

BLAMING GOD

A brokenhearted man, overwhelmed by grief, weeps, uncontrollably over the casket containing the remains of his beloved wife. Well-meaning, but pitifully misguided friends gather about him, and in an effort to soften the blow which brought the world crashing down upon his shoulders, inform him that his immeasurable loss should be attributed to the will of God. A mother grieves beside the pale and lifeless body of her only child and the preacher seeks to comfort her by saying that the child's tragic death was the result of the will of God, to which she should now resign herself. Disaster strikes with the suddenness of the lightning's flash, fortunes are swept away as with a flood, poverty stalks menacingly among innocent and helpless children, and the whole of it is attributed to the providence of God.

How Satan must grin with sardonic glee when such accusations are leveled against the Judge of all the earth. How pleased he must be to hear the character of the great Jehovah slandered, his motives impeached, and his will prostituted by those who affect to be his friends! With what great satisfaction must he contemplate the ever-increasing number of unbelievers which such reasoning produces. And, how comfortable it is for the casual observer of such instances to blame God for what he cannot, or will not, explain in any other way.

The disposition to let God bear the blame is a common one and it finds expression in many ways. Wars, famine, pestilence, and death are regularly laid at His feet. When the heavens withhold the rain and the earth becomes dust, when crops fail and cattle die, men read in the disasters the will of God. Even the law of the land takes cognizance of the disposition of men to blame God by identifying such tragedies as "acts of God." Casualty insurance policies expressly state or imply exceptions of responsibility when an "act of God" is involved. Among the contingencies often thus classified are tornadoes, storms at sea, earthquakes, and the like. Many contracts provide that in the event of an "act of God" the contract is unenforceable. An instance of man's proneness to let God take the blame is illustrated in a mine disaster some years ago, in the resolution of which it was officially declared that God was to blame! An editorial in an Eastern newspaper offered these comments: "Once again God must take the rap. In the aftermath of the ___ mine disaster a jury has solemnly assembled, meditated, contemplated, and brought in its unanimous verdict. God has been convicted. According to the jury the murder of one hundred nineteen coal miners must go down in history as an act of God."

A columnist in the same paper observed that no one government, coal operators, mine workers, or union officials – seemed prepared to look for any other culprit. Said he, "It was easy to blame God. After all, he could not talk back. More reverent men might have hesitated to reach this verdict. They might have considered the guilt of the congressman who stubbornly refused to enact a mine safety law. They might have weighed the responsibility of the coal operators who often resist safety mine legislation. They might even have studied the role of UMW officials who might seem more concerned with union politics than with human safety. But all that would have involved many complicated problems. It was so much easier to blame God."

So much easier to blame God! Let all of us ponder these words more seriously when next we are disposed to excuse our own neglect, and to ignore immediate causes by blandly suggesting that the responsibility of all such matters must be assigned to God.

Guy N. Wood, deceased

BELVEDERE BEACON
"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)
Volume 11 Number 28 July 11, 2010
A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST
535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574
(Greater Augusta, GA area)
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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A SOUND CHURCH IS HARD TO FIND

More and more brethren find themselves travelling farther and farther to find a congregation with which they can work and worship. Having to drive 20-50 miles in order to find a sound church is no longer out of the ordinary. In many small, midsize, and large cities, even in the previously labeled, Bible Belt, there is not one faithful congregation present. Because of apostasy our nation is rapidly becoming a mission field.

A reality that complicates this issue even more is that many brethren worship in congregations that are unsound, but they are so ignorant of the scriptures, and so untaught in the fact that authority must be found in the scriptures for we do in word or deed (Col. 17), that they do not even know their membership is with at least a backsliding, if not completely apostate, congregation.

There is an assumption on the part of some that if a congregation has not abandoned the biblical steps to salvation, the prescribed worship, and divinely ordained organization, it is necessarily a sound congregation. Nay, verily! Here are some things that preclude soundness in many of those congregations.

- Endorsing unsound works and liberal brethren. WBS for instance.
- In any way supporting efforts that are unfaithful.
- The "children's church" and small groups in lieu of Sunday evening services.
- Lads to Leaders and Leaderettes.
- Official offices that include women in leadership roles.
- Fellowshiping those who have sinned, but refuse to repent.
- Endorsing those who endorse false teachers.
- Dismissing Sunday night worship for the Superbowl.
- Delivery of scripture-starved sermons.
- Agnostic presentations of the facts of the faith.

The above list is in no way complete, and despite accusations of some these are legally determined issues.

Charles Pogue, Rogers, AR

Have you ever received stolen goods? Perhaps you might say, “How dare you even suggest such a possibility?” You would say, “I would never knowingly have anything to do with one who is a thief.” No member of the Lord’s church should want to be associated in any way with a thief whereby he/she would be a partaker, in any way of his evil deeds((Psalm 50:18; Proverbs 29:24).

However, when we listen to gossip that is exactly what we are doing. When a thief things he doesn’t usually what the goods but the money he can gain from them so he looks for a “fence” who will take the stolen goods and give the thief some money in return. The “fence” is then one who is guilty of receiving stolen goods. The gossip looks for someone who will act as his “fence” to buy the “juicy information” he has on offer and then help him/her to spread this around to others.

The late G.K. Wallace stated in one of his sermons: “If the critic (gossip) is guilty of stealing a reputation, then the listener is guilty of receiving stolen goods.

Some unknown writer wrote:

“For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults” (2 Cor. 12:20).

I call it “character assassination.” It usually grows from a “mole-hill” into a “mountain.” It frequently evolves into lying. It causes multiplied heartache and hard feelings.

The writer pointed out that it is so unnecessary and went on to quote the followed from Bobby Dockery:

My Name Is Gossip

My name is Gossip. I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives...I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age. The more I am quoted, the more I am believed... I flourish at every level of society. My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face...To track me down is impossible. The harder you try the more elusive I become. I am nobody's friend...I topple governments and wreck marriages...I ruin careers, cause sleepless nights, heartaches, tears, fears, and indigestion...I spawn suspicion and generate grief I make innocent people cry in their lows. Even my name hisses...Gossip! I am called Gossip, Office Gossip, Shop Gossip, Party Gossip. I make headlines and headaches... Before you repeat a story, ask yourself Is it true? Is it fair? Is it necessary? Gossip—Think twice before you participate—or better still, do not!!

Brethren, may we never be “guilty of receiving stolen goods” and then participate in character assassination by peddling on to others what has been gossiped to us.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, Maomi Aaron’s sister, Leann Rogers, who is having health problems, and Lanny Niver together with his daughter and son, and Tim Smith.

Jean Peebles daughter, Betty, continues to improve following her surgery. She is going to be staying with sister Peebles for a few days but is not able to get out much just yet.

Kathy Treadway is in Edisto for several weeks.

Lanny Niver has gone to Colorado to visit for about two weeks.

The next pot luck will be after the morning worship on July 25, 2010. Plan to stay and eat and enjoy a time of fellowship together.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Ken Chumbley is working on an update for the church directory. Those who were in the previous one, please check the information and let him know of any changes. If you have an e-mail address, please let him know that if it is not already listed. For newer members, please let him have a note with your name, address, telephone number(s), birthday, and anniversary (if applicable). Thanks.

THE MECHANIC

A MECHANIC WENT to hear a visiting evangelist in a little town...

The preacher preached that night on money, and presented the sermon under three points. First point: “*Make all you can.*” The mechanic nudged his wife and said, “*That man is the best I’ve ever heard. He is no nitwit. He knows what it’s all about. He is one smart man.*” Second point: “*Save all you can.*” This excited the mechanic and he whispered again, “*This beats anything I’ve ever heard. He’s smart enough to be President. This town has never had a preacher that could hold a candle to him.*” The preacher commended hard work and thrift, denouncing laziness and waste. The mechanic couldn’t keep quiet. He whispered, “*I’ve believed this all my life.*” Third point: “*Give all you can.*” “*Oh my,*” exclaimed the mechanic, “*now he’s gone crazy. He has quit preaching and gone to meddling.*”

THOUGHT: Isn’t it strange that some people’s conception of great preaching is a sermon that compliments them and rebukes others? Remember – your preacher didn’t write the Bible. He is not responsible for any word in it, but he is definitely responsible for preaching every word in it. And when it is preached, people judge themselves by their reaction to it.

*Leroy Brownlow
deceased*