 11), and the first thing we notice is that he lives right in Bethel, where Jeroboam had set up his altar and golden calf (I Kings 12:28, 29, 33). In other words, this old prophet was no longer preaching the negative message he was given in his younger days. So another lesson stands out in the chapter which shows that, in time, an old preacher can stray far enough away from the **“word of the Lord”** until his only use will be to be used as a test to a younger preacher, to see if he will keep standing on what he was told in the scripture. The old prophet now tells the young preacher that he has a different message than what he was already given (verse 18). The younger man of God should have considered the fact that, when the time came to have a man stand in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30) and rebuke his nation and his king, the old prophet had to be overlooked. Instead, the Lord had to bring in the younger man of God to deliver this message to the king. It appears that the old preacher could no longer be trusted to deliver the **“word of the Lord”**, regardless of what he used to do. The old prophet is so out of touch that he does not even know about the great victory and spiritual activity that was going on right under his nose at Bethel, and he had to be told by his sons (verse 11). No doubt, there were once days when this old

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Lessons for the Bible Believing Preacher

Continued from 14

man could be entrusted with God's words, but that was a long time ago. This old prophet got himself into a position where he did not hesitate to directly contradict the word of the Lord with his own opinion (verse 15) and then expected the younger man to just listen to his experience, giving another lesson for the young preacher to learn, which is, obeying the word of the Lord is more important than what anyone else says, no matter who he once was (verse 18). The word of the Lord can never contradict itself, no matter what the old man says.

These older preachers can be extremely dangerous to the young preacher, especially when it is one who used to preach **"the word of the Lord"**. Some get to a point where they rest on their past victories and their reputations, giving out their opinions as if they were pieces of great wisdom, in substitution for **"thus saith the Lord"**. I still remember being a very green thirty three year old preacher and one of these "legends" sat down in my office, crossed his legs just so,

and proceeded in so many words to let me know how it would go if I followed his example, perhaps even one day reaching his preferred status. The Lord's voice was so powerful that day in my heart as He said, "Listen close, pay attention and learn the lesson, son." Another "legend" once preached a message that was an hour and a half of stories, coupled with his "valued opinions" (one or two being directly against the scripture), when at the end, a couple of student preachers came to me and asked how that was possible. The confusion on the face of the young men was obvious, as they realized that they now had a choice to make between the scripture and what they just heard from a Bible-believing "old prophet".

In I Kings 13, the old prophet lied to get the young man of God to compromise and disobey the word of the Lord (verse 18), but then notice that it was the old man's voice that was the first to come against the young man, once he got him to divert from the word of the Lord. The next lesson

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Lessons for the Bible Believing Preacher

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for the young preacher is to remember that the backslidden brethren who try to get you to pull back from the truth, will be the first to laugh in your face once you do (verses 20-22). Many a young preacher has become nothing more than a notch on an old preacher's belt after getting him to come under his wing. I know of a case where a God called missionary began deputation out of Pensacola, only to come under the spell of one of these "old prophets" who convinced him to put deputation aside ("it isn't scriptural"), sit under him at his local church, and then when the "old prophet" decided that the young man was ready for the mission field, his church would give him the full support he needed. The young man was tested "**by the word of the Lord**", took the bait, and gave up his meetings on the deputation trail. Needless to say, it is now many years later, and that young man still has not made it to his foreign mission field, and now no longer "feels called". In the meantime, that "old prophet" continues to mouth off that Bible Baptist Church is "not a real church". So while his "real church" hinders one young man from going to the mission field, this "fake church" just sat down to help another young man called to be a missionary to the Republic of Georgia and is sending him off on deputation soon, to cross paths with others presently on the road attempting to get to the fields of Israel, Spain, the Amazon jungles, and Brazil.

The story in I Kings 13 shows that after the young man of God sat down, ate, and listened to the old prophet

(verses 19, 23), he was killed by a lion (verse 24, a type of Satan). Two more lessons for the young preacher are, first, listening to an old preacher against the scripture can get you killed, and second, you are still responsible and will give an account to God as to whether you stick with "**the word of the Lord**", no matter who else came in your way. The old prophet later felt a responsibility for what he did to this young man and asked to be buried with him when he died (verse 31). What epitaph do you suppose should have been written on that tombstone? "Here lies the liar and his victim?", or maybe, "Here lies the dumb dog and his castaway?", or perhaps "Here lie the remains of the man of God who almost made it home, along with those of the old man who helped ensure he never made it".

The last couple of lessons from the chapter include the truth that the "**word of the Lord**" will often take a long time to come to pass, but it will come to pass. The man of God's message was that a man named Josiah would one day burn the bones of the false priests on that altar (verse 2). The young preacher never saw that come to pass, as it was not fulfilled until 350 plus years had passed when Josiah took the throne and cleaned up the place around 620 B.C. Another lesson is that both young and old preachers will come and go (verse 30), but the "**word of our God shall stand forever**" (Isaiah 40:8). The Lord will continue to call young men and use them in His work, but only as they preach the

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Lessons for the Bible Believing Preacher

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“**word of the Lord**” (verses 1,3,5,9). The Lord is not looking for talented, gifted, successful, well-liked, or even eloquent young men, but rather “**it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful**” (1 Corinthians 4:2).

Whenever a young preacher places an old prophet and his supposed reputation and influences, ahead of the “**word of the Lord**”, he is on the

wrong road. The young man of God found out that being on the wrong road can get you killed. Once that old prophet gets the young preacher under his wing, he will not be around when you are slain (verse 24), though he might be hypocritical enough to come pick up your dead carcass (verse 29), and he might even pronounce some words at the funeral of your ministry

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Lessons for the Bible Believing Preacher

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(verse 30).

The Lord placed the story of the young man of God and the old prophet in I Kings 13 for our learning. The old preacher ought to be cautious that he does not get himself so far from the word of the Lord and into his own opinions (verse 11), that the Lord can no longer trust him to deliver his message. He should also be concerned that he never sways a younger preacher away from what he has already been told by the **“word of the Lord”** in order to fol-

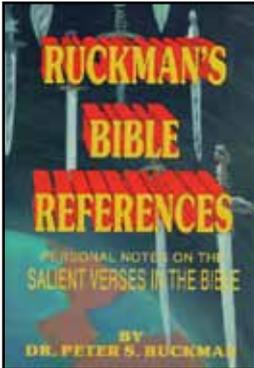
low his “experience” or his “opinions”. The young preacher should learn the following:

- Obeying the word of the Lord is more important than what anyone else says (verse 18).
- His boldness, and confidence to preach comes only from the word of the Lord (verses 1 -2).
- Preaching the word of the Lord will bring opposition from all fronts (verse 3).
- The Lord will protect the preacher

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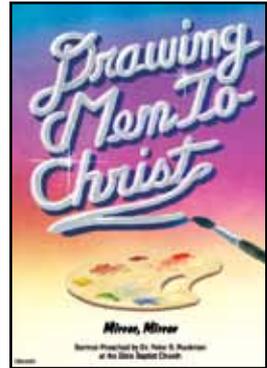
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Lessons for the Bible Believing Preacher

- Continued from 19 who delivers his word (verse 4)
- Resting on past victories is dangerous (verse 14).
 - Temptations to compromise will come from the brethren (verse 18)
 - These will often be harder to resist than those from the world (verse 7)
 - Those same brethren will be the first to rail and laugh at your calamity (verses 21-22).
 - Preaching the word of the Lord will be negative (verse 3).
 - The word of the Lord cannot contradict itself no matter who says otherwise (verse 18).
 - Young and old preachers come and go, but the word of the Lord stands forever (verse 32).
 - The word of the Lord may take time, but it always comes to pass (verse 2).

Finally, the young preacher needs to remember that he is not finished until he gets home (verse 14). Many a young preacher begins well and preaches the truth, even in the face of

opposition. About that time, he will get a feeling that he is the only one standing, and there is no one else doing anything quite like him. The last thing he should do is to sit down under an oak and rest as if he has accomplished something. The man of God in I Kings 13 began well and obeyed his calling to preach the message delivered by the word of the Lord, but he never made it home. Finish well young man. Keep your eyes on the **“prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”**. Keep pressing and never take your eyes off the mark. It’s the BOOK.

You will fail and fall short many times. When your face is marred with sweat and dirt, remember that **“ye have not yet resisted unto blood”** (Hebrews 12:4). See to it that with unflinching zeal and with steadfast determination, you pursue the great calling of your life, until you also may be able to say, **“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do”** (John 17:4).

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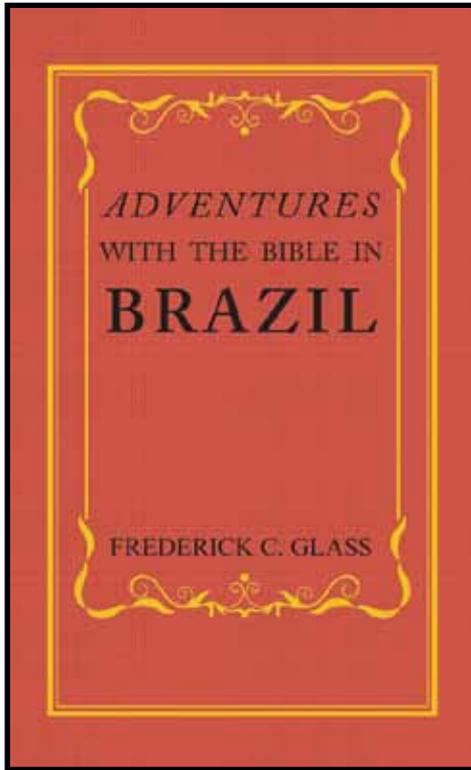
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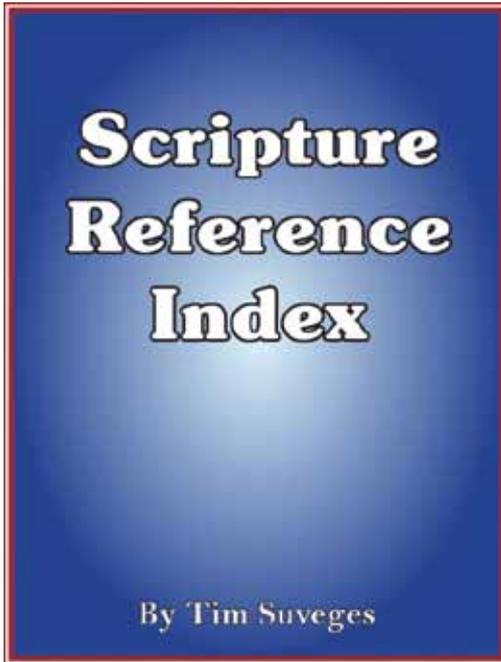
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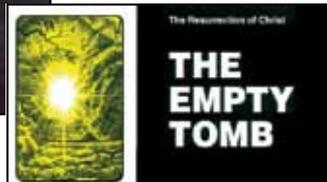
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Absence of Critical Thinking

By Robert Militello

“Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish” (Prov. 12:1).

Brutish—“relating to or typical of beasts.” That’s not a word most folks would use to characterize themselves. Solomon had no illusions about human behavior. He tried it all, and as a wise observer of human nature, he made this unflattering observation: **“I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and THAT THEY MIGHT SEE THAT THEY THEMSELVES ARE BEASTS”** (Eccl. 3:18).

Beasts act by instinct because God made them that way. Adam was made in God’s image. He was gifted with the ability to think. Obviously, to subscribe to the theory of evolution is the result of a brain that has lost the ability to think clearly. Sin does this to the minds of man—how sad!

In 1987, Allan Bloom, a Jewish philosopher and college professor, published *The Closing of the American Mind*. It became an unexpected best seller. Five years earlier, Bloom wrote an essay in the National Review highlighting the failure of universities to serve the needs of students. What Bloom attacked in his work was the growing acceptance of relativism. In philosophy, relativism is a doctrine that declares knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context and are not absolute. In other words, whether an action is right or wrong depends on the moral norms of the

society in which it is practiced. This satanic mental rot has eaten away at the ability to believe that God alone is the final arbiter of what is right and what is wrong. If Professor Bloom were alive today (he died in 1992), he would not have been welcomed as a guest lecturer at most universities. He knew critical thinking was dying 33 years ago, and those with careers in higher education hate being reproved. You have no idea of how much a King James Bible terrifies the kings and queens of the lecture halls.

Man’s pride in his accomplishments has crippled his ability to humble himself and recognize his own shortcomings. I spoke often in Brooklyn with a Jew who worked for the New York City Board of Education. He admitted that Jesus may very well have been the Messiah. I told him that he needed to trust the Lamb of God as his sacrifice for sin, His blood atonement. He looked me in the eye and said, “What is sin?” Higher education had destroyed his capacity to recognize moral absolutes. I told him to look up Judges 21:25 in the Hebrew Bible.

“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

Today, almost everyone sits as king in his own mind deciding what is right and what is wrong. Who needs a book telling you what is right and what is wrong when the common perception of today is that that book contradicts itself in many places? It is easy to close the mind and be-

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Absence of Critical Thinking

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come unteachable when you sit asking deciding what seems true and what doesn't.

“A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself” (Prov. 18:2).

Now in case you haven't noticed, religious people are prone to close-mindedness more than others. They are often so comfortable with their beliefs that any challenge to the correctness of those beliefs by God's own word is abruptly dismissed by saying, “That's your interpretation.” That one phrase brings down a steel shutter preventing truth from seeping into the darkest corners of religious deception and hypocrisy. I'll give you an example.

Now and then, I get a visit from Jehovah Witnesses doing their “missionary” thing. They are not allowed to come in because I don't want their spiritual pollution to foul the air in my apartment. Love your neighbor does not mean that I should swallow the poison he offers me. I should not have to say that, but in a day when even Christians get blinded by the “God loves you!” approach, rude speech (see 2 Cor. 11:6) offends those believers who still prefer to sleep in cribs and not beds for grown-ups.

Dealing with Jehovah Witnesses is a good way to sharpen your sword. I believe the Lord allows them to knock on my door and expects me to seek for a way to shake their faith in what they learned at their Kingdom Hall. Every soulwinner ought to learn how to penetrate the circular

reasoning defense mechanism that the Devil employs to keep religious people in darkness. Sometimes logic is the way to provoke one to think critically. Here's what I mean.

On a recent visit, two witnesses wanted to know if I believed our society was growing increasingly more wicked. I thought that was a good opening on their part, so I answered, “Absolutely.” They (it's always two) were pleased with my response. Then, I added that God has power to judge sin and that His power is absolute. To this, they assented. Now, there was an opening because I wanted them to consider what the Almighty can and cannot do.

Next, I asked if God can do anything He pleases apart from sin because He is holy. That seemed to be acceptable to them, so I proceeded. Keep in mind that critical thinking does not come natural to those blinded by the Devil. Some people get embarrassed quickly because any questioning of their belief system puts them on the defensive and that's uncomfortable. No one wants to project ignorance. We often take pains to hide our ignorance, but the more we attempt to do so, the more foolish we sound. So I asked if it were in God's power to become a man if He so wanted to. Like deer staring into the head lamps of an oncoming vehicle, they froze briefly. The look of fear in their eyes told me that all the circular reasoning they heard in Kingdom Hall could not bail them out this time. They had to put up a defense that kept logic

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Absence of Critical Thinking

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from breaking through. Here's their pathetic response: "He wouldn't do that." So I asked why not. "Jehovah is God alone, and He is above all angels and men." They were unable to fathom the voluntary humbling involved in God stepping down from His throne to take human flesh. The closing of the American mind is the Devil's signature work in these last days. Critical thinking is a mental exercise that is just about gone now. We've become too lazy to search things out, and the church, like the culture around us, is going morally and spiritually blind. See Revelation 3:17.

Last summer I had opportunity to engage college students at North-west Florida State College in Niceville, Florida at a free speech table by the student lounge. Governor DeSantis, elected in November 2018, has encouraged all Florida universities and colleges to provide space for open exchange of viewpoints and literature tables where students can access information. A brother at Bible Baptist Church asked me to participate. To draw students to the table, there was a large bowl of candies—a clever way to bait the hook. On the table, besides the Bible literature were some surveys which the students who stopped to get candy were asked to fill out. Responding to pollsters and interviewers is something many students don't mind. It's an outlet for self-expression that enhances the college experience. The surveys we used were thought provoking. Obviously, our aim was to get

students to consider spiritual things. Paul wrote about catching souls with guile: "**being crafty, I caught you with guile**" (2 Cor. 12:16). You know Paul had no problem letting Gentiles know just how a Jew operates. Would to God all the saints found ways to draw the lost to Jesus. God gives wisdom—ask for it!

Well, I thought that I should draw up a survey that might also help a student to confront issues that politicians would dare not discuss. Young minds are not sharpened by rock concerts, fraternity and sorority parties, and college sporting events. Critical thinking is what higher education can nourish by free and open debate on all sorts of topics. Sadly, intolerance and political correctness have helped stifle speech that academia deems conservative or right wing. So these free speech spaces are a breath of fresh air and a weapon for Christian students who are not afraid to put into action what the Apostle Jude wrote especially for the last days: "**it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly CONTEND FOR THE FAITH which was once delivered unto the saints**" (Jude 3).

Some of the questions appearing on this survey are as follows:

Do all religions worship the same God?

Does science have solutions for war, poverty, injustice, and human cruelty?

Can positive thinking alter the cycle of old age, sickness, and death?

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Absence of Critical Thinking

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Does having a college degree contribute to a proud demeanor?

If God is holy, will continued immoral behavior result in judgment?

Should intellectually honest people criticize the Bible without sincerely examining its claims?

Is it possible to be sincere in your beliefs and yet be sincerely wrong?

Why is the suicide rate among young people rising rapidly?

Is being "spiritual" the same as being religious?

Can a guilty conscience cause health problems?

Did you know that Jesus Christ can give you a peace that passes all understanding?

Do you have that now?

Would you like to have it if you don't have it?

Paul prayed for boldness and said he was not ashamed of the gospel. We can be as **"wise as serpents"** (see Matt. 10:16) and get needed wisdom from God; so ask. If we willingly submit our minds, hearts, and mouths to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit will teach us how to fish for souls. Keep the Judgment Seat of Christ in mind, and you will want to go fishing regardless of the weather or whatever else might discourage you.

What you will not find in Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* is the effect of the theory of evolution upon the spread of relativism. Once you reject God as Creator, you have unwittingly made it much easier to reject absolute truth. Do you know of a college or univer-

sity where the theory of evolution is critically challenged? A student, not a new one, approached the literature table and began reading the survey questions. She seemed to be open to having her opinions examined until I mentioned evolution. The *National Geographic* specials on TV had brainwashed her years ago. Anyone who rejected the **"science falsely so-called"** (1 Tim. 6:20) of evolution was an uneducated simpleton according to this young lady's opinion. Our amiable conversation was soon to become a little testy. Contending for the faith in these last days can quickly turn smiles into glares. Standing for the word of truth might not get you a "Have a nice day" ending to your conversation, but who cares? Jesus makes every day a "nice" day, regardless of whom you might run into.

So I asked the student at what point in the evolutionary chain did the monkey or ape get a conscience to know right from wrong? I assumed she would agree with me. Then I said that animals act by instinct and have no understanding of whether an action is morally right or wrong. Well, she protested vehemently telling me that she believed chimpanzees have a conscience. This she got from books and testimonies of those who worked with these animals. "Are you serious?" I said. "Do you believe everything you read?" With a straight face, she told me I offended her and got up out of her chair. Brethren, the minds of millions have been closing at record speed since I was first

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Absence of Critical Thinking

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saved in 1978. How much longer will our Lord tarry?

“Great peace have they which love thy law and NOTHING SHALL OFFEND THEM” (Psa. 119:165).

Critical thinking conveys the idea of open-mindedness. When it comes to God’s word, open-minded people are few and far between. There is a satanic bias toward what God has to say, and education, especially higher education, reinforces that bias. The Holy Spirit foresaw this development and prophesied through Paul that the last days of the church age would be characterized by those described as **“heady”** (see 2 Tim. 3:4). Now the word **“heady”** appears only this one time in the entire Bible and is coupled with the word **“highminded.”** When you look up *heady*, you find the word connected with *intoxicating*, *exciting*, and *exhilarating*. There is no doubt that our narcissistic society is producing a bumper crop of folks who are in love with their own opinions. That’s dangerous, and that is another reason why Paul said **“perilous times shall come”** (2 Tim. 3:1), and they are certainly here. **“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes”** (Prov. 21:2). Critical thinking might have saved Germany from Hitler. I might have forsaken Catholicism a lot earlier in my life if I had opened a New Testament and asked the Lord to give me understanding. Many find out too late that **“There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel AGAINST THE LORD”** (Prov. 21:30).

Absolute truth is a growing terror

to the Christ-rejecting world in which we live. Relativism as a satanic defense mechanism against truth was first put before me in Jesuit school. There I heard Jesuit priests say that nothing is either black or white, and that shades of gray appear everywhere. Jesuits train their students to think critically in all matters except the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. You speak blasphemy if you question the literal body and blood of Jesus Christ present at the communion rail. Also, the power of the priest to forgive sins is absolute. Millions throughout our land will go to hell believing these “absolute truths” as taught by the Devil through the councils of Rome. Religious people lost in sin are not critical thinkers. Cults recruit successfully among those who seek certainty but refuse to submit to the authority of God’s word. Their blindness is of the strongest kind.

Nowhere in our society is critical thinking more needful and necessary than in a jury room. There, verdicts will be reached that will exonerate or condemn those charged with breaking the law. Twelve citizens will be given power to dramatically alter one’s life. An absence of critical thinking in that jury room can put an innocent man or woman behind bars. Skilled lawyers, both defense and prosecuting attorneys, must search out potential bias among those called to a jury pool. People like to think of themselves as fair-minded, but pointed questioning can, and often does, destroy that delusion easily. That’s good because facts and not

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Absence of Critical Thinking

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feelings bring justice if the testimony of witnesses is truthful.

There always will be strong bias against the claims of the word of God. Evidence as to the truthfulness of the Bible, like fulfilled prophecy, is pushed aside because the bias is so severe. Imagine a juror making up his or her mind as to the guilt or innocence of a defendant simply because the juror thinks the defendant looks guilty. I've had many tell me the Bible was written by men and was unreliable. Coming to a conclusion without hearing one word of testimony is despicable. Nevertheless, millions judge the Bible to be inaccurate without ever having read any of it. Assert that the Bible is the only reliable authority capable of determining what is good versus evil and right versus wrong, and watch how quickly minds close. No surprise there, amen?

It is the Lord who closes men's minds. The Devil serves the purposes of God.

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things" (Isa. 45:7).

No one's mind is really opened unless the Lord has given grace.

"And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:65).

This the Lord said after telling His disciples that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Talk about closing your mind—that teaching must have hit a nerve because this was

the result:

"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66).

Many followers, not a few, quit at that point and went back to the darkness from which they hoped to escape by following Jesus. Sad, isn't it? How many of God's people have had their minds closed to many things because there were instructions in God's word that they deemed too hard to comply with? All of this will come out at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and oh, what a day that will be. **"For the time is come that JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD"** (1 Pet. 4:17).

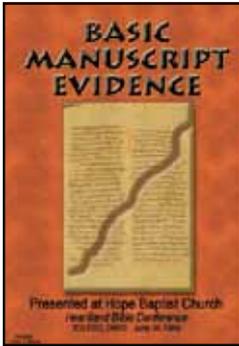
In reading through Professor Bloom's book *The Closing of the American Mind*, I couldn't help but feel pity for this educated, lost Jew. So many like him seem to get very close to agreeing with Jeremiah 17:9.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?".

Nevertheless, because they will not trust Jesus Christ as their blood atonement, they turn back to the darkness many admit is in their hearts and minds. Mr. Bloom, with almost all of America's educational establishment, is a classic example of **"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"** (2 Tim. 3:7). The professor would have greatly profited by a careful reading of Ecclesiastes. A very wise Jewish king, Solomon, would have taught him much.

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THE CREED OF THE ALEXANDRIAN CULT

1. There is **no final authority** but God.
2. Since God is a Spirit, there is **no final authority** that can be seen, heard, read, felt, or handled.
3. Since all books are material, there is **no book on this earth that is the final and absolute authority** on what is right and what is wrong, what constitutes truth and what constitutes error.
4. There **WAS** a series of writings one time which, **IF** they had all been put into a **BOOK** as soon as they were written the first time, **WOULD HAVE** constituted an infallible and final authority by which to judge truth and error.
5. However, this series of writings was lost, and the God who inspired them was **unable to preserve their content** through Bible-believing Christians at Antioch (Syria), where the first Bible teachers were (Acts 13:1), and where the first missionary trip originated (Acts 13:1-52), and where the word "*Christian*" originated (Acts 11:26).
6. So God chose to **ALMOST** preserve them through Gnostics and philosophers from Alexandria, Egypt, even though God called His Son **OUT** of Egypt (Matthew 2), Jacob **OUT** of Egypt (Genesis 49), Israel **OUT** of Egypt (Exodus 15), and Joseph's bones **OUT** of Egypt (Exodus 13).
7. So there are two streams of Bibles. The most accurate—though, of course, there is **no final, absolute authority** for determining truth and error; it is a matter of "preference"—are the Egyptian translations from Alexandria, Egypt, which are "almost the originals," although not quite.
8. The most **inaccurate translations** were those that brought about the German Reformation (Luther, Zwingli, Boehler, Zinzendorf, Spener, et al.) and the worldwide missionary movement of the English-speaking people: the Bible that Sunday, Torrey, Moody, Finney, Spurgeon, Whitefield, Wesley, and Chapman used.
9. But we can "tolerate" these if those who believe in them will "tolerate" US. After all, since there is **NO ABSOLUTE AND FINAL AUTHORITY** that anyone can read, teach, preach, or handle, the whole thing is a matter of "PREFERENCE." You may prefer what you prefer, and we will prefer what we prefer. Let us live in peace, and if we cannot agree on anything or everything, let us all agree on one thing: **THERE IS NO FINAL, ABSOLUTE, WRITTEN AUTHORITY OF GOD ANYWHERE ON THIS EARTH.**

This is the Creed of the Alexandrian Cult.

Absence of Critical Thinking

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“And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end: and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Eccl. 12:12).

His body gave out at 62, and he went into eternity with a mind that stayed dark in spite of all his learning. If he had only read Ecclesiastes 12:13 and sought the God of his fathers, he may have gotten grace and a chance to be saved. Some Jews find that grace. It takes a humbling and confession that educated Jews find more bitter than the herbs they put on their Passover plates.

There was a film made in 1957. A black-and-white movie classic starring Henry Fonda, *Twelve Angry Men*, was the only film Mr. Fonda ever directed, and it was brilliant. Please know that I'm no fan of the movies. I stopped going many years ago, and I wouldn't give Hollywood a dime of the Lord's money. This film was unique. It had no leading ladies—no females. It was shot almost in its entirety in one room. That was a jury room in the New York State Supreme Court building on Centre Street. I know the building well and am familiar with its jury rooms. In this film, twelve white men are asked to render a verdict on a young Puerto Rican man accused of killing his father. The evidence against him was strong. He couldn't afford a lawyer, so he was appointed one from the Legal Aid Society. It looked like a sure conviction. The first jury poll showed eleven to one in favor of conviction.

There was one holdout. Everyone was angry because they wanted to bring in a quick verdict and get home. I know the feeling. Well, without going further, I can only tell you how marvelously that film manifested the need for critical thinking and careful judgment. It left quite an impression upon me. I saw it again sometime ago on the classic movie channel.

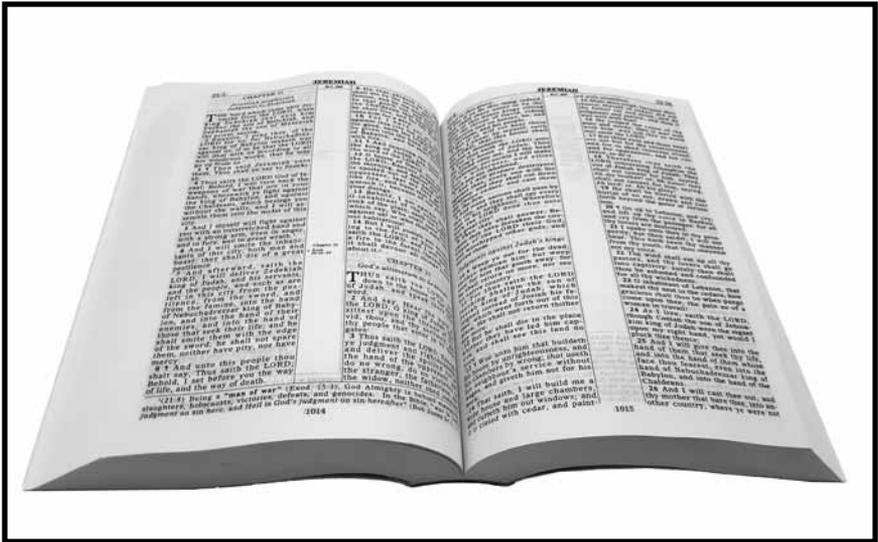
Putting twelve, blunt-speaking, argumentative New Yorkers in a hot room (it was summer, and courts were not air-conditioned in 1957) can make for fireworks. These men had the power to put a young man in the electric chair. New York State still used one then. How this one holdout juror was able to prod the others to think critically was masterful. Often, as pointed out in Luke 16:8, **“the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”** So when God's own children, for various reasons, quit walking in the light of God's word, they lose fellowship with the Holy Spirit and, along with needful discernment, the ability to think critically. Sadly, there are times when a Christian is better served by a non-believer than by a brother or sister in Christ. Being around brethren that have a Sunday only kind of faith leads to negative outcomes. I know what David wrote in Psalm 119:63.

“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.”

Think critically, even of the brethren at times, and you won't be the worse for it.

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