

# **Preaching the Gospel**

**A monthly magazine for preachers and those who want to preach.**

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## **SO YOU WANT TO BE A PREACHER?**

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### **Preaching is a life of godly living**

We have all seen the headlines about preachers who were charged with high living on funds embezzled from the church, or charged with low living with prostitutes. I well remember the Louisiana TV Pentecostal preacher, Jimmy Swaggart being caught with a prostitute several years ago. With great tears he pled on TV for forgiveness. His ministry continued, and then later he was caught with a prostitute in his car in California. When questioned about this, he replied, “The Holy Spirit told me to tell you it is none of your business.” Some “spirit” may have told him that, but I am pretty sure it was not the Holy Spirit.

But such things are not confined to denominational preachers. Far too often gospel preachers are involved in such escapades. Within the past few weeks I have learned of two gospel preachers who were involved in adultery, one of them with a prostitute. I have known of more than one preacher whose effectiveness was destroyed by adultery.

*“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity”* (I Tim. 4:12). It is obvious that the effectiveness of a preacher depends much upon his preaching. But equally important is his *“manner of life”*—his example.

One “manner of life” has to do with finances. Yes, we might like to have all the nice things some of the members may have, but it is not always possible. One simply must learn to live within his income. In one place where we lived out west, a former preacher had left town owing various sums of money around town. It was a small town, so this was pretty well known. Of course he had “moved on,” but his reputation stayed behind and cast a bad light upon the Lord’s church.

*“Keeping up with the Joneses”* is not what preaching is all about. It is about being open and transparent in our financial dealings. As Paul was collecting funds for his needy brethren, he went to great lengths to allay any suspicions. *“And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches; and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord, and to show our readiness: Avoiding this, that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us: for we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men”* (II Cor. 8:18-21).

I suppose the most common “manner of life” issue has to do with relations with the opposite sex. There are minefields out there, and preachers should really exercise good judgment in such matters. Some have been known to be what I consider overly cautious. (One preacher told the brethren that if he saw their wife walking home from the grocery store in the rain, he would not offer her a ride if he was alone in the car.) But better to be overly cautious than to be stupid. Especial caution should be taken when counseling a woman whose marriage is not well. She may look upon the preacher as the kind of man she wished her husband was, and may become emotionally attached to him. I am thankful that in over 50 years of preaching I have never been “propositioned” in such situations. Perhaps I am too ugly to be appealing, or perhaps I just have not given out “vibes” that I might be approachable.

At any rate, open doors are helpful, with someone else in the area. They don’t necessarily have to hear the conversation, but the knowledge that others are around is a great deterrent to inappropriate behavior. When immorality takes place, not only is the preacher’s influence compromised, but a huge mess is involved, marriages may end, and souls may be lost. *It’s not worth it!!!*

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## [Pulpit Commentary Free Online](#)

I did a Google search for Pulpit Commentary and found that I could download the entire set free! It was scanned, so searching for words is possible. The Greek and Hebrew words come out as nonsense, but otherwise everything in the entire set is there!

***Preaching the Gospel Magazine is published the middle of each month. It is free by e-mail. Those who receive it are encouraged to print it for others.***

***This file is formatted for printing on both sides of the paper, with room to punch holes on the left for inserting in a notebook.***

***You will find back copies on [www.knowyourbible.co.za](http://www.knowyourbible.co.za).***

It took a long time to download, and Joel had to set it up for me so that it is easy to use. But now I have that entire set of about 21 volumes in my laptop! Incredible. You will find it at [www.esnips.com/web/PulpitCommentary](http://www.esnips.com/web/PulpitCommentary). After you download it, send an email to Joel for instructions as to how to set it up in your computer for easy access. [joelwms@biblemirror.com](mailto:joelwms@biblemirror.com).

I bought Pulpit Commentary in about 1950, and I have used it constantly. It was written by various preachers who, I think, were members of the Church of England, probably in the 1800’s. They are conservative in their theology, though their denominationalism colors their comments. Nevertheless, I have received a great deal of good from this commentary. The introduction to each Bible book and the comments on each verse are thorough. I am glad I now have it in my computer.

***God’s word—different from “modern” ideas. “Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol.” Proverbs 23:13-14.***

# Starting Over From Scratch

Terry W. Benton, [terrywbenton@bellsouth.net](mailto:terrywbenton@bellsouth.net)

Jeremiah had become very disillusioned at his job of delivering God's message. He had become the most unpopular preacher in town. At this point he was disillusioned with God. "You induced me" to preach this very unpopular message, he said to God. Then he decided that he would quit preaching. What was the use? Nobody liked his message. Nobody wanted to hear what he had to say. God was the only reason he had been preaching this message anyway, and right now, God did not seem to be so near when all was going so wrong with his life.

So he tried to be silent, and to quit preaching, but the word was the only hope for a dark world. What would happen if nobody preached it? Was it worth it to let himself and the next generation down by letting them hear only the lies that the false teachers were spreading? Who wins when conscientious preachers decide to quit preaching the word, and let the false teachers be the only voices that are heard?

Jeremiah had the smoldering fire of truth which he could not hold in. His love for God, for the nation, and for the generations to come became a hot burning fire of passion raging within him and he could no longer be silent. He wrote: "*But if I say, 'I will not remember Him Or speak anymore in His name,' Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; And I am weary of holding it in, And I cannot endure it.*" (Jeremiah 20:9)

If you think that the word of God needs to be popular before it needs to be preached, then please don't preach. If you think that you need to be popular when you preach, then please don't preach. But, if you believe that the word of God must be preached because the truth is the only thing that will set anybody free from the shackles of sin and condemnation, then preach the word and never let yourself become ashamed of it, and never let some hypocritical brother steal your fire.

God will break the vessel that has turned itself to self-serving ways, and God has ways of delivering the godly out of temptation and severe trial. Jeremiah will need to stand. Shame would eventually come to the story of the nation of Judah, but the name of Jeremiah would be highly honored in time. Look what a legacy he left behind! No one thinks Jeremiah preached in vain, but we all know that the false prophets went down in shame.

**Read Jeremiah 18-20** and be strengthened to stand up for the truth like Jeremiah. Find ways to get the truth out. Only the truth will set us free from the wrath to come. We can go down in shame and leave a legacy of shame for not standing up for the truth; but if we stand for the truth, truth-seekers and truth-finders will know that we exercised faith in the Lord and did not labor in vain. They will honor us, but more importantly GOD will honor us. Whose honor do we seek?

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**Searching for the Truth**—We preachers have an awesome responsibility which is emphasized by James in James 3:1. If we are not careful to teach the truth, God will hold us accountable! Some subjects are difficult, sometimes because of social conditions. One such subject is whether a woman must wear a covering in worship. But we must not dodge this issue, or simply teach what "everyone" else says. We must study. To help you study, I have a webpage devoted to this subject. It includes my book on the subject, an excellent tract by Hiram Hutto, and other study material. You will find it at [www.headcoverings.org](http://www.headcoverings.org). -- PKW

## Online with Joel



This month, instead of reviewing a website I would like to point out a few useful online resources to help with your Bible study.

First, for the Ndebele speakers. (Ndebele is the language of a large tribe of people in South Africa.) I found that you can download most of the Bible in Ndebele in PDF format from <http://www.ibs.org/bibles/ndebele/index.php>. It is missing the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, Daniel, and Nahum. With Adobe's PDF Reader, you can search PDF files for words that you are looking for. If you do not have Adobe Reader, you may want to download PDF XChange Viewer from <http://www.pdfviewer.com>. It is much smaller to download and also lets you search PDF files. If you are using PDF XChange Viewer, you can go to the "Edit" menu and click on "Search". Select the folder (directory) where you have put the PDF files for the Bible, enter the word (or part of a word or phrase) you are looking for and click "Search". This will search all of the PDF files and allow you to quickly find a passage when you cannot remember where it is. Since I do not know of any Bible study software that includes the Ndebele translation, this could be a useful tool.

One resource that I thought would be useful is the WebBible Encyclopedia (<http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/home.html>). Unfortunately, the first entry I checked (Achan) was inaccurate and it appears that it was entered based on faulty memory instead of rereading the story. That is one big problem with the Internet - it is too easy to quickly put out content without an editor checking the writing, so the quality of the writing is often much poorer than in printed material. You may still be able to get some use from this resource, but be careful with it if you use it.

A much better online encyclopedia is the ISBE (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia). There is a number of websites where you can search it free, including <http://www.bible-history.com/isbe>. Bible-history.com also has some other useful resources. One of these is the Bible Knowledge Accelerator (<http://www.bible-history.com/bka>) which is a collection of downloadable Windows Help files covering the background history of the Bible. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of these, since I am not a historian, but the maps and images are pretty good. If you are using Linux and have Wine installed, you can view these files by running "winhelp NAME\_OF\_FILE.HLP". It does not work as well as Windows Help Viewer, but it is usable. Otherwise you can try Help Explorer Viewer (<http://www.help-explorer.com/hx.php>). I do not know of any free option for those using Macs.

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