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"For the wages of sin is death…" (Romans 6:23a)

"…there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Romans 3:12b)

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"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

God's Response:

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins…." (Ephesians 1:7a)

Man's Response:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved…For I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

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TRUTH Aflame

A Publication of Bible Doctrines To Live By **Fall 2023**

The Winds of Change Are Blowing

By:Pastor Joel R. McGarvey D.D.

In 2004, I had the privilege to travel with Lee and Darlene Homoki for eight weeks and do the adult Bible study time in their VBS meetings. Lee had been to a church the previous year to do a VBS and, upon his arrival, found that they had also asked a pastor to come and conduct an adult Bible study during the VBS program. The light went on, and Lee thought that that was something BDTLB should add to the yearly program. Hence, in 2004, he asked if I would travel and conduct those meetings. It was an extra load for me, as I was pastoring Grace Family Bible Church in Duncansville, PA. Well, the church board agreed, so I would preach each Sunday (morning and evening) and then jump in my car to drive through the night to meet up with the "Sonshine Ranch" VBS team, which that summer consisted of Lee and Darlene PLUS Paul and Rebecca Turner. I would conduct the adult time Monday through Thursday evening, then return to Duncansville to preach Sunday. Unknown to many, that summer also served as an experiment of sorts. We needed to see if Lee and I could get along, as we had already been in discussion concerning my joining the staff of BDTLB. Needless to say, the summer went very well, and in September, the Board of BDTLB extended the invitation for Susan and me to join the staff as the Associate Director and VBS leader. In the 2004 winter edition of the *Truth Aflame,* Lee announced that the "winds of change" were blowing through BDTLB and that I was joining the staff effective January 1, 2005. There were many details to work out as I remained the pastor of Grace Family Bible Church until May 31, 2005.

But the events of January 3, 2005 made it appear as if everything was going to come to an abrupt halt. On that evening I suffered a major heart attack with a 100% blockage in what is referred to as the "widow maker." Only by the grace of God, and with the quick thinking of Susan, did I arrive at the hospital in time. Would this be the end? Would the plans change? Was it mere coincidence, or was it the hand of God that had a cardiologist in the next bay of the ER? In a matter of minutes, I arrived at the hospital, was taken to the ER, and was on a gurney headed to the heart lab. After a couple of weeks, I was back in the pulpit and, following rehab, was given the all clear to proceed. Our plans with BDTLB were on.

In 2008, the "winds of change" blew once again as Lee made the personal decision to step down as the Executive Director and pass the mantle of leadership over to me. For the past 16 years I have been honored and privileged to serve as the President and Executive Director of BDTLB. It

has been a real blessing to Susan and me to travel to many churches across America boldly proclaiming the saving Gospel of the Grace of God and holding forth the Word of God Rightly Divided. We have been privileged to see several thousand individuals (young and old alike) place their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

In addition to our U.S. ministry, we have traveled to fifteen different countries around the world sharing the good news of the Gospel of Grace. Most recently, we have added the online broadcasts (Bible Study Hour, Tuesday Bible Time, Morning Coffee with a Bite of Scripture, an online weeklong Bible Conference in January, and a children's program called "Miss Susan's Bible Buddies"). Yes, looking back over the past 20 years, we can truly proclaim God is so good, and we have been so blessed.

But now the "winds of change" are blowing once again. In 2015, Matt joined the staff as the Director of Outreach Ministries and several years later became the Associate Director of BDTLB. From the first day on the job, Matt's presence and input has been a real blessing. He hit the ground running and in a matter of a couple of weeks had developed our initial follow-up programs for kids. Since that time, he has chiefly concentrated on the development of curriculum for ages 5 through adult. Today, BDTLB has available the largest selection of graded curriculum written from a mid-Acts, dispensational point of view. Matt's Biblical knowledge, along with his computer skills, has proven to be a big asset to the overall ministry of BDTLB.

And now, Matt will be moving into the position of President and Executive Director of BDTLB. Repeatedly, Matt has more than proven himself ready for this undertaking. And so, with the approval of the Board, Matt will assume his new position November 1, 2023. I would ask that you continue to pray for Matt as he takes upon himself this great responsibility. I would ask that you faithfully stand with him as you have in the past with Lee and myself.

As to Susan and I, we are stepping into a new area of ministry with BDTLB. I will become the Associate Director, Director of Broadcasting, and the traveling representative for BDTLB. Susan and I will continue to travel as we have in the past, perhaps a bit more. We will attempt to visit as many churches as we can in order to promote the Word of God Rightly Divided, the importance of the mid-Acts Dispensational teaching, and the Gospel of the Grace of God. Along with that, we will introduce and promote the ministry of BDTLB. As we currently travel, we repeatedly hear the same thing: "I didn't know BDTLB did so much." Yes, BDTLB is far broader in scope than many know. Hence, it is time that Susan and I break away from the office and hit the road. To that end we seek your faithful prayers.

Also, in 2023, Paul and Rebecca Turner joined our staff as the Director of our Family Bible School ministry. In addition, they will be working on other projects that will be announced in due time. But for now, I would ask that you faithfully lift the Turners up in prayer as they raise their financial support and continue to seek the Lord's leading.

So, yes, "the winds of change" are blowing here at BDTLB, and we anxiously await to see all the Lord has in store for the future. In the meanwhile, I ask for your prayers for this ministry and your continued faithfulness in giving. BDTLB has never been a rich ministry with large bank accounts, but we have been blessed by the Lord with partners who have faithfully given, even when the economy is down, to keep the work and ministry of BDTLB moving forward.

The "winds of change" are indeed blowing, but they are moving us forward to new heights of ministry, new souls brought to Christ, and saints trained in the Word Rightly Divided.

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must know what a godly man is. 1 Corinthians 16:13 spells out four essential areas in our lives that will require self-examination and implementation if we are to be the men of God needed for a time such as this. In this article we will examine the first two, and then tackle the last two in the next issue.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

Watch ye

First, a godly man is vigilant. "*Watch ye*" is an imperative statement. It is a command we must obey. As men, we all understand paying attention. Put a digital device in front of us, and we are dialed in! It may be a smart phone, the radio, a video game, a movie, or the news, but we have a God-given ability to tune everything else out. We need to learn to channel that ability to stand, defend, and protect our loved ones, homes, and churches against the onslaught of the culture. To what then should we pay attention? 1 Chronicles 12:32 speaks of the sons of Issachar and how they had understanding of the times. We, too, need an awareness of what is going on in our world, but specifically through the lens of Scripture. The sooner we look at the world though a Scriptural lens, the sooner we will know what needs to be done. Let me pause here to remind us that there is a difference between having "an awareness through a Scriptural lens" and the far more common addiction to information that consumes our thoughts and conversations.

We also need to pay attention to our minds. Ephesians 6:14 tells us to "*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth*." We often explain this illustration as a belt, but I Peter 1:13 says, "…*gird up the loins of your mind*." We need to watch over what thoughts we allow our minds to pursue. Vagrant thoughts will come, but that does not mean we allow them squatter's rights. Like a belt, we must constantly and actively tuck in our thoughts to the truth. Isn't that exactly what 2 Corinthians 10:5 addressed when Paul told them to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ?

Other areas of vigilance include watching over our wives, our children, and our church. We show great love when we simply watch over and protect those in our care. According to 1 Peter 4:7 that watchfulness begins in prayer.

Stand fast in the faith

Godly men DO NOT compromise. They have strength of conviction. A godly man must know what he believes and be ***un***willing to compromise for anyone or anything. 2 Timothy 2:1 begins, "*Be strong in the grace*…" Too many men don't know what they believe. They know all about fishing, hunting, their profession, or the latest Marvel movie, but they settle for a basic understanding of the Word of God! Consequently, they do not know their identity in Christ (position), their calling as a saint (purpose), or their commands for living (practice). In effect, saved men fail daily to prepare for the time when they will be called on to stand fast, so when the time comes, they don't. They have a moral veneer that looks spiritual but are ill equipped to stand up under harsh conditions. God has not given us the armor of God to live a life of apathy. In Galatians 2:5, Paul speaks of an experience he had in Jerusalem. He says, "*To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.*" Paul, in that moment, refused to compromise the truth. Later, in Galatians 5:13, he calls the Galatians to stand fast in their liberty. Again, it was a call to stand fast and not compromise.

If, as men, we are vigilant to watch, and if, as men, we are standing in conviction of the truth of God's Word, we are on our way to living the life, in Christ, God has called each of us to live.

The world asks, "What is a man?" Let us surrender our lives to His will and show them.



By: Pastor Paul Turner **Part 1**

In recent years, the "civilized" or western culture has manufactured a problem. It is a problem that truly only exists in the first world. People living in third world countries are too busy just trying to survive to worry about the nonsense forced upon us. Romans 1:22 comes to mind:

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

We are immersed in a culture that can no longer (or is no longer allowed to) differentiate between a man and a woman! It is yet another perversion of God's design. Romans 1:28 tells us, "*And* even as *they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.*" In humanity's quest to eliminate *any* reminder of the God of Creation, they must eliminate all established order that points back to Him. We must also realize that what we are watching now is not the end objective. It is just another step down the road. It was George Orwell, who wrote in his book *1984*: "In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, ***and you would have to believe it***." The time will come when it will not be good enough to simply use the "proper" pronouns; you will be required to believe the words you utter!

How do we spiritually combat a society that refuses all aspects of God's order and, specifically, rejects the simple truth that God created male and female and that Sovereign God did not give you a choice of gender?

You begin by not compromising. Every day, Christians surrender ground in this battle. They use preferred pronouns because they are told they must if they want to keep their jobs or see their grandchildren. They compromise because they are told this is loving. Lying or taking part in someone's delusion is not a form of love. God says, "*But* ***speaking the truth*** *in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ*" (Eph. 4:15). Speaking God's truth is love, but perpetuating lies is hate.

However, it is not good enough to remain uncompromised yet choose to be silent or avoid the issues. I would argue that silence and avoidance IS compromise! Now, before you get upset with that statement, please realize that I am not speaking from a place of perfection or mastery. There have been many times in my own life where I have compromised my convictions through silence or avoidance. However, my past failures are not an excuse for any of us. Praise the Lord, I am not the standard. Together, we MUST, with boldness, establish the line and stand fast. To stand fast will require men willing to stand no matter the cost. Men, whose names we know, once pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to form a nation. How much greater is the cause of Christ? How much more worthwhile is He?

If we are going to stand in this broken sin-cursed world, we must know who we are. We



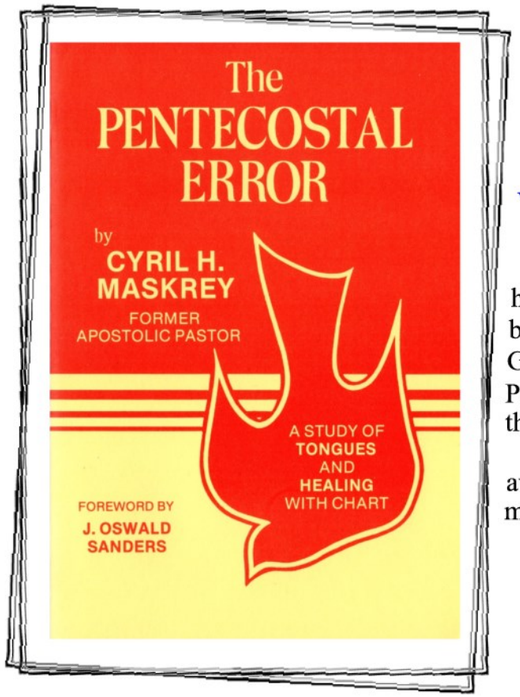
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In an era where it is increasingly impossible to avoid having contact with individuals swept up in the movement, believers must know the truth.

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The Dispensations
Human Government

By Pastor Matt Ritchey

In the beginning, God created Paradise and placed man and woman within it to care for His Creation and to enjoy communion with Him. Adam trespassed God's command to not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen. 1:1-2). Adam and Eve's eyes were opened to evil (Gen. 3:7); the conscience was awakened, meaning man was now aware of good and evil. With man's flesh fallen and his spirit dead, the struggle between good and evil had begun, with a strong desire and tendency for evil.

Mankind's conscience was responsible to God for the next 1,600 years. Noah lived under this dispensation for 600 of those years. During this time, mankind was responsible to walk justly and upright (Gen. 6:9). When they sinned, they were to offer a blood sacrifice on the family altar. Each individual and family leader was responsible to keep a good conscience before God (Gen. 4:7).

However, God "*saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*" (Gen. 6:5). Instead of obeying God, man set out to make his own evil plans. There was no concern for God's desire and purposes. As punishment, God vowed, "*I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth*" (Gen. 6:7). Yet, God chose to grace Noah and his family and gave him instructions to build an ark (Gen. 6:9-13).

Eventually, Noah and his family entered the ark, and a worldwide flood ensued, destroying every living thing outside of the ark. Then, after a little over a year, the flood waters diminished enough for Noah and his family to exit the ark. The world that Noah and his family encountered upon exiting the ark was drastically different than the one before the Flood (2 Pet. 3:6).

With a changed earth and only one family to build from, God was going to distribute the **Dispensation of Human Government**. Through this program, the responsibility was given for mankind to have human governing authorities over them to rule according to God's holy standards.

In Genesis 9:1-7, we have the highlights of this new dispensation.

1). Be fruitful (bring forth), multiply (increase), replenish (fill up) the earth (9:1, 7).
This was a restatement of God's original directive for humanity (Gen. 1:28). Noah's sons and daughters-in-law were tasked with increasing the human race.

2). Animals would fear man (9:2a).
We can assume from this statement that the relationship between man and animal before this time was somewhat different. Maybe they tolerated one another. Now, animals would run from humans and attack when cornered. This statement may also be tied to the permission in verse 3.

3). Meat was now permitted to be eaten (9:3).
Before this time, humanity was to be herbivores. With this new dispensing, man was now permitted to be omnivores (eating meat and plants). There was one stipulation with the permission to eat meat: they could not partake of the blood (9:4).

4). Capital punishment was required (9:5-6).
Authority figures were charged with maintaining peace on earth, and to use force if necessary. Man was now to govern, and to establish, uphold, and enforce laws. The word "*require*" (9:5) is a judicial term, meaning God was holding humanity accountable for governing well.

5). The rainbow covenant (9:8-9, 11-13).
God placed a rainbow in the sky as His promise to never punish the entire earth with a worldwide flood. Even today, the rainbow is a reminder of God's mercy toward mankind.

Noah lived for 350 years after the flood. Mankind multiplied and began to spread out per God's instruction. Genesis 11 focuses on the area of Shinar (later Babylon). Remember, God had instructed the people to fill the earth, not fill one area of the earth. Instead, these people decided to:

- Form a city to remain together (and not be scattered),
- Build a tower that would reach toward the heaven,
- Make a name for themselves (11:4).

In other words, they wanted to do what THEY wanted to do and not what God made them responsible for doing. They united together, perhaps thinking that collectively they could outwit and outpower God.

Their ability to communicate directly made them able to defy God, so God took away that ability by "*confounding*" their languages, taking away their ability to communicate effectively, and scattering them across the earth (11:7-9).

Once again, God had entrusted man with a program under which he was responsible, and mankind had chosen to turn from God's way in an attempt to bring honor to himself.

Many of us would have given up on making anything from humanity and, instead, started over, but "*the Lord is not slack concerning his promise…but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance*" (2 Pet. 3:9).

While mankind's actions necessitated these actions from God, God already had another plan to reach mankind with his mercy. He would choose a man (Abram) from the area where the tower was built (Mesopotamia) in order to create a nation from him to reach the nations of the world.

McGarveys' Travel Schedule

Sept. 22-24 Bethesda Missions Conference Prior Lake, MN

Oct. 1 Grace Bible Church Bruce, WI

Oct. 6-8 Wall Lake Grace Church Wall Lake, IA

Nov. 4 Heartland Conference Middlebury, IN

Turners' Travel Schedule

Sept. 22-24 Ohio Grace Family Conf. Springfield, OH

Oct. 1 Community Bible Church Tipp City, OH

Nov. 19 Altoona Bible Church Altoona, PA