

WHAT DO “INTELLECTUALS” AND LIBERALS KNOW ABOUT THE BIBLE? NOTHING !

I am just going to give you a few quotes from a December 15, 2008 Newsweek article titled, Our Mutual Joy.” It is an attempt by a so-called, (but know nothing) religion editor (Lisa Miller) to justify homosexuality **BY** the scriptures. These are exact comments or statements found in the article. I will leave most of my comments for the conclusion, but here you have this to see for yourselves how ignorant someone can be:

“Scripture gives us no good reason why gays and lesbians should not be (civilly and religiously) married—and a number of excellent reasons why they should.”

“The Bible does condemn gay male sex in a handful of passages. Twice Leviticus refers to sex between men as “an abomination“ (King James version), but these are throwaway lines...”

“...our modern understanding of the world has surpassed its prescriptions. Why would we regard its condemnation of homosexuality with more seriousness than we regard its advice, which is far lengthier, on the best price to pay for a slave?”

“Paul is not talking about what we call homosexuality at all,”

“The Bible was written for a world so unlike our own, it's impossible to apply its rules, at face value, to ours.” “Religious objections to gay marriage are rooted not in the Bible at all...”

This article reveals not only how little Miller knows about the Bible, but also how desperate she seems to toss aside hundreds of years of Biblical scholarship that is overwhelmingly concerned with correct and specific definitions – not homosexuality. She speaks with sarcasm of the passages in Leviticus relegating them as some archaic cave writings that cannot possibly be taken seriously and therefore should be **thrown away!**

To think that our modern world has somehow surpassed the prescriptions of God is perhaps the most insulting slap of all at the Creator. She defiantly sees no reason to obey or apply anything the scriptures teach if they don't correspond to beliefs she has concocted in her little speckle of a distorted humanistic mind. How this woman can oversee several so-called religious publications also is an indication of how pervasively entrenched the pro-homosexual liberal press is as it endeavors to demean/demonize religion (not only is she the religion editor (?), but she writes a weekly column, BeliefWatch for the magazine). If anything, Miller hates the Bible and what it teaches and stands for.

If Paul is not talking about homosexuality at all, what does this passage from I Corinthians mean? “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (1Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV)” The English Standard Version translates that phrase similarly: “neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality...”, so there is no doubt of whom Paul speaks!

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BELVEDERE BEACON

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

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UNNECESSARY BAGGAGE

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, lie any longer therein?”(Rom.6:1, 2).

Christians often carry around with them unnecessary intellectual, emotional and even religious baggage. We should not be shocked by this because we live in a messed up, sinful world. False doctrine, denominational dogma and **prejudices** can rub off on us. The Christian should seek to rid himself of all this baggage and return to the Bible.

One common refrain you hear from religious people in this world is, “Well, you know that we are all just sinners”. **But are we?**

The term “sin” in the New Testament literally means “to miss the mark” (Vines) of God's law (cf.1 John 3:4), like an arrow missing its target. “Sinner” does refer to the one who has sinned. But often the later is used to describe a habit or life of sinning. They continue to miss the mark over and over again. **Consider the following passages:**

“But God commandeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom.5:8).

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness” (Rom, 6:17, 18).

Notice the phrases I have underlined in the preceding passages. All denote that sinning is not the current condition of the Christian. They “were servants of sin” but now, after obeying the gospel of Christ, they have been “made free from sin;” no longer habitual practioners of sin but they “BECAME servants of righteousness”.

Does this mean that a Christian is incapable of sinning or being a sinner? **No!** Christians can find themselves “sinners” in the sense of falling into the old rut of sinning. James wrote these words to Christians: “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:19,20). Thankfully, the Christian can repent, pray to the Father through the Son (our “advocate” - 1 John 2:1) and ask forgiveness of their sins. **What a great blessing!**

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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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RIGHT ROAD OR WRONG ROAD?

A number of years ago a preacher that I knew was back in the States from Australia where he had lived for sometime. Late one night he got onto the interstate leaving Abilene, Texas. He had gone about 50 miles when he realized he was on the wrong side of the road traveling in the wrong direction! In all that time he had not met another vehicle. Yes, it is possible in the physical realm to be on the right road but going in the wrong direction! Under such conditions, clearly, no progress has been made.

In the spiritual realm, it is also possible for one to have gotten on the right road – the way that leads to life – but have turned back from following that way and thus they do not make progress in their spiritual journey but instead they have, by the u-turn they have made, are now going in the wrong direction thus going away from that life that they had once sought. C.S. Lewis wrote: “We all want progress, but if your’re on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive.” Jesus said: “*And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*” (Lk. 9:62). If you have looked back, turned back, there is only one way to make progress toward the heavenly home. They need to do an “about face” and return to going in the right direction, without looking back.

Our Lord also, said, “*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*” (Matthew 7:13-14). The right way, the right road, is a narrow road, the wrong way, the wrong road, is the broad way that leads to destruction. Sir Winston Churchill, in one of his speeches to Parliament made the following statement in that changes the metaphor but has a great point: “ I have watched this famous island descending incontinently, fecklessly, the stairway which leads to a dark gulf. It is a fine broad stairway at the beginning, but after a bit the carpet ends. A little farther on there are only flagstones, and a little farther on still these break beneath your feet.” Churchill made the statement on March 24, 1938 relative to the appeasement of Hitler and Nazi Germany prior to World War II. This statement illustrates the way it is with the “*broad way*” of which Jesus teaches. It starts out fine and beautiful, “*the pleasures of sin*” but as one travels in that way its finery decreases until it is a way that is rough on the feet because those “*pleasures*” are indeed but “*for a season*” (Hebrews 11:25).

If you are traveling the “*broad way*” we would plead with you to make those changes that are necessary that you might be able to enter the “*narrow way that leads to life*” by your obedience to the gospel through faith, repentance, confession and baptism into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

Remember, “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). We plead with you, don’t come to end of life’s journey only to find that you have taken the wrong road and your soul is lost.

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, Justine Hall’s husband, Joe and Tim Smith.

Pam Gossett was sick and unable to be out Sunday but was out Wednesday evening.

Rachel Fitzpatrick and Lanny Niver were not well and unable to be out Wednesday evening.

Kimberly and Jennifer Wilson have returned to school at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA.

Joe Hall, husband of Justine, came home Saturday morning and is recuperating at home from his surgery.

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

UNNECESSARY BAGGAGE continued from page 1

Where did this **unscriptural** view of sin and sinning come from? It originated with the pagan Greek philosophy of Gnosticism. The Gnostics believed that material things, like the human body, were inherently evil. The theologian Augustine used this idea to come up with his doctrine of Original Sin. He said that all people are sinners because of Adam’s sin which we inherited, along with the sins of our ancestors. The reformer John Calvin used this false concept to come up with his doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity. He taught that we are all born depraved and so sinners. This means that that precious **newborn baby** is a sinner! Can you imagine a more pernicious false doctrine? Yet multiplied millions of people accept this as a fact. So was born the idea that “we are all just sinners,” which has become embedded in popular religious discourse.

The Bible teaches no such doctrine. Neither you nor I were born a sinner (Ezek.18:20). We are free moral agents and must choose to sin or not to sin. “*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust have conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*” (James 1:15, 16). Obedience to the gospel of God’s grace frees us from the bondage of sin so we might become free in Christ to do God’s will.

But some object and say, “Didn’t Paul describe himself as chief of sinners (cf. 1 Tim.1:15). Yes he did. But Paul was describing his former life as a persecutor of the church of Christ, in rebellion against God’s will, not his current spiritual state as a servant of Christ. He was no longer a sinner in the sense of one who was in a life of sin. He had been **forgiven** of all that. He was now a “new man” in Christ (Col.3:10); cleansed by the blood of Christ of his past habit of sin.

Dear reader, are you a sinner? If you have not obeyed the gospel you are one, however “good” or “spiritual” you think you are (cf. Matt.7:21). If you are a Christian and have gotten out of fellowship with Jesus and His brethren, back into the rut of sin; **you are a sinner**. You need to repent and ask God and your brethren’s forgiveness. But if you are a faithful Christian, still striving to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7); the Bible says that you are NOT a sinner.

My friends, let us give up any misconceptions, false doctrine and misunderstandings we have and replace them with the pure, unadulterated **Truth** from the Bible “*which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified*” (Acts 20:32).

Roelf Ruffner, Cheyenne, WY