

The American Church of 2011

Many brethren over the years have asked why people couldn't really understand Bible prophecy, even when it was clearly explained to them. If you're speaking the truth and know it's the truth because it agrees with the Bible, with history and many brethren affirm it; but people still can't hear you, there's a sound scriptural reason they can't . . .

The disciples once asked Jesus why He always addressed the people in parables. His reply spoke volumes, "I speak to this people in parables, lest they understand and repent and I have to heal them." That's not the exact quote, but it's the sense of John 12:40.

A few weeks ago, a Baptist pastor was visiting us in our home, probably to ask us to attend his church. Our conversation eventually got around to Bible prophecy, during which I quoted the literal translation of Revelation 1:1 . . .

"A Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show to His slaves things which must occur quickly. And He signified by sending through His angel to His slave, John."

I explained to the pastor that Revelation wasn't Jesus' own prophecy, but God the Father's prophecy about His Son Jesus. That God the Father gave the book of Revelation to Jesus to prepare His slaves for what would happen during the Christian era. Furthermore, according that verse, Revelation wasn't for everyone, it was just for Jesus' slaves!!!

In Greek (the original language of the New Testament), the Lord named many different kinds of servants: the *pais*, the *presbuteros* the *diakonos*, the *episkopos*, the *leitourgikos*, the *huperetes*, the *therapon*, etc.,etc., but Revelation wasn't written to any of them, it was written to Jesus' *doulos*, His slaves! Wow, what a blessed privilege if we're counted among them.

A person may indeed be Jesus' servant, even a church leader, a *presbuteros* or *episkopos*, but if he's going to understand Revelation, that person also has to be Jesus' slave!

Our visiting pastor (probably a card-carrying Dispensationalist) got red in the face and heatedly exclaimed, "I don't like the exclusivity!"

Well, that exclusivity wasn't my idea, it's what the Bible stated, so I replied, "I didn't write the book," but I might as well have been speaking it in ancient Sanskrit. It seems that I, too, had been speaking in parables.

Twenty five years ago, here in south Florida, I was teaching five different, two hour, Bible prophecy studies a week, with between 15 and 50 people at each study. Today I can't find 5 people who are interested enough in the Lord or His word to attend even one. So be encouraged, brethren, a servant is not greater than his master. It's just like Jesus prophesied it would be when He said, "When the Son of man returns, will He find faith on the earth?"

With rare exceptions, the church is no longer standing against enemies of the faith or teaching the Gospel of the New Testament. True biblical Christianity has gone the way of the dodo bird. Instead, the church teaches "doctrinal salvation", that if you get your doctrine right you're going to heaven regardless of your heart condition.

Here's how that works . . .

Some well meaning saint brings an unsaved neighbor into his church so the pastor can lead him to the Lord. The pastor sees this new shiny face so he preaches a salvation message (a bit watered down) and gives an invitation. The guy thinks to himself, "Well, I'm not sure there's a hell and I'm no worse than the next guy, but this believing in Jesus thing sounds a lot better than going to hell so I'll say whatever I'm supposed to."

After the service, members of the congregation gather around him, teach him the four spiritual laws and have him say the sinner's prayer. Then they beat him (and themselves) on the back and say, "Praise God, you're now saved! A bonafide born-again Christian on your way to heaven."

While all this is going on, the pastor walks up, shakes the hand of the new “believer” and says, “You must now attend our catechism class and learn our absolutely biblically correct doctrine (that church down the street claims their doctrine is also from the Bible, but their doctrine isn’t correct so they’re heretics). In six months, when you fully understand our absolutely correct and totally biblical doctrine, we’ll baptize you and permit you to become a member of our church.” (So much for the liberty that’s in Christ Jesus)

Anyway, the man does all the above and three years later, if he puts enough money in the collection plate and doesn’t run off with their sexy looking organist, they’ll make him a deacon or elder (which office he gets determined by that church’s governmental bylaws).

I once told the above story to a Bible study group and they all started laughing their heads off. “What’s so funny?” I asked. They said, “That sounds just like us. The same thing happened in our church.”

The problems with the above are . . .

- (1) They aren’t funny, they are a spiritual tragedies!
- (2) The man never repented of his sins so he’s just as lost as the first day he walked into that church.

Salvation hasn’t anything to do with what someone says and it isn’t believing in a doctrine. Salvation is in a person, the person of Jesus Christ. It doesn’t happen when someone says the right words, but when that person comes to God with a humble and contrite heart, repents of his sins and the Lord replaces his stony heart with a heart of flesh.

While preaching in a large church, a dear evangelist brother of the 50s, Paris Reidhead, was led of the Lord to ask for a show of hands when he asked the congregation, “How many of you out there are saved?” Almost every hand went up.

He then asked, “How many of you were ever lost?” Only four or five hands went up. Shaking his head, Paris asked, “Now here is a strange thing, how can you be saved if you were never lost?”

Good question! In Paris’ book entitled, *Getting Evangelicals Saved*, he wrote, “The greatest mission field on earth is the

Evangelical Church.” That book almost got him drummed out of the Brownies, but he was right, nonetheless.

Nobody actually comes to the Lord because it’s a goodie-two-shoes thing to do. Everyone I know who really loves Jesus, me included, came to Him because of a Holy Spirit given awareness that in God’s eyes, we are monsters of iniquity who desperately needed to lay our sins at the foot of the Cross.

I’ve been there, because I needed forgiveness. I didn’t need doctrine, and what was happening in me wasn’t because of some preacher’s eloquence, it was a work in my heart by a God who really does love me and would still have given His Son for me if I were the only person in all Creation who ever sinned. Doctrine right or wrong didn’t save me, a broken heart before the Lord is what it took.

That happened many decades ago, but I never forgot it. Meeting the Lord at the foot of the Cross is a life changing experience. Unfortunately, the church is full of supposed “Christians” with excellent doctrine, who live saintly lives for a couple of hours on Sunday, but live like the world for the rest of the week.

Having the right doctrine doesn’t change the heart. What does, is an awareness of what we are without the Lord and coming to the Cross in humble repentance. Far be it from most pastors to preach the above, it might offend someone and they’d leave the church.

But since the truth isn’t being taught, “a great falling away” isn’t in our future, it’s already here and the spiritual weakness of the Church will impact our lives in ways that are almost impossible to believe.

The Islamic world needs an atom bomb to be on parity with the West, particularly those wild-eyed mullahs in Iran. Amadinijab’s and company are just kidding about their plans to destroy Israel. We must be mistaken about the hundreds of people that Muslims kill every day. For instance: if you are a Christian woman in the Sudan, with a baby, they cut off your breasts so your baby starves to death . . . and if you are a Christian pastor there, they crucify you (by the way, you can

document that yourself on the Internet). Let's forget about the other 2,500,000 Sudanese Christians and animists who have been murdered by Islamic Jihadists during the last few years. That's no big deal anyway, it's a zillion miles away and can't happen here.

The documentary and historic evidence must be wrong somehow, Islam is a peaceful religion. If you don't believe it, just ask any Muslim. That 9/11 Trade Center incident was just a fluke caused by a few rabid radicals. We don't need to believe what all Islamic leaders in the Middle East are saying in Arabic to their people, that's just crowd-pleasing rhetoric for local consumption. They don't really mean it.

The over 21,000 deadly terrorist attacks against anyone of a different faith since 9/11 are just boys being boys. The fatwas (murder edicts) Muslim imams write against Rushdie, Wilders and Danish cartoonists are justified. The fact that those men wrote the truth is immaterial. Why, those three even had the temerity to air Islam's dirty laundry for all the world to see and that must be stopped! So what if a few innocent bystanders get killed in the process. Point being: We have nothing to fear, lets just forget all the above and keep on dancing.

But do you hear about the danger of Islam in any of the churches? Not hardly.

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