

THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

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EDITOR: Dylan Stewart

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

www.thegoodnewsofgod.org

“Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.
For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.”

Acts 20:26-27, NKJV

From the Editor's Desk

DYLAN STEWART - 01 NOVEMBER 2023

We are very excited to present the second edition of *The Whole Counsel of God*. We appreciate the kind and encouraging words we received from readers after distributing the first edition back in September. We pray that this month's edition of the journal will be of benefit to all who read it.

You likely noticed that September's edition placed particular emphasis on two concepts: (1) marriage, divorce, and remarriage and (2) "controversial" commands found in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. Lord willing, we hope to revisit 1 Corinthians in future editions to discuss 1 Corinthians 11 further, as well as examine 1 Corinthians 7 to hopefully expose false doctrines that have sprung up over the years due to misunderstandings and misapplications of Paul's commands in comparison to what our Lord taught during His earthly ministry. Both Corinthian letters are two of my favorite books in the New Testament due to my belief that they are two of the most dense and challenging epistles in the gospel. So, we look forward to revisiting Paul's first of his two crucial and inspired letters to the Corinthians.

This month, while there is no specific point of emphasis we are stressing, we have included multiple articles focused on our Lord Jesus Christ, with one article exposing a false doctrine regarding His deity, another article explaining how Christ's death was planned by God before the foundation of the world, and an article teaching the truth of how husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the church. We have also included an article looking at what the Bible teaches regarding sexual activity in the lives of God's people. We hope all articles included in this edition will be of great edification to us all.

Let us all continually pray that the Lord will soften our hearts to the truth, while hardening our hearts to error and that which is evil.

(DTS)

The Whole Counsel of God is published monthly by Dylan Stewart. All correspondences should be submitted via the **Contact Form** found [here](#). For previous editions of *The Whole Counsel of God*, visit www.thegoodnewsofgod.org.

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The Deity of Christ: Refuting Some False Arguments

OSAMAGBE LESLEY EGHAREVBA | LAGOS, NIGERIA

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Recently I met some preachers in the Lord's church who affirm that Jesus Christ was created. By "created" they mean that Jesus Christ at a point before the creation of the world, was not in existence. Then God the Father had to create Him, after which He (the Father), together with Jesus created all other things in the world.

Interestingly, these same preachers admit that Jesus is God. Quite strangely, they made Jesus a "created" God who is qualified to receive worship. Some arguments were advanced in support of their affirmation. It is my desire to address these arguments and see what the Bible says about them. It seems to me that the concept of Jesus being a "created God" would be like the concept of a "married bachelor" - both statements are not only contradictions in thought but they simply do not exist. Let us look at some of the arguments used by them to defend this doctrine.

JESUS WAS BEGOTTEN

One of the arguments used by these folks is about the usage of the word "*begotten*" found in **Heb. 1:5**. The text reads, "*For to which of the angels did He ever say: You are My Son, Today I have begotten You?*" And again: "*I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?*" They argue that the Greek word translated "*begotten*" as used in this verse means "to bring forth" or "to create" and that since Jesus Christ was begotten by the Father, then it means He was created. By this very argument, they have successfully made angels uncreated beings. Notice that **Heb. 1:5** clearly states that none of the angels were ever said to be begotten. And if

"*begotten*" means "created" as these brethren affirm, then the simple meaning of the text would be that none of the angels were ever created. But we know that angels were created as evident in **Psalm 148:5**. In an attempt to prove that Jesus was created by running to this passage, these folks have inadvertently made the angels uncreated!

But then, we also find the word "*begotten*" used in **1 Cor. 4:15** when Paul told the Corinthians that "*though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*" Would anyone argue that the Corinthians were created by Paul? Was it that they were not existing, and Paul had to bring them into existence? Paul is simply indicating that the Corinthians are now in a new position. He was the instrument of their conversion to Christ by means of the gospel; by preaching it to them, that is, by the truth. Whatever the word *begotten* means, it sure does not mean that the Corinthians were not in existence and then Paul brought them into existence. Surely, the word would not also mean in **Heb. 1:5** that there was a time Jesus was not in existence and God had to bring Him into existence.

JESUS HAD A FATHER BEFORE HE CAME TO EARTH

Another argument from **Heb. 1:5** often used by these preachers is that Jesus had a Father from when He was in heaven. And just like the earthly fathers who always exist before their children, God the Father existed before the Son. But whether Jesus was a Son in heaven or not is not an indication that He

was created. The truth is: it is erroneous to suggest (or state) that the word “Son” as used for Jesus necessitates any kind of physical begetting since we are “*sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus*” (**Gal. 3:26**). In the United States, George Washington is often called “the father of his country” without any understanding or suggestion that those in the U.S. are his biological sons. So far as I know, he never had any “sons” in that sense. Quite often I have read of a person who is called “the father of medicine,” or “the father of sociology,” or “the father of” something else, without the idea of that individual having begotten a “son” in the sense that “son” is so often used in the Bible. Jesus was not the “Son” because He had a beginning (e.g. that He was a CREATED being). He was the agent of creation, as the apostle John wrote in **John 1**, not a part of what was created!

JESUS WAS MADE

There is another argument that these brethren advance from **Heb. 1:4**. The text says in the King James Version: “*being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*” These brethren say that the word “made” means “to create” or “to assemble.” And because the Bible says Jesus was “*made so much better than the angels,*” then it means He was created better than the angels. But we find this same word used in **Matt. 23:15** when Jesus said, “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves*” (KJV). Was Jesus implying that the Scribes and Pharisees created the proselyte? Was the proselyte not in existence before he was made by the Scribes and Pharisees? In this verse, Jesus was simply speaking of the conversion of the proselyte. There is a change in his posi-

tion and in that sense, he was “made.” In the same way, **Heb. 1:4** is not even talking about creation, rather, it speaks of Christ’s role in the scheme of redemption and what He had become. If a man was made (or became) the director of a company, that would not mean he was created by the company or that he never existed before he was made such. It is very inappropriate to just stick to one meaning of a word and insist that such meaning would be applied in every instance the word occurs without regard for the context.

JESUS IS THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE

Speaking of Christ in **Col. 1:15**, Paul said, “*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*” And these brethren think that the word firstborn is used in this passage to mean that Christ was the first to be created. But the usage of the word “*firstborn*” simply indicates that Jesus is supreme over all creatures (not that He is a created being). It refers to the firstborn in position and not in time. For instance, when we refer to Jill Biden as the “first lady” of the United States of America, we do not mean she is the first woman in time. We simply refer to her as the first lady in position. Another good example is found in **Jer. 31:9** when God called Ephraim His firstborn. However, notice from **Gen. 48:14** that Ephraim was the younger son while Manasseh was the firstborn: “*And Israel stretched out his right hand . . . upon Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh’s head . . . for Manasseh was the firstborn.*” **Col. 1:16** clearly tells us the very point of **verse 15** - everything was created by Jesus and for Jesus - He is supreme! If Jesus is a created being, then it means that He created Himself based on **verse 16**.

JESUS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD

The last argument we would consider is found in **Rev. 3:14**, where Jesus said He is *“the beginning of the creation of God.”* These brethren interpret this passage to mean that Jesus is the first to be created. However, the term *“beginning,”* as employed in **Rev. 3:14**, does not suggest a commencement in time for Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, these brethren claim that *“the beginning of the creation”* was a time prior to **Gen. 1** (before God created the world) and that it was sometime within this period that Jesus was created. But the Bible teaches that the beginning of the creation began with Genesis when God created the heavens and the earth. Notice in **Mark 10:16** (*“But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female’”*) and **Mark 13:19** (*“For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be”*) that Jesus referred to the beginning of the creation and this points back to Genesis when God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all present in creating all things. Hence, *“the beginning of the creation”* does not refer to a time before Genesis as these people contend that Jesus was created. Since Jesus was present at *“the beginning of the creation,”* it is an assumption to find another beginning of the creation in which it is claimed that Jesus created.

So, this phrase as used in **Rev. 3:14** simply indicates that Jesus is “first in rank,” not first to be created. The Greek word that is rendered *“beginning”* in **Rev. 3:14** is ARCHE. The term is employed in various senses in the Bible. It may refer to the *“beginning”* of something (e.g. in *“the beginning of the gospel”* [**Mark 1:1**]) and it can also signify the *“first cause,”* of a thing, or

that by which something *“begins to be,”* i.e., the originating source. In **Rev. 3:14** ARCHE is used of Christ as the uncreated principle, the active cause of creation. The term in this text is not to be understood as the first of created things. Notice that in **Rev. 22:13**, Christ refers to Himself as *“the beginning [arche] and the end [telos].”* If *“beginning”* suggests that there was a time when Christ did not exist, but that He came into existence as the first being of God’s creation, does *“end”* indicate that there will be a point at which the savior will go out of existence? The question hardly needs a response. Also, in **Isa. 48:12** the Lord God described Himself as *“the first”* and *“the last.”* Did He mean to indicate that there was a time when He did not exist? The very idea that Jesus was the first to be created is not only absurd, but it is inconsistent with the teaching of the Bible.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT JESUS IS FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING

The Bible teaches that Jesus is God and that suggests He was not created. He accepted worship on different occasions (**Matt. 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9,17; Heb. 1:6**). Cornelius refused to accept worship since it was improper to worship a creature like Him (**Acts 10:25-26**). **Rom. 1:25** makes it clear it is wrong to worship the creature: *“who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”* Creature worship is sinful and if Jesus was created as these brethren affirm, it would be a sin for Him to have been worshipped. **Micah 5:2**, in speaking of Jesus, teaches that His *“goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”* This means He has been from eternity. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made (**John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; Gen. 1:26**).

What Constitutes Obedience?

RICHIE THETFORD | COLORADO, UNITED STATES

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1 Sam. 15:22 says, “*And Samuel said, ‘Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, [And] to heed than the fat of rams.’*” Obeying the voice of the Lord is our first obligation. The truth is what guides us unto salvation and all men should obey the truth of God (**Gal. 3:1-5; 1 Pet. 1:22**). We can learn from the scriptures that no man is saved by obedience to anything other than God’s word. King Saul obeyed the voice of the people and that led to his downfall (**1 Sam. 15:21**). Adam obeyed the voice of Satan (**Gen. 3:1-6**). Saul of Tarsus obeyed the voice of his conscience (**Acts 26:9**). Only when one obeys the commandments of God is one able to be saved.

So how do we obey the truth? Before answering this question, let us first see how we disobey it. We disobey the truth by refusing to do anything at all (**John 5:40**). We disobey the truth by adding anything to it that God has not commanded or allowed. The Proverb writer says: “*Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar*” (**Prov. 30:5-6; see also Rev. 22:18; 2 John 9**) Besides adding to God’s word we disobey Him by taking away that which He has instructed us to do (**Rev. 22:19; Deut. 4:2**). The only way that we can obey the truth is by doing the exact thing that God commands for us to do: “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I*

will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’ (**Matt. 7:21-23**). Some may think they are doing God’s will because it “feels right”, or “it is a good work” but that doesn’t make it right! This point is driven home by the example of Moses when he struck the rock when he was not commanded to do so (**Exo. 20:7-12**). It seemed such a small thing when Uzza touched the Ark to stabilize it, yet it caused his death (**1 Chro. 13:9-10**). If we offend in one point, we are guilty of all: “*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one [point], he has become guilty of all*” (**James 2:10**). Let us strive to do ONLY those things which ARE AUTHORIZED by God!

Did You Know?

The New English Translation (NET, Thomas Nelson Full Notes Edition) includes the following footnote in regards to **1 Cor. 11:2-16**:

“That the hair is regarded by Paul as a covering in v.15 is not necessarily an argument that the hair is the same as the head covering that he is describing in the earlier verses (esp. v.10). Throughout this unit of material, Paul points out the similarities of long hair with a head covering. But his doing so seems to suggest that the two are not to be identified with each other . . . If head covering = long hair, then what does v.6 mean (‘*For if a woman will not cover her head, she should cut off her hair*’)? This suggests that the covering is not the same as the hair itself.”

An “Unforgivable” Sin?

MIKE JOHNSON | ALABAMA, UNITED STATES

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1 John 5:16 says, *“If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.”* What is this sin which leads to death for which it would do no good to pray for forgiveness? Many different explanations exist. Please consider some brief thoughts.

Some have taken this verse to mean there are particular sins which we can obtain forgiveness for, and there are others which we cannot. Some say this verse refers to transgressions such as murder, idolatry, and adultery. This view does not seem to be the case as the passage is speaking in a more general sense.

Consider a few facts about this passage. The passage says there is a sin unto death, and for those guilty of such, it is futile to pray. Also, the scripture is speaking about a “brother” who sins; thus, it is talking about Christians who sin. The passage shows us a child of God (a Christian) can sin. Further, the effects of this sin were visible, and it was possible to distinguish between the sin unto death and the sin not unto death. Also, the death under consideration is “*spiritual death*,” such as is spoken of in **James 5:19-20**.

1 John has a lot to say about forgiveness and conditions for forgiveness. In the immediate context, **verses 14-15** speaks of prayer and says God will hear our prayers and respond, but it also shows that what we ask for must be according to the will of God. When it comes to praying on behalf of

a brother, we must respect God’s will as in all other cases.

What is the sin unto death? **1 John 1:8-9** says, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* In interpreting our text, the concept expressed in these verses is critical, leading us to this conclusion: The sin leading to death, for which it would do no good to ask forgiveness for, is any sin which a person is not willing to confess and, implied elsewhere, repent of (**Acts 8:22**). Prayer by a person for another or prayer by the one guilty of sin does no good if that person is unwilling to confess the sin and repent. Prayer is not a substitution for confession and repentance.

SWORD SWIPES

**“Shun profane and vain babblings”
(2 Tim. 2:16a, KJV)**

The Bible provides so much more than just encouragement; it also provides correction if we are willing to accept and apply it.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16).

(DTS)

Just as Christ Loved the Church

AL DIESTELKAMP | ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES

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For men who are married, I doubt that there is any greater challenge than the one posed by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians: *“Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it” (5:25)*. Loving our wives is easy, but loving them *“just as Christ also loved the church”* sets a very high standard. Therefore, it is important that we see just how Christ loved the church so that we might act accordingly toward our wives.

CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH SACRIFICIALLY

He *“gave Himself for it.”* To succeed at loving our wives *“as Christ does the church,”* we must have an attitude of sacrificial service toward them. It is not likely that we will have to die for our wives, but we must be willing to serve their needs. As husbands, we need to understand that our wives’ needs differ from our own. True love *“does not seek its own” (1 Cor. 13:5)*. It is our responsibility to meet the needs of our wives. A great *“fringe benefit”* of doing this well is that our wives will respond in kind by making sure that our needs are met. While not all wives have identical needs, a survey of Christians attending a ladies’ Bible class showed that their number one need is for their husbands to provide spiritual leadership. Others expressed needs (in order of their importance) were family commitment, communication, affection, and financial security.

CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH EXCLUSIVELY

The apostle says that Christ’s gift of Himself was *“that He might sanctify and cleanse it” (v.26)*. Though Jesus loves the whole world, He has *“set apart”* His church

from the world. He has only one bride. The marriage relationship requires sanctification - a setting apart from other relationships. In marriage, the husband is *“set apart”* to belong to the wife, and the wife is *“set apart”* to belong to the husband - he is for her; her for him. Any interference with this God-given arrangement is sin.

CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH CARINGLY

“So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church” (v.28-29). I think we know what we do for someone or something we cherish - *“protect and care for lovingly; hold something dear”* (American Dictionary).

CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH ENDURINGLY

As the church is joined to Christ, so *“a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (v.31)*. This is a reference to the intimate sexual relationship between a husband and wife. However, Jesus used this same quote to teach the inseparability of marriage (**Matt. 19:5-6**). As Christ and His bride are *“one body”* which nothing can separate (**Rom. 8:35-39**), so the husband and wife are *“one flesh”* which man must not separate.

From the beginning, God said, *“It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him” (Gen. 2:18)*. As men, we should have a great appreciation for our wives. Our creator knows just what we need to help us go to Heaven.

Hypothetical Situations

PAT DONAHUE | ALABAMA, UNITED STATES

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Matt. 22:23-33 records the case of the Sadducees using a hypothetical situation to try to prove their incorrect theory that there was no resurrection. Their supposed case was of a woman who had seven different husbands (due to the death of the first six) in this life. Their question in **verse 28** was, *“In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?”* They reasoned that since she couldn’t be the wife of all seven in the afterlife, therefore there must not be an afterlife. Of course, Jesus answered the question by saying there are no marriages in heaven, and that there is a resurrection (afterlife).

The Sadducees’ “difficult case” didn’t prove anything did it? Only the scriptures prove doctrine (**II Tim. 3:16**). Hard cases are nothing more than hard cases; they do not change the words of the Bible. In this case, even though the hypothetical was presented, the words of God in **Exo. 3:6** still read, *“I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,”* and so Jesus quoted this verse to prove there is a resurrection.

In spite of this bad example, many believers (including Christians) today will use hypothetical situations to try to prove their false doctrines. Some ask “what if a limb falls on a man and kills him on the way to the baptistery?” in order to prop up their false doctrine that one does not need to be baptized in order to be saved. This “hard” situation proves nothing. It does not change the words of **Mark 16:16a**: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”* These

words teach conclusively one must be baptized to be saved. Just as bad, are Christians who understand what **Mark 16:16** is teaching, but when presented with this “hard hypothetical,” they bend and say that “Jesus might save someone who dies on the way to the baptistery.” Either **Mark 16:16** is teaching the necessity of baptism, or it is not! If it is, then these Christians are basically saying that Jesus said a sinner must be baptized to be saved, but that he might have lied about it!

Many Christians say they agree with the Bible that a Christian must repent of (**Acts 8:22**) and confess (**1 John 1:9**) his sins in order to be forgiven of his sins, but they are evidently only paying lip service to these verses, because they will bring up a hypothetical to try to prove a Christian doesn’t have to turn from his sins under some circumstances (ignorance and/or weakness). They ask, “What about the Christian who is driving one mile per hour above the speed limit and doesn’t know it? Will he be lost if he dies?” The questioner doesn’t really want to know the Bible answer to this question; that is not why he is asking. What he is doing is trying to present a sympathetic case to try to get someone else to agree with his false theory that sins of ignorance are automatically taken care of, without repentance and confession. When someone asks me, “What about the Christian who ignorantly drives over the speed limit,” I ask them, “Is it a sin for a person to drive over the speed limit?” They respond, “Yes.” I ask them, “What are the wages of sin according to **Rom. 6:23**?”

They quickly see the Bible answer to their original question. Whether they completely accept it or not, is up to them. Of course, their main problem is in trying to use hypothetical situations instead of the scriptures to prove a doctrine. You can be sure that if they had a verse that proved their doctrine, they wouldn't be using a hypothetical to try to prove it.

On the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, many Christians use the hard case of a husband beating his wife to teach it is scriptural to divorce and/or separate for a reason other than fornication as long as remarriage does not follow. Of course, **Matt. 5:32** and **1 Cor. 7:10** teach this position is patently false. Have you ever noticed that the words of these two verses still read the same

even after someone tells you the very sympathetic story of a wife being beaten? Certainly, Jesus feels for a woman in such a terrible situation (and so should we), but he gave one, and only one exception (fornication) to his "no divorce" law (**Matt. 5:32, 19:9**).

Can we not see that hypothetical situations, as difficult as they may be, do not prove anything? Only revelation from God (scripture) proves anything (**Acts 18:28**). Let yourself be influenced by scriptures and not hypotheticals. In addition, let all people everywhere cease using these hypothetical situations in an attempt to prove religious positions. If you have a verse that proves your point, then use it! If you don't have a verse, then back off your point, and quit teaching what cannot be proven by God's word.

ILLUSTRATIONS

"He did not tell them anything without illustrating it with a story" (Matt. 13:34b, GW)

If a shopper hands a cashier a \$100 bill but does not allow the cashier to examine the \$100 bill to verify it is a genuine and authentic piece of currency, we all assume the shopper is using counterfeit money. Yet, when a preacher teaches something he is not willing to defend publicly or allow anyone to question, people still choose to accept his preaching as truth and risk their salvation on it. But the Bible proves time and time again that truth fears no investigation:

- **1 Thess. 5:21** - *"Test all things; hold fast what is good."*
- **1 John 4:1** - *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."*
- **Acts 17:11** - *"These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."*
- **John 3:20-21** - *"For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."*

If a preacher is not willing to allow people to question or debate his teaching, you can be confident that what he teaches likely is not the truth. (DTS)

The Death of Christ Was Planned Before Creation

DYLAN STEWART | ALABAMA, UNITED STATES

WWW.THEGOODNEWSOFGOD.ORG

In **Acts 2:22-23**, during the first gospel sermon after the death of Christ, Peter preached, *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know - Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.”* The death of Jesus Christ was not a spontaneous tragedy; it was not God thinking of a last-second idea to correct some mistake He made; nor was it some sort of historical goof-up. The death of Christ was in the predetermined mind of God and part of His eternal plan thought out before the foundation of the world.

In **Titus 1:1**, Paul writes, *“Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgement of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.”* A promise was made before there was even time. As humans, it is incredibly difficult for us to think about anything outside the realm of time. Everything we do is centered on time. We plan our meals, measure our age, make appointments, etc. all based around time. Yet, God made a promise before time existed and before there was anyone or anything created on earth. It was a promise made from the Father and it involved eternal life. The promise was that if the Son would become the Lamb of God, the Father would grant eternal life to all who obeyed Him (**Heb. 5:9**), and God, who cannot lie, promised this before the beginning of time!

Christ was destined to die from the beginning. A couple passages in addition to **Acts 2:22-23** make this truth especially clear:

- **1 Pet. 1:20a** - *“He [Christ] indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world.”*
- **Eph. 1:3-6** - *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”*

Jesus, in love, was willing to be the One who would come as the sacrificial Lamb of God and die as a sacrifice for sin so those who were lost could be adopted back into His family and receive the blessing God planned for mankind from the beginning of time - eternal life (**John 1:29; Isa. 53:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19**).

Describing the judgment day and the promise of eternal life to God’s faithful people in **Matt. 25:34**, Jesus explains, *“The King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”* What a day and what a plan, both forged in the love of God and the sacrifice of His Son, thought out before the foundation of the world.

Sex: A Biblical Discussion

DYLAN STEWART | ALABAMA, UNITED STATES

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Whether we were looking for it or not, it is likely that we have all been taught innumerable lessons on what sex is from a very young age. These lessons, for better or for worse, have come from our television screens, from our own desires, and from the people around us. The problem is, as is the case with everything in life, unless we filter what we have learned about sex through God's word, then we have, at best, a lesser version of what God intended and, at worst, a twisted and deeply harmful perception of what God has intended. The Bible has much to say on the subject of sex, both positively and negatively. Since God's holy book is the infallible source of truth, we hope to examine this subject with the proper care and grace it rightly deserves, while also standing firm on what our Lord and His Spirit has revealed.

PURPOSE

The Bible teaches that sex between two scripturally eligible participants serves a two-fold purpose. First, sex is how humans "multiply" (**Gen. 1:28**); I think all humans who have reached a level of mental maturity can recognize this purpose of sex. But reproduction is not the only purpose of sex. By necessary inference, we can learn that God's second purpose for sex is the physical/intimate joining together of a man and woman who are scripturally authorized to do so. Sex between a scripturally married husband and wife is the physical representation of the way marriage joins together two separate beings into one (**Mark 10:7-8**). The act joins the man and woman together into one flesh in a figurative sense and discourages married couples from falling to sexual immorality. Paul urges,

"Because of the temptation of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband" (1 Cor. 7:2). Sex, then, has a two-fold purpose, but only for those who are scripturally eligible and mutually agree to participate (see **1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Cor. 7:2-6; Heb. 13:4**).

MIRRORED INTIMACY WITH GOD

In passages such as **Eph. 5:31-32** and **2 Cor. 11:2**, illustrations are made explaining how marriage was designed by God as a picture of the covenant relationship He wants with us. Now, consider a parallel: In marital sex, there is a giving over of the body, and in our spiritual relationship with God, we are also to give our bodies - *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1).* Just as we give our bodies and our entire beings to God through service to Him, sex likewise exemplifies a giving of the body because *"the wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife" (1 Cor. 7:4).* As we can see, marital sex is more than just a safe outlet for fulfilling sexual desires and reproducing. Sex is holy to God because it mirrors the pure soul intimacy He wants to share with us.

MORE THAN FOR JUST PROCREATION

Opinions vary among Bible believers on this particular point, but the Bible shows very clearly that sex can be for more than just procreation. In His perfect wisdom, God placed a very small yet very powerful book in

the Bible that centers around the subject of sexual intimacy. The **Song of Songs** (or **Songs of Solomon**) is a book consisting entirely of a playful back-and-forth between a husband and wife. The man and woman are both feeling the “heat of the moment” as they call back and forth to one another throughout the book, and they leave no detail out when describing their love and longing (i.e. sexual desires) for one another. For example, the woman describes the man as “*like the finest apple tree in the orchard is my lover among young men. I sit in his delightful shade and taste his delicious fruit*” (2:3). The woman’s words intentionally carry sexual connotations to provide fairly provocative imagery. Likewise, the man would respond by describing the woman as “*my private garden, my treasure, my bride, a secluded spring, a hidden fountain*” (4:12). Why does God include such a provocative book in the Bible? Simply put, it is to show joy and pleasure that comes from a scripturally married husband and wife being joined together sexually.

CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Paul provides the following warning in **1 Thess. 4:3-4**: “*For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust.*” Today, love is constantly awoken outside of its proper time. However, this impropriety has been the case long before the Holy Spirit completed God’s divine revelation of His holy book (remember Sodom and Gomorrah? **see Gen. 19**). Love that is stirred up in its proper time between a scripturally married husband and wife is beautiful and even encouraged by God (**see again 1 Cor. 7:2-6**). However, love stirred up outside the proper time is nothing more than a pursuit of the desires of the flesh, such as what we read about in **Gal.**

5:17-21. There, Paul explains, “*For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do . . . Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality . . . orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*” Indeed, there is a fine line between desires of the flesh versus desires of the spirit, and the Bible provides very clear boundaries separating that which God approves and that which God has unauthorized.

The Bible repeatedly defines clear boundaries that exist for sex. The Proverbial writer encourages, “*Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love*” (**Prov. 5:18-19**). We see how the writer paints sex in a beautiful light. Yet, going back to the **Song of Songs**, we can also read how the woman who sexually longs for husband repeatedly warns, “*I charge you do not stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time*” (**1:5; 2:7; 3:5; 8:4**), clearly indicating an appropriate coming together between the husband and wife.

Throughout scripture, God puts parameters on physical intimacy and these parameters are not undefined or loose, but firm and precise. **1 Cor. 7** draws the clearest line on what is and what is not within the boundaries God has set. A number of issues are addressed throughout the chapter, both for the married and the unmarried, but it might be summarized like this:

- Every person (single, dating, or married) must control their passions and not give in to sexual temptations (**v.1-10**).

- Single people especially must control their passions and avoid sexual immorality (v.8-9, 36).
- Husbands should fulfill the intimate needs of their wives (and vice versa), and should only have sex with other and no one else (v.2-5).
- Although every person battles sexual temptations, scriptural marriage is the only approved outlet for fulfilling sexual desires (v.8-9).

God has placed clear boundaries on sexual activity. It is intended only for scripturally married husbands and wives. All sexual activity outside these confines contradict God's laws. The need to recognize and submit to God's boundaries is vital because the Bible says we should not just avoid but "*flee all sexual immorality*" (1 Cor. 6:18). The word "*immorality*" translates the Greek word "*porneia*." This word refers to any and all sexual activity outside of a legitimate marriage relationship. Sexual immorality, or breaking of God's defined boundaries for sex, was so prevalent during the first century that it is discussed in nearly every epistle the apostle Paul wrote (see 1 Cor. 5, 6:9-18; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess 4:7). Stirring love up outside of its proper time and boundaries carries grave consequences for our souls. John explains, "*As for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death*" (Rev. 21:8). We must all strive to hold marriage "*in honor*" by letting "*the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous*" (Heb. 13:4). Likewise, we must all recognize and daily strive to not fall outside the boundaries God has clearly defined when it comes to engaging in sexual activity.

CONCLUSION

Sex between a scripturally married husband and wife is the only sexual expression approved by our Creator. It serves as a covenant between a married man and woman, mirroring the covenant God's people have with their heavenly Father. Though God approves for people to take pleasure in it, sex should always be treated as a sacred gift enjoyed solely within the confines of the scriptural "*marriage bed*." We must guard our eyes and hearts from all temptations trying to sully or steal the sexual intimacy and pleasure God approves by never crossing the clearly defined boundaries our Lord provides.

MYTH BUSTERS

"They will turn away their ears from the truth & will turn aside to myths"
(2 Tim. 4:4, NASB)

The next time someone tells you it is obvious that "*Jesus is returning soon,*" respond the way Jesus would by asking, "*Have you not read?*" (Matt. 12:3; 19:4; 21:42; 22:31). Then, read for that person Matt. 24:36: "*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven, but my father only.*" Indeed, no man knows when the Lord will return. Now, that does not mean we are excused to ignore the fact that He will return one day; we ought to live everyday preparing for His inevitable return by walking step-in-step with what the Lord commands (see 2 Pet. 3). Yet, if we find ourselves trying to look for the "*signs*" of the end times, our efforts will prove worthless since Jesus clearly stated "*no one knows*" when that day will come. (DTS)

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

“And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks” (Hebrews 11:4, ESV).

Make the Break

QUENTIN McCAY

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Many churches are doing many things today that would have been unthinkable several years ago. Though the gospel is God's power to save (**Rom. 1:16**), all kinds of gimmicks are invented to draw people. Church kitchens are built with the money from church treasuries. Children are rewarded with candy and cookies for riding the buses to services. Basketball teams, skating parties, fellowship halls, and youth rallies are designed to appeal to the young people. Homes for unwed mothers, homes for the needy, and schools, for which a fee is charged (to teach secular subjects), are invented to draw people into the fold. Numerous other practices could be mentioned that indicate that many churches have abandoned the practice of doing all things according to the pattern of the New Testament.

Some people are bothered by all these things being done by the church. Often they say that they do not believe that such things are the work of the church and wish that the church would cease such practices. But they do not have the courage to break with the liberal trend. However, some have made the break and are willing to bear whatever reproach and shame evil men heap upon them. To those who have thought of breaking with the accelerating apostasy, we make an appeal to come back to the Bible, and take a stand with those who are fighting for the purity of the church.

To keep you safely in the fold of digression, many tricks are used. The “liberals” would have you believe that the “conservatives” are a bunch of cranks who would let poor little orphans starve and who think that it is sinful for churches to cooperate. Such charges are false and most everyone knows that such is false, but it serves the purpose to deceive. We stand ready to accept any passage or Bible argument that will prove these things to be scriptural. But all the wisdom of men has not found any Bible authority for the above mentioned practices. We urge you to examine what we teach and practice in these areas of differences and find out just what the issues are. Many honest people have done this and discovered that what we are saying is exactly what they believe, because it is what the Bible teaches, and have broken with the liberal forces. They have taken their stand with those who are making a sincere effort to “speak where the Bible speaks,” and to “be silent where the Bible is silent.” For the following reasons we appeal to you to make the break as many have done

FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE

Many say they do not believe many things that churches are doing and yet go right along giving their money and time advancing the very thing that they oppose. The Bible teaches, “*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin*” (**Rom. 14:23**). This means that we sin if we do things not being fully persuaded in our

own mind that the practice is right. Paul was discussing the matter of eating meats, but his teaching has application to unscriptural practices of churches today. Practicing something without the full consent of one's conscience is sinful. So for the sake of your conscience, you should break with those unscriptural practices.

FOR SAKE OF YOUR CHILDREN

Though you say that you do not believe in many things being done by the church where you worship, your children will likely grow up believing that such are scriptural. Little by little the church is drifting into complete apostasy and your children will find themselves involved in this apostasy. For the sake of your children, therefore you should lead the way out of the digressive movement. You have a duty to teach them the truth on every subject and show them the dangers of any departure from the ways of the Lord. Your children will grow up and give their time, money, and influence to the cause of digression, and you will be responsible for it. Their usefulness for truth and righteousness now, and their eternal salvation depends upon you leading the way out of error and back to the Bible.

DUTY TO STAND FOR THE RIGHT

Christians have an obligation to "*contend earnestly for the faith*" (**Jude 3**). Error succeeds when Christians do nothing. When God's people fail to stand against error, there will be no opposition to it, and error will grow like leaven to permeate the whole body. Paul

declared, "*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore*" (**Eph. 6:10-18**). The person that does not stand against (anti) error is in violation of this passage.

FOR YOUR OWN SALVATION

One cannot be saved believing and following error. Jesus said, "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (**John 8:32**). One is made free from sin, or saved, by truth and not error. A little error mixed with a lot of truth is destructive. Some say, "I don't go along, nor believe a lot of things being done where I worship." But they do go along by giving their time, money, and influence to those things. You should either correct the error where you worship, or make the break and find a place where you can stand for the truth. Your salvation depends upon it.

To have a clear conscience, to save your children, to fulfill your duty, and for the sake of the salvation of your own soul, you should make the break and take your stand with those who are making a sincere effort to please God in all things.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Although I never met Quentin McCay, without his evangelistic efforts it is unlikely I ever would have become a Christian. Brother McCay's preaching led my grandfather to leave the Baptist church in the 1950s. As most of you know, without the example of my grandfather, it is very, very unlikely I would have obeyed the gospel. Therefore, although I never met brother McCay, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to him for the important role he indirectly played in me becoming a Christian due to the impact his preaching had on my grandfather.

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**“BUT WHEN THEY BELIEVED PHILIP AS HE PREACHED GOOD NEWS
ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST,
THEY WERE BAPTIZED, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN.”**

ACTS 8:12, ESV

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