



Diakrisis (Australia)

'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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Editor's comment

We live in a world where ideas and values are losing their meaning and integrity. There is a polarisation of thought. What is 'immoral' to one is neutral to another. We have racial wars, gender wars and other 'wars' polarising people into one camp or another. Many simply do not have a standard by which to gauge what is right or wrong. To the western postmodern world there hardly are any such absolutes today. Truth is less a commodity than what feels good and right.

In all this seething mass of what is depraved and fallen humanity, one would think that the church of Jesus Christ on earth would provide the answers. The 'church' is supposed to be salt to a decaying world, light to a world 'in darkness' (Eph.6:12; Jn.12:46), '*the pillar and the ground of truth*' (Matt.5:13-16; 1Tim.3:15). But sadly what the world is seeing as 'church' is really the world's religions immersed in the *same* social and political pottage.

Most churches today pay lip service to the scriptures as being inspired and inerrant. And there is one mandate that the church has from the scriptures which is being lost...

Many years ago I was asked to teach on 'what is the Gospel?'. I began by handing out half page blank sheets with pens and asked the listeners to 'write the Gospel' down in their own words. I have repeated this often, sometimes painting a scenario of a person on a death bed who asks 'what is the Gospel?' and one has a few minutes to explain. (I usually give the listeners about 4 minutes). When I first carried out this test I was shocked at the content I received and how little many Christians understood of the 'Gospel'. At some college lectures (even at one degree level lecture) the same test produced similar results! But try this in many churches today and many professing Christians will give answers that simply have nothing to do with the 'Gospel' as it is found in scripture. Here are some of the aberrant answers I have received: The Gospel is...'*the love of God...fellowship with Jesus...*'; '*the grace of God...faith*'; '*conviction of sin*'; '*changed lives*'; '*the inspired word of God*'; '*Jesus is coming back...his prophecies are true*'; '*you must be born again*'; '*ask Jesus to be your Lord and Saviour*'; '*ask Jesus into your heart*'; '*the blood of Jesus saves us*'; '*forgiveness of sin and then we stop sinning*'...

The scriptures are clear on what the Gospel is. Here is one summary: '***Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel...For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ (1) died (2) for our (3) sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was (4) buried, and that he (5) rose again the third day according to the Scriptures***' (1Cor.15:3,4).

I have numbered the points to suggest that these five points can be used as cardinal points of the Gospel: the *Death, Burial, Resurrection, Substitution, Sin*. Any of these can be expanded in themselves but the passage serves as a summary with these vital ingredients within. I particularly look for two points in any summary - *sin* and *substitution*. Sin gives the reason *why* salvation is necessary; and substitution arguably is the heart of Gospel showing the work of Christ *for us*. The 'sin' demonstrates man's responsibility for his sin in the sight of an

absolute holy and just God who will require payment for sin before he can allow any sinful human into His holy and pure presence in Heaven with Him.

Another summary I have used is: ‘The message of God is: That Jesus Christ came as God (*Deity*) in the flesh and humbled Himself to die (a *substitute*) in our place as a *sinless, perfect, and finished* sacrifice, and through His *blood* to pay the penalty (*redemption*) of *our sin*. He rose from the dead in the (*resurrection*) power of the Holy Spirit to declare (*impute*) *His righteousness* to those who will believe and trust Him as *Lord and Saviour*. His offer is *eternal life* to sinners who *repent* and have *faith* in who He is and what He did’.

The Gospel is the ‘good news’ of *who Christ is and what He has done* for the sinner 2,000 years ago. Man must ‘receive’ this Gospel to acquire salvation.

False ideas of what the Gospel is often fall into the following categories: Confusion between ‘salvation’ and the ‘Gospel’. Salvation is the work of God when one is ‘born again’ in which the tenses are always man as passive and God active. It is the work of God alone.

Another error is confusing Justification with Sanctification. The former is the work of God imputing righteousness to the sinner *at* salvation, when upon belief, sin is imputed to Christ (2Cor.5:21); the latter is the work of the Holy Spirit *from* salvation. The Gospel is about the former, not the latter.

Modern Ecumenical evangelism is often summarised by : ‘*Come to Jesus and you will have love, joy, peace and everlasting life...*’. This arguably may have some truth in it but it is the *fruit* of salvation, not the *Gospel* of salvation.

Terminologies such as ‘*Accept Jesus into your heart*’; ‘*Give your heart to Jesus*’; ‘*Give your life to Jesus*’; ‘*Open the door of your heart to the Lord*’; ‘*Make your decision for Christ*’ have all emphasised the response of man and replace ‘*believe*’ and ‘*repent*’. But the ‘Gospel’ is about *Christ and His work*. As one author states: ‘*The Gospel is not about what man can do in conversion but about Gods perfect and finished work in Christ for us helpless sinners. The Gospel is not man accepting Jesus as his Saviour but that God has accepted the Lord Jesus as the perfect and only Saviour 2000 years ago. The Gospel is not man giving his heart or his life to Jesus but that Christ gave His life in the place of sinners. The Gospel is not man receiving Christ into his heart, but that God received the Lord Jesus into heaven as the mediator of sinners. The Gospel is not Christ enthroned in the human heart, but that God enthroned the Lord Jesus at His right hand in Heaven. Do we see the great distinction between these two messages? One is subjective and puts great emphasis on what man must do. The other is objective and puts emphasis on what Christ has already done*’ (‘*Firm Foundations*’ by Trevor McIlwain)

Churches and ministers are to be *ministers of the Gospel*. How can we spread the Gospel if we do not know what it is and what its major tenets are? The Gospel needs to be taught and retaught at all levels. My plea to pastors and Christians alike is to know what the Gospel is, study its ingredients, be able to write it, summarise it, meditate on it, preach it and share it!

Bring the true Gospel back!

Terry Arnold

Revival, What Revival?

New research from The Barna Group reveals that about half of millennial Christians believe it's 'wrong' to evangelize. The new report, 'Reviving Evangelism'...examines the experiences of persons who share their faith and their attitudes toward evangelizing.

...Millennial Christians...born between 1984 and 1998...a significant percentage regard it [evangelism] as at least somewhat 'wrong'. This despite evangelism being a central aspect of what is known as the Great Commission, where Jesus charged his followers in Matthew 28 to 'go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you'.

'Almost half of Millennials (47%) agree at least somewhat that it is wrong to share one's personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith. This is compared to a little over one-quarter of Gen X (27%), and one in five Boomers (19%) and Elders (20%)', the report reads.

...Increased cultural hostility to the Gospel and conversations that bring people's differences into focus make evangelism more difficult today than in previous decades, the analysis shows, as many older Christians do not appreciate the negative forces in society that demean sharing one's faith.

...The study was conducted in May of last year, surveying just under 1,000 practicing Christians and 1,000 American adults who do not meet the criteria for 'practicing Christians', including lapsed Christians and non-Christians.

...For the purposes of the research 'practicing Christians' was defined to be as those who 'identify as Christian, agree strongly that faith is very important in their lives and have attended church within the past month'.

The data shows 'enormous ambivalence' among millennials about sharing one's faith...Christians must persuade younger believers that evangelism is essential...'

Editor's comment:

This is the postmodern world we live in where there are no absolutes in truth. The Bible does not give any excuses not to evangelise despite whatever the culture may be. It's a command to preach and disseminate the Gospel of Jesus dying for our sin in a substitutionary sacrifice to propitiate and thus satisfy a holy God's just wrath against sin.

At the foundation of these worsening statistics is the realisation that the number of true Christians may well be much smaller than we think - a remnant. And percentage wise, a shrinking one at that in the west?

Many professing Christians today do not really believe (and practise) the Bible as inspired, inerrant and the all sufficient completed revelation of Jesus Christ. This is why the Gospel is not as important as it once was and thus the need to disseminate the Good news of Christ to a lost world dead in sin.

The ‘Shocking’ U.S. Vote



‘Shocking’, ‘inhumane’, ‘extreme’ were some of the words used as Senate Democrats blocked a bill to protect babies born alive.

President Donald Trump and prominent conservative politicians and advocates reacted with dismay Monday after Senate Democrats blocked the Born-Alive Abortion

Survivors Protection Act that would have required health care professionals to protect the life of babies that survive an abortion attempt.

‘Senate Democrats just voted against legislation to prevent the killing of newborn children. The Democrat position on abortion is now so extreme that they don’t mind executing babies AFTER birth...’ the President said... ‘This will be remembered as one of the most shocking votes in the history of Congress. If there is one thing we should all agree on, it’s protecting the lives of innocent babies’

Republican Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah called the move ‘unconscionable and inhumane...It’s unconscionable and inhumane that some in our country, especially members of Congress, are unwilling to take a stand and support the lives of newborns who survive an abortion attempt’.

...An analysis of CDC records on infant deaths coded ‘Termination of pregnancy, affecting foetus and newborn’ between 2003 and 2014, showed 588 such cases, the Heritage Foundation said. Of those cases, at least 143 could ‘definitively be classified as involving an induced termination’.

... ‘There is no difference between infanticide and abortion: both kill the same child. We as a society have all of the information we need: undercover investigations, survivor testimonials from women like Gianna Jessen and Melissa Ohden who survived abortions, abortion workers on the record discussing their inhumane treatment of survivors, and Centre for Disease Control data showing that babies are surviving abortions’, Live Action founder and President Lila Rose said in a statement to The Christian Post Monday.

...The Born-Alive Infants Protection Act was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2002. This new bill would add penalties and enforcement mechanisms to that law...

(Christian Post by Leonardo Blair, Feb.26 2019)

Sub Editor’s (Mike Claydon’s) comment:

Will God judge this? God chased the children of Israel from their land mainly because of their offering of their precious children to the fires of the ‘god’ Molech. It was the LAST straw. Therefore, if God does not act against America, and the West in general over live birth [murder] abortion, He might need to apologise to all the followers of Molech at the Great White Throne Judgement. That’s NOT going to happen – so judgement is at the door? Listen to a survivor of a failed abortion who gives a graphic but Christian testimony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0Wwgh7kdKM>

The Fashions of the Megachurch and Hillsong



Brian Houston, Carl Lentz and Joel Houston on Hillsong TV Channel...At a time when millennials are ditching religious gatherings, these men of the (very good) cloth are winning them back...Megachurch pastors Carl Lentz, Chad Veach, Rich Wilkerson Jr. and Judah Smith may not be household names outside Christendom, but you can bet that Hailey Baldwin...along with stars like Justin Bieber, Selena Gomez, Luka Sabbat and Khloe Kardashian, have attended their churches, been photographed with them repeatedly...With millennials leaving the American church 'in droves', how do these pastors continue to draw thousands of young, culturally aware people to their Sunday worship services?...there's no doubt that fashion plays at least a supporting role.



'I remember hearing about this church called Hillsong from a coworker of mine', says celebrity tattoo artist Jonboy, who has 'inked' the likes of Kendall Jenner, Sofia Richie, Bella Hadid and Zayn Malik. 'And my first question was, 'Can I wear a hat?'" For Jonboy, finding out that he could wear what he wanted to church - and seeing that Lentz, the lead pastor, had tattoos of his own - was enough to get him in the door. The sense of God's presence that he says he felt there is what made him stay. Jonboy, who 're-dedicated his life to Christ' after landing in a New York jail cell, has now been attending Hillsong for five or six years.

It's not just that pastors like Lentz have tattoos, though. They also wear capital-F fashion...Supreme, Common Projects, Gucciand...as their wardrobe staples...Not all church attendees can afford to copy designer pieces like the ones they see worn behind the pulpit. But that doesn't stop their followers from emulating their pastors' looks...Clayton Chambers...co-founder of a popular menswear blog says 'People literally look just like how their leadership dresses'...In short: these pastors are cool...the men in their congregations want to dress like them... 'Ultimately, what is our brand?' asks Veach. 'Our brand is the gospel. Our brand is Jesus. We're trying to sell the good news of who Jesus is'...

(Lance Goodall, *Coercion Code*, April 2019)

Editor's comments:

Many mega churches and the Christian music industry are openly catering for celebrities. The cry today is that we must be 'relevant' but the price is often to minimise doctrine and the Gospel.

I would argue that the true Gospel is NOT being preached in many of these churches. Additions such as healing, prosperity, self esteem/potential and missing ingredients such as the depravity of man in his sin are more to do with 'another gospel' (Gal.1:8). Do we really need to copy the fashions of

this age to impress those who belong to it? Is there not power in the Gospel - *‘for therein is the righteousness of God revealed...’* (Rom.1:16,17)?

What does God say and mean in Romans 12:1,2 *‘...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind...’*.

‘Be not conformed to this world’ is literally referring to the ‘fashions’ (*‘suschematízo’*) of this ‘age’.

You can only impress the world from the outside but nothing will change them on the inside but the Gospel itself powered by the Spirit in agreement with the Word! Christ was never fashionable and never appealed to the spirit of the age.

Many years ago when I was busy doing seminars on various ‘cults’, one of the things I often mentioned was the ability of people in cults to follow the ‘image’, the dress of the leaders and their mindset. Many of these above churches and Hillsong, certainly are attracting followers to an image with certain fashions of the existing culture of the day.

Swedish Church Creates LGBTQ View of the Bible



The Diocese of Västerås, a division of the Church of Sweden, is now giving away an LGBTQ guide for ‘Christian queer kids’ ...This extreme guide describes Jesus as ‘queer’ and Joseph as transvestite. No, this isn’t just some radical college course about the Bible. This is coming from the actual Church of Sweden.

The church, which identifies as Protestant, has created what it calls a ‘survival guide’ for LGBTQ youth...The guide goes on to contradict Scripture by stating the Bible is actually not against homosexuality, implying scriptures dealing with it are actually about exploitation or rape. The guide also includes definitions for leftist sexual terms, such as ‘cisperson’, ‘gender fluid’, ‘nonbinary’, ‘queer’, ‘two sex norm’, ‘rainbow fairs’ and more. It states Jesus’ mother Mary dared ‘to break traditional sex norms in a patriarchal society’. And the biblical character of Joseph is described as a person who ‘breaks the norms in terms of gender expression and probably went in a suit intended for a king’s daughter’. Jesus is described as someone who ‘broke the norm’, calling him ‘queer’ for the way he lived his life. Also, the guide states he ‘did not defend the traditional family’. This is part of a growing support for LGBTQ values within left-leaning segments of the church. Different denominations have battled internally with approving gay clergy...

Are these the end times we live in or what?

(Apostasy Alert, 9th April, 2019)

The Myths We Believe

How often have I heard phrases like ‘*God loves the sinner and hates the sin*’; ‘*Jesus would never send anyone to Hell, Hell was created for the angels*’; ‘*Jesus loves the people in Hell*’ ...

What exactly is meant by these phrases is often never explained. The danger is that they become new mantras that people use for secondary motives...

‘*God loves the sinner and hates the sin*’

I first heard the phrase ‘*God loves the sinner but hates the sin*’ when homosexuality was being hotly debated amongst Christians in the 80’s and 90’s. The phrase was commonly applied to homosexuals. There was a new ‘tolerance’ entering Christian circles.

In today’s increasingly liberal church climate this phrase can mean to tolerate the sin or not to talk about the sin. The woman caught in adultery (Jn.8) is often used as an example of the phrase. Certainly Jesus showed love and compassion to the sinner here. But did Jesus tolerate or excuse her sin in any way? In the Old Testament the same sin brought punishment by death as allowed by God. In the New Testament Jesus calls out the hypocrisy of those who were about to stone her. If He ‘tolerates’ the sin then why does the same Jesus state clearly that the same adulterers will ‘not enter the kingdom of heaven’? Jesus finally tells the woman to ‘sin no more’. It could be *implied* here that He ‘loved the sinner and hated the sin’, but it actually does not state either and the story is more about the hypocrisy of the crowd and their laws, and that *all* are sinners.

The problem with such cliché phrases is that they are actually not scriptural and they set up contradictions, and worse, additions to scripture which may well pander to a world full of ‘new tolerance’ philosophies.

Another danger of ‘*love the sinner and hate the sin*’ is that we might minimise the factor of sin in the Gospel. The Gospel is about sin, the sinner and the wrath of God towards sin *and the sinner*. Such mantras might well minimise the depravity of sin. The danger is that ‘*God loves the sinner*’ might diminish the second part of the phrase ‘He hates the sin’.

But does God really ‘love the sinner’? Is this something which is taught explicitly in scripture? Does He love all sinners? That is certainly how many modern evangelistic messages begin today. Yet it is not how the great evangelists of old began their messages. It was the Puritans who invented evangelistic literature. Richard Baxter, Hugh Clark, John Cotton and many others were all great evangelists. Baxter’s classic ‘*Call to the Unconverted*’ or Alleine’s ‘*Alarm to the Unconverted*’ showed the *preparation* of a mind towards an understanding of the Gospel - by relentlessly showing sin and its consequences; the judgement of God; and thus the very *reason* for the Gospel and the need to be saved.

‘*God is love*’ (mentioned twice in 1Jn.4:7-17) is sometimes used to argue ‘God loves the sinner’. The context is God’s sacrificial love (‘*agapeo*’) given *to believers* - the ‘*us*’, the ‘*we*’, the ‘*beloved*’, the ‘*born of God*’. This particular

'*agapeo*' love is given *only to believers* upon salvation. This love came about due to '*propitiation*' (vs.10) - Jesus satisfying the wrath of God with a sacrifice. When God's love is spoken of, it invariably refers to His believers.

Some might quote John 3:16: '***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life***'. If the 'world' here is everyone then it has to be at least discerned that God does not love everyone in the same way He loves his believers. Certainly God loves his creation, since He made it *without sin*. And the '*whosoever believes*' here is not anyone but literally '*all the believing ones*' ('*pas o pistueon*') which matches perfectly the context of the passage. The verses either side of verse 16 also speak of *judgement*: '***He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God***' (vs.18).

If God loves this sinner then the question to be asked is '*what kind of love is this?*' - when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah; when He once commanded people to be stoned for homosexuality; when He at times commanded whole cities, families and children to be slaughtered (Josh.ch.6,7,8). Did He love the Canaanites who were not given any opportunity to repent before being slaughtered by Joshua? Why does He state that certain sinners (eg. 'fornicators') will not enter the kingdom of Heaven and will endure eternal torment and punishment (Eph.5:5,6)?

The statement '*God loves you*' is true of God's elect, His beloved, His church. But the Bible never says '*God loves the sinner*'. The Scriptures teach that those in unsaved states, those who are not believing - that the wrath of God abides on them (Jn.3:36; Rom.1:18; 2:8; 13:4). The Bible clearly says that unsaved people are '***children of wrath***', '***children of disobedience***' (Eph.2:3; 5:6; Col.3:6).

The common way of presenting the Gospel today is to begin with 'God loves you'. But this is a misrepresentation of what scriptures say of the unsaved. The scriptures tell us that God '***hates all workers of iniquity***' (Ps.5:5) and God is '***angry with the wicked every day***' (Ps.7:11). That hardly sounds like '*God loves the sinner*'? Rather than '*God loves the sinner and hates the sin*', what is more scriptural might be that *God hates the sin and thus his wrath is upon the sinner*. He is angry with the sinner because what is in a sinner other than sin? Psalm 5:5 and Ephesians 2:3 (above) cannot be ignored. So God is angry at all people as they are by nature, and the end result of this for those who don't trust Christ is eternal torment in Hell. Is this truth important enough to tell people? If not then are we alerting them to the danger that they are in, and thus presenting the way of salvation to them and showing them exactly what they need to be saved *from*?

Nowhere does the Bible explicitly say that God loves the unsaved, yet today this 'love gospel' is often the *first* message in tracts and salvation messages. The problem is that not only is it unscriptural but it thwarts the very reason why man needs to be saved - because of his *sin nature which incurs the wrath of God!*

Again, this author's main reason for caution in using such phrases as '*God loves the sinner but hates the sin*' is that it is simply NOT explicitly in scripture and we are attributing something to God saying this that He just did not say. Yet

we assume that this is what God thinks?

If we accept the phrase '*God loves the sinner and hates the sin*' then let's test that in how we practise it - should *we* love the sinner? If we answer 'yes' then do we love them enough to tell them about their sin and their need of a Saviour? Jesus, the apostles and all the great evangelists down the centuries unashamedly spoke of sin and the need for repentance *before* they preached the love, mercy and grace of God and his work on the cross.

If we accept the phrase '*God loves the sinner and hates the sin*' then likewise do *we* really hate the sin? If so, we will talk about sin in the true Gospel. This does not mean that we will necessarily single out any particular sin (such as homosexuality or fornication) and blast away at that, but that the Gospel of what Jesus did on the cross was necessary for the *sin nature* in all of us; that God hated sin so much that He poured out his wrath, his hatred for sin, upon Jesus who bore it all in our place.

Perhaps '*God loves the sinner and hates the sin*' needs to be explained in the language of the Gospel if it is to be true? Why use cliches that are not in scripture or ambiguous as to what God is really saying? Perhaps we should replace such cliches with '*Love the sinner, tell him about sin*' or better, '*love the sinner, preach the Gospel*'!

'Jesus would never send anyone to Hell, Hell was created for the angels'

Often this above statement runs together with '*Jesus does not judge anyone. Jesus could never send anyone to Hell. People go to Hell of their own free choice*'.

This is a popular sentiment today. But what do the scriptures say?: '***For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son***' (Jn.5:22). It is Jesus who will '***judge the quick and the dead***' (Acts 10:42). The wicked will be cast into the furnace of fire, where there is '***wailing and gnashing of teeth***' (Matt.13:42). It is also Jesus himself who *consigns people to Hell* who are even *professing Christians* but lacking repentance, who He did not '*know*', they having not been born from above (Matt.7:23).

God created Hell originally for the angels but *knowing* it would be a place of punishment for all unrepentant sinners but *knowing* Hell would be an eternal monument to his wrath against sin. '***He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him***' (Jn.3:36). Is your God a God of this 'wrath' and judgement? *This is the true God of the Bible!*

Do '*people go to Hell of their own free choice*'? Scripture and even logic defy this - who in their right mind would choose Hell? Who would *choose* to enter an eternity of flaming torment over an eternity in heavenly bliss? Some would reply: '*People go to Hell when they refuse to accept Jesus*'. But logic again defies this - Do they simply accept their fate and *willingly* walk into a fiery furnace?

Romans chapter 9 is a passage rejected by many for its hard truths on the wrath and judgement of God. It teaches God is sovereign in whom he elects and that his holy attributes of justice and wrath will forever be on display in the '*Lake that*

burns with fire and brimstone (Rev.21:8; 19:20; 20:10,14,15). ***‘Therefore has he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens...Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory’*** (Rom.9:18-23).

God has a righteous anger upon sin and the unrepentant sinner. Jesus is a judge to be fearful of. He is the one who executes judgement. If God or Jesus *‘would never send people to hell’* than what do we do with Matthew 10:28: ***‘And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell’?***

Which ‘God’ Do You Have?

Is it possible to create a false image of God? We all have a perception of who God is. But today it is evident that the image we often create of what God is like and how he thinks, is often *extra biblical*.

The danger in today’s Christianity is that we mould God into a deity that fits with our mind’s sentiment, and worse, if that sentiment is fashioned by the philosophy of the age. It becomes more and more an image of ME. Is it any wonder we have so many different ‘gospels’ today?

What kind of ‘love’ does God have for the unsaved sinner when scripture teaches God has anger (‘wrath’) upon every unsaved person and calls them ***‘children of wrath’*** (Eph.2:2,3). ***‘Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things come the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience’*** (Eph.5:6).

‘God is a God of love and not of hate’ is the fruit of sentimental modern Evangelicism. In contrast, the scriptures break the mould of the ‘god of love’ that many preach today. ***‘God is angry with the wicked everyday’*** (Ps.7:11); He hates the ***‘wicked’*** and ***‘those who do violence’*** (Ps 11:5). Is this your God? *This is the true God of the Bible!* Do we mould God into what we want? Has he become a god of ‘love’ and not of wrath; a god of love and not of justice?

What God wants all men to hear is that God commands all to repent and believe in His Christ. When we are saved, the image and perception we have of God and what he is like *must be shaped by scripture alone*. God is a God of love but he is also a God of judgement and justice. He deems it fit to punish sin one way or the other - *either upon His Son Jesus on the cross, or in an eternal Hell*.

Surely one of Satan’s chief weapons today is to change the truth of who God really is. The world’s postmodern thinking, its sentiment and cliches will surely play into the Devil’s hands in this regard.

Which ‘God’ do you have?

Terry Arnold

The Martyrdom of John Hooper

John Hooper (1495-1555) was the Anglican Bishop of Worcester and Gloucester, a student and graduate in the University of Oxford. He became a Protestant Reformer and martyr. He was executed for 'heresy' by burning during the reign of Queen Mary I.

An early reference to John Hooper appears to show him as a rector in Liddington, Wiltshire in 1538. He at some time after was employed as a steward in the house of Sir Thomas Arundell. Hooper's own writings refer to himself as a 'courtier' and living a very comfortable life in what he described as like living in the palace of a king.

At some stage of this life he read Huldrych Zwingli's works and Bullinger's commentaries on the apostle Paul's epistles. From this led to a conversion experience. He began writing to Bullinger who lived in Zurich. He wrote of his difficulties in complying with the established religion in England and the troubles this caused in his conscience. Between 1539-1540 his house Lord, Sir Thomas Arundell, became concerned with Hooper's new views and referred him to Stephen Gardiner, the Roman Catholic bishop of Winchester. Hooper realised he was in danger of being cited for 'heresy' and sought refuge on the European continent in Paris.

Hooper later returned to England to serve Sir John St Loe, constable of Thornbury Castle, Gloucestershire, Arundell's nephew.

Some time after 1544 Hooper felt it necessary to leave England again for Europe and stay in Strasbourg and then later in Zürich. In Zurich he developed a close friendship with Bullinger and it was here in 1547 he married Anne de Tserclaes. He was now also having correspondence with other Reformers and scholars such as Martin Bucer, Theodore Bibliander, Simon Grinaeus, and Konrad Pellikan. During this time Hooper published some Protestant evangelical articles.

In 1549 Hooper returned to England while England was in favourable circumstances with peace in the churches under the King Edward VI. He now became a more well known figure championing the Reformation position, principally the position of the Swiss Reformed position and against the Lutherans and Roman Catholics. (Like all the martyrs he adhered to the 'Doctrines of Grace' and Hooper in particular was considered strongly 'Calvinistic', as it is nicknamed today).

Hooper was appointed chaplain to Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset. It is believed Hooper played some part in the formation of the Zwinglian Dutch and French Stranger churches in Glastonbury and London.

In his many sermons his practise was to speak of sin and the evil of the world as well as the abuses of the church. He had a reputation for personal holiness. Daily many people flocked to hear his strong sermons.

Hooper became the chaplain to the Earl of Warwick (later the Duke of Northumberland). After a series of sermons at Easter he was then offered the position of the Bishop of Gloucester.

Continued next page >

At this time Hooper became embroiled in a controversy over vestments worn by priests. Hooper refused to wear what he described as the 'Aaronic vestments'. He spoke against this in some sermons as well as against some of the priestly oaths taken in various Roman rites. Some of his peers (Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, Martin Bucer) urged him to submit but he refused. A council ordered him to be confined to his house and short term imprisonment before he finally submitted to 'consecration' with legal ceremonies in 1551.

Hooper set about a visitation programme of his diocese, something which few bishops had done before. He examined 311 clerics and deemed that 168 were not able to repeat the Ten Commandments. 31 of them were unable to state where they were found in the scriptures. 40 could not state where the Lord's Prayer was written and 31 were ignorant who was its author. The result was that Hooper put into place rules by which clerics were to know and teach these things to their people.

Hooper also believed in a vow of poverty and that any profits of the position in Gloucester should go to the crown. When economic and living conditions in the country fell in the early 1550's he wrote to the council pleading for action on the price of essential goods for those common people who were struggling to cope with the economic hardships.

When King Edward VI died, Mary Tudor became Queen. She set about re-instating Roman Catholicism in a reign of bloody terror which gave her the name 'Bloody Mary'. Hooper was considered a more radical Protestant than 'conservative' leaders such as Cranmer, Ridley and Bucer. Also, because of his position he was first in line to be investigated as a 'heretic'. After some sanctuary at Sutton Court, he was sent to the Fleet Prison on 1 September, first on a false charge of 'debt' - supposedly owing the Queen money. In March 1554 according to new laws, Hooper was deprived of his bishopric as a married man. He was kept in prison for nearly 18 months while new 'heresy' laws were drawn up. He was 'examined' at least three times by Roman Catholic leaders Bonner, Gardiner and Tunstall, the final being on January 28th, 1554. In December 1554, Hooper was condemned for 'heresy' by Bishop Gardiner and 'defrocked' by Bishop Bonner on 29 January 1555. Execution was inevitable unless he would recant.

One dark night Hooper was led through the city to Newgate. Even with the attempted secrecy many common people stood at their doors with lights and saluted him. During the next few days he was visited by Bishop Bonner who tried to have him recant his beliefs and his testimony. At one stage they lied and publicly reported that he had recanted when he had not.

Hooper was taken to Gloucester where he raised his hands to Heaven and rejoiced that he could again be in the place where he had pastored his people. He was under guard at one Ingram's house and after some sleep and a few short meals he continued in prayer until morning and throughout the next day.

Sir Anthony Kingston, a friend of Hooper was appointed by the Queen's letters to attend his execution. As soon as he saw Hooper he burst into tears. He exhorted him to 'live' and recant, stating '*life was sweet and death was bitter*'. Hooper replied '*Eternal life is more sweet; and eternal death is more bitter*'.

The same day a blind boy who had been imprisoned for his confession of faith was brought to Hooper. Hooper said to the boy *'Ah! poor boy, though God hath taken from thee thy outward sight, for what reason He best knoweth, yet He hath endued thy soul with the eye of knowledge and of faith. God give thee grace continually to pray unto Him, that thou lose not that sight, for then wouldst thou indeed be blind both in body and soul'*.

Hooper, before his execution requested a quick fire to end his torments. In the morning of the execution he also requested to be alone. About eight o'clock, on February 9, 1555, he was led forth, and because it was a market day many thousands of persons were gathered. He was ordered not to speak to anyone. The people who witnessed Hooper being led to the place of execution in front of the cathedral spoke of his pleasant smiling face and how he often gazed into the heavens. Hooper was placed in front of the cathedral where Catholic friars looked on from windows above.

A box was brought and laid before him upon a stool, with a pardon from the Queen if he would recant his faith. Hooper cried out *'If you love my soul, away with it!'* A Lord Chandois then ordered the box to be taken away and said *'Seeing there is no remedy; despatch him quickly'*.

Of all the English martyrs, none suffered for as long or in such pain as did Hooper, except perhaps the later Nicolas Ridley (on 16th October the same year).

The fires were lit but the faggots lit slowly. Finally it began to burn around his body but the cold wind also blew the flames from him. Finally more dry faggots were brought and more fire lit. It began to burn his hair and some skin. Hooper was heard to say: *'O Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me, and receive my soul!'* After the second fire began to go out he wiped both his eyes with his hands, and with a loud voice cried out *'For God's love, good people, let me have more fire!'* His lower body was being burned but his upper body remained singed only. A third fire was lit with more success. Hooper again cried out with his last words *'Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me! Lord Jesus receive my spirit!'* His mouth was black and tongue swollen and he could speak no more, yet his lips continued to move. He thumped his chest with one hand until his arm fell off, and then thumped with the other hand. Fat, water and blood dripped out at his fingers' ends, until his hand stuck to the iron plate fastened on his chest and he died. The horror is said to have lasted at least three quarters of an hour. Then finally, on the 9th February 1555, another martyr was welcomed into the presence of their Lord and Saviour.

In the next few years hundreds of Englishman would follow John Hooper in defiance against the Roman Catholic religion. Many Protestants escaped death by fire by fleeing to Europe. But many chose to stay and resist. In 1555 there were 71 burned, Hooper being the second after John Rogers. The following year 89 were burned, in 1557, 88 and 1558, 40. Thousands of these men and women were to pay the price so that we could have our Bibles freed from the shackles of false religion.

Lest we forget.

Terry Arnold

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

In Times of Terror...

Terry...What we can see [in times of terror]...Luke 13:1-5 'There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose you that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, No: but, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think you that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, No: but, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish'...

(Please check out Tsarfati's update, <https://youtu.be/e04rvknJnW0>...and Farag's update as well <https://youtu.be/MbV9JkwCYgo>)

Sin of course is the issue, as always. Christ Jesus is the ONLY answer, and Islam (like ALL religions are of Satan; Islam is not unique) rejects Him. Acts 4:12 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved'; John 14:6 'Jesus said...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me'

...Countries are liberalising laws for the murder of the unborn /newborn. Where is the global outpouring of indignation and grief at this travesty!

2Timothy 3:1-13 '...in the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away...13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived'.

Matthew 24:37 'But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be'; Gen 6:5 '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'. Gal 6:7 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap'.

However, we have hope, comfort and assurance as we look up for our Lord's return. Everything is happening as we have been told beforehand. John 14:1-4,27-30 'Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know...27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I

said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, you might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me’.

1Thessalonians 5:4 ‘But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief’Look up...Love in Christ
(M&K. Qld.)

Editor’s comment:

In a world of increasing terror, this is a good selection of scriptures to be read and digested. The recent atrocity in New Zealand outraged many. But little was being reported of the terror acts being repeated weekly elsewhere in the world. In the same month (March) 50 Christians were slaughtered by Muslim herders in Nigeria. Over 120 Christians and 149 homes were burned to the ground in months. The media was almost silent on that. According to the Global Terrorism Index, Fulani herdsmen have killed more than 60,000 people since 2001. Many media outlets refused to condemn these attacks or to accept that they were religiously motivated.

Added to this is the almost weekly Palestinian terror attacks on Israelis. With even limited investigation, it is not hard to show that the media reports on these are often blatantly biased or silent.

But there is another point raised in the above letter - what of the millions of abortions each year (over 1 million each year in the U.S.). Many who are shocked at the atrocities of terror attacks on innocent people do not see the gravity of taking *millions* of these lives that God created!

But most important of all as mentioned in this letter is Jesus’ answer to a tragedy in his day to so called ‘innocent’ people - ‘...except you repent, you shall all likewise perish’ (Lk.13:3,5).

The Holy Spirit and the Gospel

‘The Holy Spirit shines his illuminating light on Christ, not on himself...The Holy Spirit brings no message of his own. He did not die on the cross. He did not teach commandments which we are called to obey...It is He [Christ] alone who holds the place of honour and of whom the Spirit testifies (Jn.15:26) and whom He glorifies (Jn.16:14). The role of the Holy Spirit is to shine his light on Christ, to draw us to him, to give him the place of honour. The Spirit is God indeed, but he teaches us nothing of substance without referring us to Christ...The Spirit does indeed illuminate. But to be drawn to the illuminator rather than to be illuminated in the Christian scheme of things is nothing less than traversing the path of esoteric subjective experience and abandoning the God given path which is fast becoming the very hallmark of modern Christianity and evangelical spirituality, belief and practice.’

(Source unknown)

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

A 'Difficult' Scripture? (1Corinthians 7:14)

Terry, what is your take on 1Corinthians 7:14? ...

Editor's reply:

A literal reading is: *'For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by [in] the wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by [in] the husband: else are your children unclean; but now are they holy.'*

Note the tenses here ('has been' and 'are') are more literal translations compared to some translations (* see technical notes at the end on the tenses).

This passage is not clear to all or even most commentators. It is considered a 'difficult' verse because several factors (including Jewish culture and traditions) need to be considered.

The Context:

The passage contains regulations for a marriage with one spouse not saved. Various reasons are given for remaining in the marriage unless the unsaved person wants to leave.

What the passage does not clearly teach:

The passage does not teach that the unbelieving husband or wife would become 'holy' or be saved because of the marriage to a Christian. Such interpretations would be pressed into the text and violate hermeneutical rules, common sense, as well as other scriptures which would contradict.

A suggested interpretation:

It is important to understand the Jewish culture and mindset here. The Jews had a law prohibiting marriages with heathens and idolaters; such marriages were dissolved, and wives put away (Ex.34:16). There was a heightened sense of 'clean' and 'unclean' and mixtures. Lev.5:2 *'Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast, or a carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty'*. The New Testament also has the same idea in a moral sense: Acts 10:28 *'And he said unto them, You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean'*; 2Cor.6:17 *'Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you'*.

The sense of 1Cor.7:14 is that despite the Jewish understanding of a clean with an unclean (saved with an unsaved spouse), *nevertheless the children of this union are 'legitimate'*.

Continued next page >

The teaching here in vs.14 is that *the relationship is approved by God to remain*. Thus the children are 'holy' in the same sense that their parents are; that is they are sanctified, or lawfully espoused together, so the children born of them were in a civil and legal sense holy, that is, 'legitimate'.

The problem with interpreting this passage is that some might force different understandings of the word 'sanctified' apart from the context. The word 'sanctified' means to consecrate; to set apart. Whenever it is used the meaning must be gained *by the immediate context*. The word 'sanctified' does have varying meanings depending on each context.

The possible question being answered here is whether it was proper for the husband and wife to live together, or whether they should be separated, and what of the children of such a union. The context is a defense (an 'apology') for not separating because of the differences between saved and unsaved and the state of the children thereof. A similar idea is implicit in 1Tim.4:4,5 *'For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer'*

In 1Cor.7:14 here the meaning is the 'unbelieving' partner is set apart on account of the 'believing' partner. And likewise for the children. This is a special or divine favor *because of the believer*. Further to this the argument is extended to the hope that the unbeliever will be saved (see vs.16).

The main point here in vs.14 is that in such a marriage the believer is not defiled by the unbeliever, rather the *unbeliever is sanctified by the believer*. The marriage *is still legitimate in God's eyes to remain as it is*.

Vs.15 continues the context: *'But if the unbelieving depart [separates], let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God has called us to peace'*.

Vs.16 *'For what knows you, O wife, whether you shall save your husband? or how knows you, O man, whether you shall save your wife?'*

This refers to the possible salvation of the husband or wife.

Summary:

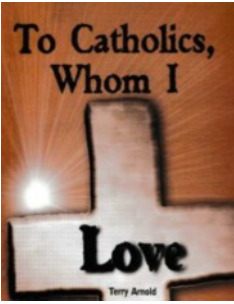
Vs.14 is not stating the children are necessarily saved. The context is not about salvation but a setting apart, approval by God, even though the marriage is between saved and unsaved people. (The Jewish understanding here arguably needs to be considered).

The object of the verse is to answer a possible objection as to a pollution because of an unsaved connection.

* 'has been' is in the Greek Perfect Indicative Passive which describes an action or more literally a process which took place in the past but with results which continue to the present. It is usually translated by using verbs such as 'has' or 'have'.

Note the tenses of '*are your children unclean*' and '*now are they holy*' which differs from many translations. The Greek is Present Indicative Active', not 'aorist' or past as some translate (Interlinears have this more literal translation).

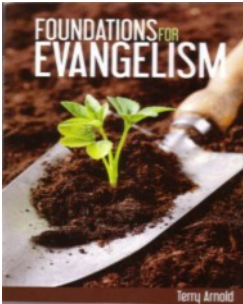
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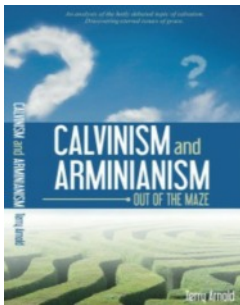
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