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Living in the Last Days

By M. A. Bailon

When you read in the Book of Acts that there is a time called the last days do you think to yourself: "Yes, I am living in the last days?" In particular, Luke writes in Acts chapter 2, quoting the apostle Peter:

Acts 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

One theologian notes that "one cannot separate restoration from the pouring out of God's Spirit in the prophetic literature."¹ That the Spirit Himself would move the apostle Peter to use this Old Testament prophecy of Joel to answer his critics is worth noting. The events of this particular Pentecost celebration occur in what could be called the penultimate chapter in the great story of the eternal covenant of redemption and grace; the last chapter being The Judgment, and creation of new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter 3:9 – 13).² It should also not escape our attention after a careful reading of chapters 1 and 2 of Acts that this day of Pentecost was a watershed moment in human history. The Lord of Glory having been incarnated according to the eternal covenant of redemption and grace and having lived the perfect life in obedience to the law and having died by crucifixion to pay the sin debt for His people, is ascended and now rules and reigns from heaven through the Holy Spirit of God. It is this same Spirit which was poured out upon Peter and the other disciples at this feast of Pentecost. God has clearly ushered in a new time which the Apostle, under

inspiration, termed the last days. Moreover, Peter under inspiration says that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon, and the empowering thereby, of the Jerusalem church is a fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 2:14 – 16).

The first effect of the outpouring of the Spirit of God is the preaching of the wonderful works of God in the native tongue of the many devout men who had travelled to Jerusalem from several different countries to celebrate Pentecost. What caught the attention of the people is not only that men were preaching in a language other than their native tongue but that the preachers were lowly Galileans, known for their illiteracy and unattractive accent. God transcends the humbleness of the disciples and enters the world of men in spectacular fashion. He did not introduce this new epoch in a benign and nondescript manner. The day starts out quietly with the normal festivities carrying on outside and the Jerusalem congregation sitting around and fellowshiping inside. No one could anticipate the events that were about to follow. The Spirit of God suddenly makes His clamorous entrance. The surprise entrance of the Spirit upon the disciples and the other believers is likened to the sound of a rushing mighty wind coming down from heaven. The sound is loud and violent, and what looks like many tongues of fire come to rest on each one in the house. And everyone in the house is filled with the Holy Spirit. Now being empowered by the Spirit, the apostles will preach in languages other than their own. The first ministry of the newly empowered preachers is to immediately overcome the consequences of Babel (Gen. 11: 1 – 9). The amazement and agitation of the people caused by the abrupt and unexpected preaching of the word in several different languages must have been similar to the

experience of the people at Babel. The commotion in their midst is nothing more than the sovereign God of creation getting the attention of man as He comes down to their mundane world. The natural order of the day being disrupted, the Spirit continues the ministry of the word by exposing the people as either scoffers or seekers. The scoffers are shown to be irrational. Despite the time (it being 9:00 A.M.) and the season (it being the festival of wheat, not of grapes) the scorners accuse the apostles of being drunk. Not only does their accusation not make any sense, but it betrays the fact that they are totally clueless to what is happening. They have absolutely no idea that the people of God are now empowered by the Holy Spirit of God and that Christianity is now poised to spread throughout the world. They are eye-witnesses of this great Day of the Lord as He enters the world in a new way to credential the Jerusalem church. Like the prophecy of Joel in his day, this is not the final Day of the Lord but a momentous and amazing day. God intervenes in our world on such singular occasions with much fanfare and excitement.

The scoffers in that day, as in ours, make no sense of the ministry of the word. But there are others who ask, "What does this mean?" Since the day of Pentecost God has sent out preachers to preach the Gospel to lost men. There are those who will believe the message of salvation. This is the basis of the Great Commission. And this Day of the Lord at Pentecost is the beginning of the fulfillment of the Great Commission: "Having gone therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."³

To be sure, after Pentecost and until the end of the age, scoffers and other troublemakers also make their appearance in the New Testament churches (Jude 1:18; 2 Peter 3:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 John 2:18). While this is a topic worthy of two or three articles just in itself it is worth mentioning that church history

teaches us that each generation laments the state of their own contemporary churches. There have always been heretics. Not only the well-known kind that teach erroneous doctrine as prominent theologians but also the local run of the mill church hopper or church member who divides the local assembly by pushing others in the congregation in a direction contrary to the pastor's teaching. One cannot determine if these are especially the last days by counting heretics or, for that matter, the numerous apostate churches. It is just not possible to know whether or not we are living in the last of the last days. Besides the inference to be made from 1 Thessalonians 5:2 where we are told that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, even in Acts 1 the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ tells the apostles that it is not for them to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in his own power. And this statement occurs in the context of Pentecost when the Spirit of God is going to be poured out inaugurating the last phase of these last days. Even as God is fulfilling prophecy He reminds us that it is not for us to know when He will judge and destroy this sinful world. One thing we do know is that we are living in the last days and that our times are indeed evil. If to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams (1 Samuel 15:22), then surely to obey is better than satisfying a speculative, and vain, curiosity about the exact timing of the end of the world. Instead, it is imperative that we obey the scripture and redeem the time.⁴

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¹ Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1998), p. 356.

² Note that Peter says emphatically that the new creation shall be characterized by righteousness. Literally, [it is a new heavens and new earth] *in which righteousness dwells* (ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ). Note also that the relative pronoun "which" is plural indicating that righteousness makes its home in both heaven and earth.

³ The word 'go' in our English Bible is not a verb in the original Greek, but a passive participle (πορευθέντες). The word 'and' in "Go therefore and make disciples," is not in the original. Thus, we translate this

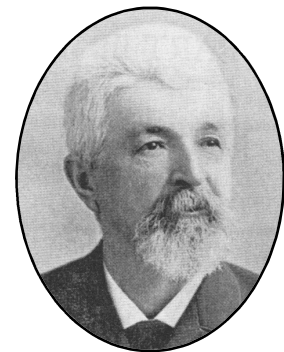
clause as 'having gone, therefore, make disciples' which is the literal translation. Our Lord knew that the gospel would spread from Jerusalem out to the rest of the civilized world.

⁴ The phrase 'redeem the time' in Ephesians 5:16 is an interesting phrase in the Greek. Literally, ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν means to buy up the time. But the word time is not just the ticking of a clock. It has the connotation of an allotted amount of time or an appointed time. It is also the word translated 'seasons' in Acts 1:7. There is a time of opportunity and we need to buy as much of it as we can. And, of course, that is done by not wasting time.

The Worth of Baptist Principles

By M. A. Carling

In the year 1901, a second edition of a series of articles on *Distinctive Baptist Principles* (organized originally by Jeremiah B. Jeter) was published in Virginia by the Religious Herald Company. This edition included an article by A. E. Dickinson entitled, *What Baptist Principles Are Worth to the World*. My desire is to use excerpts from that article to remind those of us who are Baptists, that we hold precious principles. It is my hope, as it was for Mr. Dickinson, that these excerpts will not "...put forward unwarranted and exaggerated claims for the Baptists..."¹



Alfred Elijah Dickinson, D. D.
1830-1906

Dickinson was aware that Baptists were not immune to blunders. Before acknowledging what Baptist principles are worth, he frankly states that Baptists have made mistakes.

In the very beginning, I must frankly confess that Baptists have accomplished for the human family scarcely a tithe of what they might have done and ought to have done. We are summoned to the profound-

est humiliation in reviewing the failures and follies which have almost everywhere and always marred the force and beauty of our principles. Many a time have these blunders brought us into disrepute among great masses of good people. You know that the worst enemies to any good cause are those who profess to be its champions, and yet, in their teaching and living, misrepresent its spirit and aims.²

It was keenly felt by Dickinson that Baptists have had a knack for turning on one another.

Whenever Baptists give their chief and almost exclusive attention to emphasizing the points of difference between them and others, they place their denomination at a frightful disadvantage. Multitudes, who might be won to our faith but for this distorted view, because of it are driven into organized and unrelenting opposition to us...While this unwise advocacy of our views...has often damaged us immensely in the eyes of other good people and the world at large, such so-called Baptist champions have often not stopped there, but have turned their guns upon their own citadel. Not content with the ruin inflicted upon their own denomination by their unwise methods in attacking others, they have too often found additional vent for their pugnacious impulses in keeping up a lively fight at home within their own lines. There is nothing such Baptists like so well as hot water; the hotter, the better for them.³

He considered that Baptist principles themselves were not responsible for the follies that Baptists created.

It is not the fault of the Baptist idea that it has not been worth a thousand times more to the world. It is not the fault of good seed that they fail to produce a good harvest, when they are not properly planted and wisely cultivated... McCormick's best reapers fail to gather the waving harvests, if those in charge do not know how to use them. Baptist principles are not responsible for Baptist follies.⁴

After these and other preliminary remarks, A. E. Dickinson sets out to enlighten the reader concerning Baptist principles. I have noted only a few.

What Are Baptist Principles?

Baptists hold to certain views and practices which are distinctive and peculiar, and are held by no others on earth. They regard these as immensely important; worth living for and worth dying for. And hence, when it is proposed in the name of Christian union to merge all denominations into one general organization, it seems to us but idle talk. Such a union may suit those who have nothing in particular to stand for; but it does not commend itself to us, who have great doctrines which can be maintained only by our continued separate existence.⁵

Church Order & Action

...the principle that the New Testament is our ultimate and only authority as to church order and church action, the question of church organization is settled for us for all time.⁶

Believer's Baptism

The inspired volume does not contain a line which indicates that anything will do for baptism; that if you think a thing is right, it is right to you. You search the Book of God in vain to find that baptism means this, that, or the other thing, or nothing, just as one may choose to have it. You will find no line there which so much as remotely intimates that this ordinance is for any but penitent believers.⁷

Soul Liberty

It might quicken the zeal of Baptists for them to recall the sufferings endured by their fathers, to bear in mind at what cost this liberty they now enjoy was obtained, and how joyfully their fathers paid that price in the dungeon and at the whipping-post. They counted life itself a thing of no value, when called to abandon Baptist principles.⁸

Authority of Scripture

...the sacred Scriptures are the only and the absolute authority in religion...The Word of God is the sovereign, and this sovereign has no parliament and no prime minister...The Word of God, what does that teach? is the only question which concerns a true Baptist.⁹

Baptists & the World

Baptist principles, when rightly held, lead

to a life of consecration to God's service and to a world-wide philanthropy. One cannot take this Baptist idea into his heart without taking with it all else that is good. He is false to his burial with Christ, if there is in him no resurrection to a new life. He must feel, as Paul felt, that this world has been put upon his shoulders, that he may lift it up to God; that every human being has a claim upon his best energies; that his commission is to each and every being on earth. Nothing less than such a consecrated life does the Baptist idea demand, and nothing less will it accept.¹⁰

Baptists & the God of Providence

The God of providence is our God. He has often turned the bitterest enemies of the Baptists into their most helpful friends. Many of the greatest names in Baptist history are names that have come to us from other denominations. How often, in searching for arguments against us, have men and women found that the Baptists have a "Thus saith the Lord," and gone forth frankly confessing that our position must stand while the inspired record stands.¹¹

Dickinson had hope that the Baptists of the future would not hide their great distinctive principles.

If God has wrought so mightily through the Baptists in the past, with all their lack of faith, and zeal, and tact, and toil, what may we not hope for in the better days that are ahead of us, when we shall realize as never before the weighty responsibilities which press upon us - in the coming days, when we shall see that having more truth than others devolves upon us the solemn obligation to live a more holy, a more consecrated life? We are Christ's witnesses, and his only witnesses, for the great distinctive principles he has committed to us. Shall He look in vain to us to witness aright for Him?¹²

Finally, A. E. Dickinson looks to the zeal of other denominations and calls us Baptists to consider, not just our faith, but our practice as well.

Often their holy zeal and Christian endurance will put us to the blush, and cause impartial observers to say that, while Baptists have the doctrine, others have the practice. Let us seek to profit by all this, and then, at last, when the crowning day shall come, it will appear to all

that not only have Baptist principles been valuable to the world, but invaluable.¹³

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¹ Jeremiah B. Jeter, *Baptist Principles Reset*, Reprint (Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., 2004), p. 277.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. pp. 278-279.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 280-281.

⁵ Ibid. p. 282.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. p. 283.

⁸ Ibid. pp. 285-286.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 287-288.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 300.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 302.

¹² Ibid. p. 304.

¹³ Ibid. p. 305.

Essential Texts for a Biblical Approach to Apologetics (9) 1 Peter 3:15

By P. S. Nelson

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

The charter text for Christian apologetics is 1 Peter 3:15. The following article discusses four aspects of Christian apologetics taken from this text; 1) *Commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ*, 2) *A Universal Call to All Believers*, 3) *Defending the Faith* and 4) *A Spirit of Humility*.

Commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ

The A.V. reads, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” However, from the better Gk MSS,¹ it is actually ‘Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts’ (κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν). “Lord” is placed forward in the word order for emphasis; “As Lord! - Christ, sanctify in your hearts.” The apostle Peter stresses the lordship of Jesus Christ in the work of apologetics. The Christian is commanded to place Christ as Lord first in his heart.² The verb sanctify (ἀγιάζω) means to set apart, to separate.³ The aorist imperative form of the verb denotes doing this with determination.

The Christian apologist must be committed to the lordship of Jesus Christ. We are to bow to *Christ as Lord* in every area of life, and that includes scholarship, academics and the entire world of thought. Hence, the Christian is obligated to presuppose Christ and his Word in the activity of apologetics. It is upon this imperative, to sanctify Christ as Lord, that defending the faith depends. Peter calls upon us to set apart *Christ as Lord* in the very process of defending the faith.⁴

This means that apologetics is not neutral. The unbeliever has his presuppositions, and a worldview that is antithetical to the Christian’s worldview. The unbeliever would have the Christian adopt his ungodly worldview under the guise of being neutral and objective. But to assume neutrality in any fact or data, would be to give up the lordship of Christ, whose Word alone is the absolute standard for all truth and reality. Christians must refuse to think or reason according to the mind-set of the world, and their apostate epistemology. It would be immoral to do so. Neutrality is a delusion, for everyone has their presuppositions. The Christian is commanded to reason from Christ’s word as the ultimate authority.

In our text, the apostle Peter demands an unreserved allegiance to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Christ’s lordship stands above and beyond all other authorities. Our starting point in reasoning with the unbeliever must be Christ and his Word. Peter’s command is “sanctify!”

A Universal Call to All Believers

And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh. “Be ready” (ἔτοιμοι) is an urgent command to every Christian. This is a call to all Christians to be ready to engage in apologetics. Every believer is to be prepared to give an answer, not just the experts and professionals, not just philosophers, scientists, and theologians, but every Christian. The sense in the Gk is to be *perpetually* prepared (ἔτοιμοι δὲ ἀεὶ), at any time and all the time. Therefore, it is a moral necessity for every Christian to be continually

ready to engage in apologetics. Every believer must learn apologetics for his own spiritual well-being and maturity in the faith.

Defending the Faith

The Christian is “to be ready always to give an answer.” The Gk word for “answer” is ἀπολογία. It is a technical term denoting the defense that a defendant makes before a judge in a court of law (Acts 22:1; 25:16).⁵ It is a compound word derived from the preposition ἀπο meaning from, and λόγιον (diminutive of λόγος) meaning utterance or speech. Thus, it means to speak from a certain position.

Our English word *apologetics* derives from the Gk term ἀπολογία (transliterated *apologia*). Theologically, *apologetics* means to defend the faith. The Christian is to be always ready to give his defense, to present his case, for the hope that is in him.

In the context that Peter uses this term, it is to defend the faith from a *reasoned* position. The Christian is to be prepared to give a “reason” of the hope that is in him. The Gk term used for “reason” (λόγον) connotes logic, not logic in its formal or symbolic sense, but as a consistent rationale.⁶ Defending the faith is a *reasoned* defense. It is to give a consistent rationale of our hope that is in Christ Jesus. We are to be prepared to intelligently articulate and rationally defend the doctrinal content of the Christian faith.

A Spirit of Humility

Finally, we note that 1 Peter 3:15 also speaks of the spirit in which we are to defend the faith. The Christian apologist must adorn himself with two things, “meekness and fear.” *Meekness* (πραΰτης) denotes humility and a gentleness of spirit. *Fear* (φόβου) can mean either fear of Christ (as it did in 1 Pet. 1:17, 2:18, 3:2), or it can mean reverence and respect of others. Both are true. Christians are to reverence Christ in the work of apologetics. This is part of sanctifying Christ as Lord in our hearts. Christians are also to give due reverence and respect to men. All

human beings possess the dignity of being made in the image of God. Therefore, they are to be treated with respect and in a becoming manner suitable to that dignity.

It is essential to conduct apologetics in an atmosphere of mutual respect. We are not to be parading our knowledge, or to be arrogant, rude, and disrespectful. We are not to be contentious. Being belligerent and obnoxious does not do any good for the cause of Christ, and only serves to irritate and provoke. We are representing Christ and his gospel. As Christians, we are to exhibit grace in our speech. For “the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim. 2:24).

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¹ The A.V. follows the inferior variant “the Lord God” (κύριον δὲ τὸν Θεόν).

² The term “heart” includes all the faculties of the soul, and is the center of our reasoning, thinking and understanding.

³ The noun forms ἁγιασμός (translated holiness and sanctification) and ἅγιος (translated holy or saint) depict the same basic meaning of separation unto God.

⁴ Bahnsen, G., *Pushing the Antithesis* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 2007), p. 19.

⁵ Lenski, R.C., “First Peter” in his *Commentary on the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), p. 150.

⁶ Oliphint, K.S., *The Battle Belongs to the Lord* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), p. 34.

The Faithfulness of God Exhibited in the Law of God Exodus 20:1-17

By J. A. Billings

In order to understand salvation from sin men must understand the significance the Law of God. The Law of God is manifested in its God-controlled historical setting. The significant historical highlights are: 1. The Fall and its effects on mankind; 2. God called out a special people to Himself and He is faithful to His covenantal promises; 3. The purpose of the Law; 4. How bad is

sin? 5. The problem of sin; 6. The solution for sin is only found in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Fall and Its Effects

In the beginning God showed Himself as the Sovereign God of creation. He created the heavens and earth out of nothing. He is not only The Creator; He is also The Sustainer of all creation. He created man in His image and likeness; therefore man represents God on the earth. Man is required to think God’s thoughts after Him and live according to His Word and will. The first man, Adam had perfect fellowship with God in his original righteous state. He thought God’s thoughts after Him. The Law of God was written on his heart. Adam understood that the law of God manifested the nature and character of God.

Adam’s sole responsibility was to obey the commands of God. He was required to live by faith, always trusting in the goodness and mercy of God. Adam, by his own volition, deliberately disobeyed an explicit command from God. “*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*” (Gen. 2:16-17). Not only was he the first man, he was also Representative Man. God constituted Adam as the Federal or Covenant-Head of the human race and all of the human race stands in Adam. When Adam fell (his sin and apostasy from God), he fell as Representative Man. He did not act on behalf of himself but on behalf of the whole human race. The sin of Adam, who is our representative, has been imputed to all of mankind without exception; it has infected the whole human race.

Sin spread rapidly. Cain murdered Abel and man was off and running...away from God. Finally, after centuries of wickedness God caused a great flood that covered the earth and killed everyone except Noah and his family. Why?

Gen. 6:5-9 And 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. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

The reality is that sin is pervasive throughout the human race and there is no returning to the Garden of Eden. After the flood, man continued in his wicked and sinful state. So God gave different languages to men and sent them to the four corners of the earth.

God Called Out a Special People to Himself and is Faithful to His Covenantal Promises

Through all of this, after many years, God revealed He is a God of grace and mercy. He revealed Himself to a man who did not know Him. His name was Abraham. Abraham was a pagan and God called him out of *Er* of the *Chaldees*. God made a covenant with Abraham. God promised that He would give him land and through Abraham’s seed a great nation would be born. Why? So the nation would be a peculiar people of God. God would reveal Himself to the world through His covenant people. His people would reflect His nature and character to the nations of the world. He would deliver His people, save His people, protect His people, provide for His people, go to war for His people and reveal his moral standard to His people. God promised that all the nations of the world would be blessed through His covenant promises made to Abraham. God did all of this because of the problem of sin. God, by His grace and mercy initiated a covenant promise to save people from their sin.

After hundreds of years God revealed Himself to Abraham’s descendants who had grown close to three million people. He did this by calling Moses to deliver them out of slavery from Egypt. Through Moses, God guided His people to the Promised Land. In the Promised

Land, Jehovah was to be their God and they were to be His Covenant People. They were a people called by God and set apart to reflect God in their lives. He revealed Himself as a patient God, a loving God, a faithful God, a forgiving God and a Just God. How? No matter how many times the children of Israel broke their covenant with God, God was faithful. While they were in the wilderness he gave them His Law.

Joshua conquered the Promised Land after the death of Moses. After his death Judges ruled for over 400 years and the nation was oppressed by her enemies because *“Every man did that which was right in his eyes.”* The nation of Israel was unfaithful but God was faithful! Then God gave them kings to rule over them because they no longer wanted God to be their King. By God’s mercy and longsuffering the nation stabilized, expanded, and became the mightiest nation in the world.

Then the kingdom divided and deteriorated morally. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was destroyed by Assyria and the people were assimilated into Assyria’s conquered lands. The Southern kingdom (Judah) was destroyed by the Babylonians along with the destruction of the Temple and the people were deported to Babylon. After many years of captivity a remnant returned, rebuilt the city walls, rebuilt the city and they rebuilt the temple.

Between Moses and the Birth of Christ 1400 years had elapsed. It is a history of rebellion, and unfaithfulness to God. But not once did it hinder God from being faithful to His covenantal promises to them. He was faithful to His eternal covenant he made with His Son. Through the nation of Israel the Messiah would come and save His people from their sin!

The Purpose of the Law

There are four explicit purposes of the Law of God: 1. It is the revelation of the righteous character of God. 2. It exposes sin. 3. It reveals God’s standard for man. 4. It leads men to Jesus Christ.

The Law shows that man cannot save himself. God gave His Covenant People His Law and they constantly broke their covenant with God. The Law revealed the true sinful nature of God’s Covenant People. The Law shows us that no one can, by his own works, earn acceptance before God. The law does not save men, rather it condemns them. Man cannot escape the horrible reality that he is a sinner before a righteous God and that he can do nothing to find favor with Him. The purpose of the Law is used for conviction of sin.

Rom. 3:19-20 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Rom. 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Gal. 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

How Bad is Sin?

There are five things that show the heinousness of sin: 1. Every person in the human race is guilty before God, 2. Sin requires a penalty and that penalty is death. 3. Sin has polluted the whole human race. 4. Sin is the dominating controlling nature of the human mind and will. 5. Sin has provoked God to anger.

Sin is so bad that all men are condemned before God. What can man do? Nothing. But the Good News is that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord! Throughout the Bible we find the grace of God in the life of unworthy sinners. Sin is the greatest problem in the human race and without the grace of God we are all doomed.

The Problem of Sin

The problem is that men are lost sinners that are condemned by the Law of God. The Law demands perfect obedience but men are incapable in their

fallen state before God! Because of His righteous anger we should all perish. God is not obligated to show mercy. But He does. That is free Grace!

Consider, for a moment, what the world would be like if Adam had not sinned and the human race had kept the Law. There would be no problems, no crime, no drug addiction, no drunkenness, no wife beating, no adultery, no murder, no stealing, no lying, no police, no jails, no half-way houses, no missions, no abuse of children, no rape, no war, no death! All would walk in perfect communion with God. But the horrible reality is that sin entered the human race! All men are condemned by a holy, righteous and just God and He is revealed through His Holy Law. God must punish sin. God must be consistent with His holy character.

The Solution for Sin: The Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ

From the beginning God has been working to renew a right relationship with the human race even though the human race has no intention of doing what is right. We have learned that God is faithful no matter what man does. That is the Good News of the Gospel. God determined to save sinners and will save sinners. No matter what man does God will not break His promise to save sinners!

Isa. 54:7-10 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

The Good News is that God sent His only begotten Son to save sinners. Jesus Christ is the anti-type of Adam. He is the Federal-Head of the Redeemed Race. The Redeemed race

are those for whom Jesus Christ suffered and died. Jesus Christ accomplished this in his active and passive obedience.

Jesus kept the law on our behalf. He led a perfect and sinless life. The penalty for sin had to be paid and the only penalty worthy of the crime was death. So Jesus paid the price for all those who have found grace in His eyes. He took our sin upon Himself. He became an offering to God for our sin. He shed His blood as the perfect sacrifice of God. He willingly offered himself as the sinless, spotless, Lamb of God and became our penal substitute for sin.

This is the covenant that God has been faithful to all these thousands of years. Jesus is the only Savior from sin. The problem is men do not believe they are sinners. The only way a man knows he is a sinner is by the Law of God condemning him. Paul said, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5:13). "...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7). It is of the utmost importance that men are brought before the Law of God in order to make them understand they are sinners in need of The Savior! May all men everywhere know that God is faithful to His covenant promises through His Holy Law and through His grace.

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An Introduction to Islam Part 1: Islam and Jihad

By Dr. A. L. Mellon

Islam is a religious and governmental system that affects all of us. It is a three-part system in which all laws are based upon the Quran, the traditions of Muhammad (called *Sunnah*), and the sayings of Muhammad (called *Hadith*). These form both the secular and religious laws of Islam - *Shariah Law*. The goal behind this system is to dominate the world through either peaceful or violent means. Islam intends to bring every civilization under one grand Islamic State and under *Shariah Law*.

The goal of virtually all terrorism committed in the world today is to bring about this Islamic State. In this article I will deal with the meaning of two words: *Islam* and *Jihad*. My desire in this article, as well as future articles, is to quote as much as possible from Islamic sources. To better understand the information presented, I would recommend purchasing an English translation of the Quran to read along with these series of articles.

Islam

According to Altaf A. Kheri, in his work *A Comprehensive Guide Book of Islam*,¹ Islam may be defined as the following: "*Total submission to God. In its primary sense the word Islam, which is derived from "as-lama" which signifies submission to the will of God Almighty. That such submission should be total and complete is specifically demanded by Allah;—'O ye who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly....'* (Surah 2:208).² *A Muslim is required to submit his whole self to Allah³ and devotion to Allah must be completely pure and sincere.⁴ Anyone who enters into the fold of Islam, or claims to be a Muslim, has to obey Allah in all matters: acceptance of some of his commands and non-acceptance of others is simply out of the question.*"⁵

In the work *Dictionary of Islam*,⁶ by Thomas P. Hughes, Islam is defined through the opinion of the Sunni sect:

"Islam—resignation to the will of God. The word generally used by Muhammadans themselves for their religion ... Muhammadans explained it to mean the observance of the five duties: (1) bearing witness that there is but one God; (2) reciting the daily prayers; (3) giving the legal alms; (4) observing the Ramadan or month's feast; (5) making the Pilgrimage to Makkah once in a life time."

The three major sects in Islam are: (1) **SUNNI** (83%) (Follower of the *Sunnah*). They follow caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar and Utlman and follow the Quran, the *Sunnah* and the *Haidith*. They do not believe in praying to Islamic saints or images. Both the Shiites and the Sufies are considered heretics and are

the targets of persecution by the Sunnis; (2) **SHIITE** (16%) They are mostly located in Iran. *Shiite* means "partisan or Followers." They only accept Ali, the son-in-law and cousin of Muhammad as the rightful and true Caliph. The Sunnis murdered Ali while he was praying in the mosque and his son was poisoned by one of his wives. The Sunnis murdered Ali's and Fatima's second son along with his family at Karabala. The massacre shocked the Islamic world and brought about the true birth of the Shiite party. They observe the ten holy days of Muharram (the days of lamentation) with reenactments of the massacre at Karabala and in memory of Hasain. The Shiites pray to Shiite saints and worship their graves. They have their own *Hadith*; (3) **SUFI** (1%) They are the mystics who believe in the internal, ascetic form of Islam. They look inward for the spiritual aspects of the religion. They believe that a person can commune with Allah through prayer, song and dance. Love is the key in their belief. The "*Whirling Dervishes*" are Sufi.

Most Muslims are born into the religion of Islam; the rest are converted into Islam. To leave Islam is to be under a death sentence. Under *Shariah Law*, to say anything against Islam or Muhammad is blasphemy and is punishable by death. All Muslims are under *Shariah Law* and this code of law controls every aspect of the individual's life, eating habits, personal hygiene, dress, and every other aspect of life.

Jihad

Jihad is a word that is heard quite often, but what does it mean? *Jihad* means "struggle, striving" or "holy war." With the *Sufi* sect of Islam, there are two forms of *Jihad*: 1) *the Greater Jihad*, which is the inner spiritual struggle against lust and corruption, and 2) *the Lesser Jihad*, which is the physical struggle against the unbeliever or infidel and is also called "holy war." With the *Sunni* sect of Islam, *Jihad* is the state of "holy war" against the unbeliever and is to be perpetual until the Day of Judgment:

Fighting is prescribed for you, and you dislike it. But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you... (Surah 2:216)

In Islam there are two houses: 1) "Dar al Islam" (the House of Peace) and 2) "Dar al Harb" (the House of War). The House of Peace means being under the Islamic State and Shariah Law. If a person is not a Muslim, he is under the House of War and is an enemy of Islam. He is in a state of war against Islam, and Jihad is justified against him.

Jihad is classified as the greatest act of devotion that a Muslim can perform, and to die in Jihad brings the greatest rewards in Paradise. All Muslims are commanded to participate in Jihad, either by supporting those who are active in Jihad or by being active themselves:

Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons. Allah has granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than those who sit (at home). To all (in Faith) Allah has promised good: but those who strive and fight He has distinguished above those who sit (at home) by special reward. (Surah 9:95)

If a Muslim dies in Jihad, he goes straight to Paradise and does not have to face the Day of Judgment, where all his good and bad acts are placed upon a balance scale to determine if he will enter Paradise or go to Hell Fire. When the martyr is buried, he is buried in the bloody clothes he died in. This is to show Allah that he is a true martyr. In Paradise, he is to receive eternal sexual pleasure with seventy-two virgins:

Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. To him who fights in the cause of Allah, - whether he is slain or gets victory - soon shall We give him a reward of great (value). (Surah 4:74)

In the Five Pillars or "Five Duties" of Islam laid down by Muhammad in Thomas P. Hughes' definition of Islam, Jihad is not a pillar. Jihad became the Sixth Pillar after the death of Muhammad. "The only religious move-

ment that defined Jihad as the sixth pillar of Islam was the Kharajites in the seventh century."⁷

The only two justifications for Jihad are: 1) to advance Islam and 2) to repel evil from Muslims. When an infidel is conquered in Jihad he has three choices: 1) convert to Islam, 2) be under the protection of Islamic State and pay the pool-tax, or 3) die by the sword. As long as Saudi Arabia promotes *Wahhabism* (the violent form of Islam) around the world, there will always be violence and death in the name of Jihad. Remember that the goal of Islam is to dominate the whole world and to replace every government on Earth with the Islamic State and Shariah Law.

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¹ Kheri, Altaf A., *A Comprehensive Guide Book of Islam*, (Adam Publishing & Distributers: Delhi, India), 1994, p. 1.

² Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Quran: Translated into English*, (Goodword Books: New Delhi, India), 2005. A *Surah* is a chapter and verse in the Quran. Chapter 2 verse 6 would be Surah 2:6 in the Quran.

³ Surah 2:112; 4:125; 22:34; 31:22.

⁴ Surah 39:2, 11; 40:14, 65; 98:5.

⁵ Surah 4:150, 151.

⁶ Hughes, Thomas P., *Dictionary of Islam*, (Adam Publishing & Distributers: Delhi, India) 1999, p. 220.

⁷ Gold, Dore, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, (Regnery Publishing, Inc.: Washington, D.C.) 2003, p. 190.

Hebrews 13:1

Πίστει νοοῦμεν...

"By faith we understand..."

Images from Church History



From *Martyrs Mirror*, Thielemann J. van Braght, p. 231

Clement, surnamed Scotus, that is, of Scotland, opposed the superstitions of common popery in various points, touching mostly the ceremonies. Thereupon he was accused as a heretic and burned to death about A.D. 750, or a little after.