

## The Wise and Good Counsel of Jesus Christ Continued from page 1

Involved in our love and concern for our enemies should be our pity upon their future state in eternity, and perhaps even in this life, if they do not repent. It is important for us not to allow a vengeful or malicious attitude to develop within our hearts toward them. Paul declared: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice...But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Eph. 4:31; Col.3:8).

When someone commits an injustice against us, or harms us in a painful manner, let us not give in to the temptation to take that which does not belong to us, namely, vengeance. This belongs to God: "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:30-31; cf. Rom. 12:19).

No, it is not ours to "even the score," as God is the avenger all evil: "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Col. 3:25; cf. 1 Th. 4:6). God warned Israel through Moses in this regard: "To me *belongeth* vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deut. 32:35).

The fact that man shall reap as he has sown is set forth as proof that God is not mocked without severe consequences: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Gal. 6:7-8).

Based on this principle, David declares how foolish and self-destructive it is for the wicked to plot against the righteous: "For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous" (Psa. 37:9-17).

Indeed, the outcome of the wicked is as the Psalmist declared: "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made" (Psa. 7:15).

In conclusion, let us do good in the face of evil. Let us love, pray for, and do good to, our enemies, and this includes doing those things which will help to save their souls (cf. Jas. 5:19-20; Gal. 6:1; 2 Th. 3:6, 14-15). Never allow the misdeeds of others to cause you to do wrong. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). By living in a godly manner, regardless of the ungodliness around us, we will overcome false accusations and evil prompted by the "accuser of our brethren," the devil himself (Rev. 12:10). "For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men...having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed" (1 Pet. 2:15; 3:16).

Danny Douglas  
Dresden, TN

# BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

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## The Wise and Good Counsel of Jesus Christ

Everything that Jesus taught and commanded was good and right. It is all something that is good for us. One such teaching is His command to love, pray for, and do good to, our enemies. Jesus said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans so? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:43-48). Indeed, it makes us like the heavenly Father when we follow this teaching, because He sends rain and sunshine upon His enemies, the evil and the unjust. Jesus knew that the enemies of His followers can never get the best of them as long as they follow this principle. Stephen exemplified this when he was stoned by the Jews who rejected the truth (cf. Acts 7:54-60). Jesus Himself manifested this attitude toward His enemies who crucified Him, as He prayed while hanging on the cross: "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..." (Luke 23:34).

While there are various things that we may pray for concerning our enemies, the major thrust should be our desire to see them repent, so that they will not be lost in eternal destruction. Moreover, the fact that we love them and pray for them does not negate our responsibility to mark or withdraw from them, or to refute their error, when necessary, God commands: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple...And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*...Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (Rom.16:17-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 Th. 3:6, 14-15; Tit.3:10- 11; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-9).

It is not loving to fail to do those things which God commands in order to bring them to repentance, and to prevent other souls from being destroyed by their leavening influence (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Gal. 5:7- 9). This would include dealing with any personal offences they have committed, in a Scriptural manner (cf. Matt. 18:15-17).

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### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.

Morning Worship 11.00 am.

Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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## **In One Generation's Time**

Some very wise men in the kingdom have been known to state that we are always just one generation from apostasy. In seeing the growth of harmful trends in these last several years, we are convinced that a full generation is not needed! But let us focus on what can occur in one generation's time, and Judges 2:10 is so appropriate just here Reference has been made to Joshua's generation and then this:

And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

This, in one generation's time!

Our Lord had made it so plain, in John 6:45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

We see the emphasis we are making now in the wording of the Great Commission, recorded by Matthew: "Go ye therefore, and teach...Teaching them" (Mat. 28:19-20). A shift away from the study of, and teaching of, the Word of God is the opening of the door and a begging for apostasy. That lesson has been well demonstrated in Israel's history, and it has been repeatedly shown in the history of the church. But, do we learn?

We can see deviation at work in one generation's time in what we read of the work in Ephesus. This was a noteworthy stop in the apostle Paul's missionary endeavors (Acts 19), and we combine that fact with several others made plain in the New Testament. May we be reminded of blessings and benefits received by Ephesus:

1. Paul had visited there, and caused some to take their place faithfully in Christ. Not every city or community in the New Testament era had an apostle to visit them early in their work, but Ephesus did!

2. Late in his missionary work, Paul called the Ephesian elders to meet him at Miletus, and he reviewed his work before them, gave them special charges pertaining to their work, spoke of dangers before them as wolves would seek to harm their flock, and gave them specific warnings regarding some false men arising from their own ranks! (Acts 20:28-30). Not every church, and not every eldership, was blessed in having an apostle to meet with them and call special attention to dangerous times ahead, with warnings given to them to be faithful, but Ephesus had such warnings given!

3. The apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesian congregation, with that special emphasis on Christ, Head of the church; the giving of God's foreordained will for the saving of men; the Word of truth as the instrument of salvation, and the great unity the Spirit teaches, with the need to loyally maintain and keep it! Not every New Testament congregation had a letter sent to them from an inspired apostle, but Ephesus was so blessed!

So, those benefits: Paul's physically being with them, Paul's meeting with the leadership for special teaching and warning, and Paul's great lessons to them in his letter sent them. What benefits and blessings were given to Ephesus!

In less than a generation's time, we see Ephesus again, as the Lord, the Head of the church, writes to that congregation. The letter to Ephesus is one among seven, recorded in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. The Lord, always faithful in noting loyalty and dedication, refers to some of that in Ephesus' history, but then we have this: "Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4). Against the blessings and benefits earlier received by Ephesus, now we have words from the Christ Himself: "Ephesus does not love me as she earlier did." And not too many years later, in the apostasy of the late first century and beyond, Ephesus ceased to be the people of God!

It thus **has happened**, and it **is happening** today, and it **will happen** to some in the future. Will we learn from Ephesus? Remember, **in one generation's time—or less!**

*Bill Jackson, Deceased  
Ken Chumbley*

## **NEWS AND NOTES**

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron' sister who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter and Tim Smith. Noah Arnold was sick and unable to be out on Sunday.

Lanny Niver was ordered by his doctor to have bed rest and thus was not out Sunday. He had a procedure on his back Thursday to ease pain. Linda Chumbley is to have procedures on both December 22 and 29.

Rachel Fitzpatrick was in Texas last week visiting here sister and family.

Helen Culpepper had her second cataract surgery Wednesday. It went well.

We express our sympathy to Pam Gossett in the passing of her mother in her sleep Saturday night, December 13. Visitation was Tuesday night and services Wednesday in Union, SC.

Kathy Treadway has gone to Texas for the holiday.

Our first pot luck in 2009 is planned for January 18, after the evening worship. It will be a chili, soup, sandwiches, etc. meal. Plan to be with us for this meal together.

We will be having our pot-luck this morning after our worship service. Plan to stay and enjoy this time together.

## **You Expect Me to Believe That!**

In the beginning there was nothing. And suddenly for no reason nothing exploded and created everything. **You expect me to believe that?**

At some point, by chance the right chemicals happened to float together at just the right moment to be struck by an electrical charge and become life. **You expect me to believe that?**

Somewhere two non-human mothers each gave birth to a human child. They were born at the same time and in the same place, one was male and one was female. These two new "humans" gave birth to the human race. **You expect me to believe that?**

One of the descendants of these first humans was born with a knowledge of right and wrong. No longer driven by instinct, this person suddenly was making decisions based on a morality for which there is no real explanation. **You expect me to believe that?**

I'm sorry. I do not have that much blind faith. It is **all** just too far fetched to be anything more than a fairy tale. I cannot believe intelligent people claim it is "science."

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Now that makes sense. I can believe that without stretching my imagination into the realm of the impossible. The universe was created by an all-powerful, all-knowing God. I can believe!

The "theory" of evolution is one of the biggest lies the devil ever invented. If people can believe (have faith in) the theory of evolution, believing about God should be easy.

*Author Unknown*