

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

“BIBLE EXCUSES” FOR DRINKING BEVERAGE ALCOHOL

Don W. Tarbet

Our society is plagued with the use and consequences of drinking alcoholic beverages—wine, beer, whiskey, etc. Hundreds of souls enter eternity as a direct or indirect result of drinking beverage alcohol. Homes are destroyed and health is ruined because of alcohol. Virtually, every TV program and movie involves the practice of “drinking,” with an implied approval or endorsement of the practice. Hardly a day passes without a tragic story of some kind that involves drinking alcohol. Watch the news and see if this is not true. Yet, so-called Christians, even preachers and elders, will attempt to defend its practice, attempting to make “arguments” supposedly from the Bible to justify their position. This writing will be an expose’ of some of the absurd and anti-Bible arguments made in the brotherhood today in an effort to justify drinking beverage alcohol.

FIRST—*it is said that it was allowed in the Old Testament, the background for the New Testament, and, therefore, we should be hesitant to condemn the use of beverage alcohol today.* After all, there is much “good” that actually comes from the sale and use of alcohol—even in America. Admittedly, alcohol does contribute “something” to our society today. Think of the tax money that comes in whereby we can pave our roads on which the drunks may drive,

threatening the safety of all other drivers. That tax money can help build extra large hospitals to treat the alcoholics, those they help put in the hospitals, and those who in other ways need healing, especially because of the use of alcohol. Many health issues are caused by drinking alcohol and they must be treated by those with the expertise to deal with such diseases. Also, if we did not have alcoholic drinks, we would have to live without the wino’s that sleep on the sidewalks of our large cities and beg for money from all they meet so they could buy more alcohol.

Remember, God did not give ALL His warnings and prohibitions before or at one time to mankind. To Eve, He said that if she ate of the forbidden fruit, she would “know good and evil.” Many times, she and her offspring would know “evil” before “good” by experiencing the evil that comes by doing wrong, and then learning how to correct it, do good. Cain committed murder, but we have no record of God specifically forbidding it, and Noah got drunk before it was condemned. God revealed His will little by little in the development of His complete will for the ultimate “good” of mankind in the gospel system. Before this time there would be many partial expressions of His will until He revealed the perfect law of liberty through Jesus Christ through inspired men by the agency of the Holy Spirit (Jam. 1:25; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Now we possess a complete knowledge of what He wants all mankind to know regarding salvation from sin and godly living. In the Old Testament, we have much warning against the use of alcohol, and in the New we have further prohibitions. Let us look at some of the passages in

IN THIS ISSUE.....

“BIBLE EXCUSES” FOR DRINKING BEVERAGE	
ALCOHOL—DON W. TARBET.....	1
EDITORIAL—PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.....	2
SOUND TEACHING FROM J. W. SHEPHERD.....	5
GOD THE AVENGER—ROELF L. RUFFNER.....	6

(Continued On Page 4)

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Editorial...

PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

It was the apostle Paul who instructed Timothy to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul’s own example of how to do what he told Timothy (and thereby all those who would be faithful gospel preachers) to do is a divine commentary on how to comply with the instructions of 2 Timothy 4:2.

Immediately following Paul’s conversion Luke says that “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20). Of Paul’s preaching, the inspired Luke tells us how Paul approached his subject when he was in Thessalonica.

And Paul as his manner was, went in unto them and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scripture, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ (Acts 17:2, 3).

The results of such preaching to the honest recipient of the gospel message is seen in Luke’s comment, “**For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ**” (Acts 18:28).

Luke records some of Paul’s sermons. In each one of them, the apostle approached his subject and delivered his message in the same manner. The only difference being that he dealt with his audiences on the basis of their knowledge or the lack thereof concerning God (Acts 13:12; 14-41, 44, 46-49; 16:14, 32; 19:8-10). Notice the specific example of this in Paul’s sermon delivered in Athens (Acts 17:22-31). To the Athenians he began with, “**For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you**” (Acts 17:23). In his preaching, Paul took the Athenians from the existence of God, to Christ and His resurrection, to mankind’s responsibility to repent of sins, ending with the judgment of all mankind (Acts 17:23-31).

Another example of how Paul preached is found in his defense before the Roman governor, Felix (Acts 24:10-23). Notice what Luke tells us about Paul’s manner of preaching on the second occasion that the apostle appeared before the governor after Felix had requested to hear “**him concerning the faith in Christ**” (Acts 24:24). Paul delivered his gospel message in the following manner and with telling effect. **And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled,...**” (Acts 24:25a).

Thus, in his sermons we have examples of what Paul meant in his instruction to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2.

Since the gospel message is addressed to mankind's intellect and, thus, his rational powers, whenever and wherever the gospel is proclaimed it ought to be presented as inspiration records its presentation. Homiletics is the science of the preparation and delivery of sermons. Hermeneutics is the study of the interpretation of scriptures. It pertains to the right division of the truth (2 Tim. 2:15). If one does not know the importance of Bible authority, how the Bible authorizes, and how to ascertain said authority from the words of the Bible, especially the New Testament (and we must, Colossians 3:17 and John 12:48), how can one be prepared to engage in the homiletics of the same? A close study of Paul's preaching alone would go a long way in teaching preachers how to logically and systematically present a gospel sermon, regardless of the number of those in his audience.

Clearly, teachers of the Word, especially gospel preachers are expected to be able men. Of this matter Paul wrote to Timothy, **"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"** (2 Tim. 2:2). Obviously, not every brother should be permitted to speak because not everyone is "faithful" and not everyone is "able." Moreover, James declared **"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation"** (Jam. 3:1). No person can teach what he does not know. Furthermore, what some know is *some* truth, but they think it is all the truth. But remember that Paul declared to the Ephesians elders of his teaching among them, **"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"** (Acts 20:27).

Of course, many people have been led away from the truth by false teachers. Paul knew this and also warned the Ephesian elders about the same, directly telling them that some of it would come from among themselves (Acts 20:28-31) Thus, he said to them, **"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified"** (Acts 20:32). It should be obvious that gospel preachers play a big roll in helping the faithful elders to present the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth of God's will to the church.

"As goes the pulpit, so goes the church" is a maxim that ought to tell the elders that they must be very careful concerning who "fills the pulpit," as is the case with their need for circumspection regarding all teachers. It should be no wonder to Christians that both the Old and New Testaments warn repeatedly about false doctrine and the teachers of the same. For honest hearted preachers of the truth, only proper instruction in the Word of truth can alleviate the problem (Luke 8:15; John 8:31, 32; 2 Tim. 2:2; Acts 18:26; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16, 17). One's desire to preach must grow out of one's faithful dedication to and love of God, a concern for those lost in sin, and the spiritual edification of the body of Christ. Brethren with the right attitude toward preaching the

gospel will give themselves wholly **"to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine"** (1 Tim. 13-15). It is a lifelong effort.

"DOG AND PONY SHOWS" IN THE PULPIT

False teachers must get people away from the Word of God. This is always the case. On Mt. Carmel, in their contest with faithful Elijah to determine who was or was not the one true and living God, the prophets of Baal spent all day long calling on Baal to consume with fire their offering to him. Theirs was a frenzied exhibition that no doubt begged description, but was typical of their pagan conduct. No doubt this caused the faithful prophet Elijah to mock them in their vain antics, which proper mockery enhanced their lunacy as described in 1 Kings 18:26-29.

And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

About 200 years ago in America, at the beginning of the effort to cause people to return to the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, Alexander Campbell made the following observation regarding much of the preaching of his day. He wrote:

Often have I seen a preacher try to get his mind abroach until he began to snuff the breeze like a whale snorting in the North Atlantic Ocean. It is more easy to bring a seventy-four gun ship into action in a gale of wind, than to get the mind to bear upon the text, until the nostrils catch the corner of a volume of air, and sneeze it out like a leviathan in the deep. I have seen other preachers who can strike fire no other way than by the friction of their hands, and an occasional clap, resembling a peal of distant thunder. In this holy paroxysm of clapping, rubbing, sneezing, and roaring, the mind is fairly on the way, and the tongue in full gallop, which, like a race horse, runs the swifter the less weight it carries. The farther from nature the nearer the skies, some preachers seem to think. But so it is whenever they acquire this habit it is almost incurable. They can neither speak to God nor man in the pulpit to purpose, as they think, unless when, like the boiler of a strain boat, they are almost ready to burst. (*Christian Baptist*, A. Campbell, ed., *Sermons to Young Preachers*. No. 1, Vol. 7, pp. 584, 585: September 7, 1829).

Save for the kind of religion practiced and the thousands of years separating the two examples, that false religion is and always has been built on a lie. And those who practice

(Continued on Bottom of Page 7)

(Continued From Page 1)

the Old Testament (not necessarily from the Ten Commandments, or Law of Moses) but in the revelation of events before Moses, and afterward. We are going to see the full text of these passages lest we miss all of what they teach by only giving the Bible citation. The *New King James Version* is used for the Old Testament passages.

We begin by looking at Joshua 6:18—“**By all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become cursed when you take of the accursed things.**” The context is pertains to Israel regarding certain things as they came to the city of Ai as they were conquering Canaan. However, the word in principle serves as a warning against other things from which we are to abstain because God has forbidden them, lest we become cursed. As the “Virginian” on the old TV series is often quoted as saying, “If it’s wrong, you need to fight it. If you don’t, you become part of it.” Alcohol is an enemy of God and happiness, and we must not all ourselves to use it or condone it.

Now to the principle book that deals with “wisdom” in the Bible—the book of Proverbs. “**Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, And whoever it led astray by it is not wise**” (Pro. 20:1) Next, Solomon writes in Proverbs 23:29-35:

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, Those who do so in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly? At the last it bites like a serpent, And strings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, And your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea. Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying, ‘They have struck me, but I was not hurt. They have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, “**Woe to those who rise early in the morning, That they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them**” (Isa. 5:11). Again he penned: “**Woe to those call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness, Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter**” (Isa. 5:20). Habakkuk warned,

Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle, Even to making him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness. You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also—drink as uncircumcised! The cup of the Lord’s right hand will be turned against you; And utter shame will be on your glory (Hab. 2:15).

Twice in this passage, the prophet of God, by inspiration, states “**shame shall be on your glory**” (v. 16)

Now we turn to the New Testament. The apostle Paul

wrote to Christians, saying: “**And be not conformed to the world**” (Rom. 12:2) John, the apostle, directed Christians to,

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever (1 John 2:15-17).

Paul also told Christians: “**Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof**” (Rom. 13:14). To the Ephesian church Paul wrote: “**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them**” (Eph. 5:11). Again the apostle Paul directed Christians to “**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil**” (1 The. 5:21-22). Jesus taught, “**Ye shall know them by their fruits**” (Mat. 7:16). DO THE FOREGOING PASSAGES EXPRESS THE WILL OF GOD OR NOT? We must **not** handle the Word of God deceitfully in our attempts to justify ourselves or someone else in the sins we commit (2 Cor. 4:2; Luke 16:15; 1 John 3:4).

SECOND—“*Early disciples did not have refrigerators to keep their grape juice from fermenting, so they HAD to drink it fermented.*” This “argument” is not made by anyone who is acquainted with wine making of the first century. A little research on the Internet will help in learning this. Samuel Bacchiocchi (PhD) of Andrews University in Michigan has some fine material on this subject. He lists (and goes into detail) on four (4) ways the ancients had to keep grape juice fresh for long periods of time. (1) By BOILING, (2) By FILTRATION, (3) By COLD STORAGE, and (4) By SULPHUR FUMIGATION. William Patton, in *Bible Wines*, explains how the ancients would put grape juice in sealed containers and keep them submerged in cold water for a time, and upon removal the grape juice would remain fresh for a year at a time.

Even IF they did NOT have a method of keeping it alcohol free, that would not mean Christians HAD to drink it, which they were taught not to do. They did have fresh juice and other things they could drink, unless they were drinking for much the same reason as most people do in our time—for the “pleasure” of intoxication, which is against God’s will for man’s soberness.

THIRD—“*Jesus endorsed the making of fermented wine, so it is okay for us drink it.*” Where and when did He do this? The scripture brought forth is from Matthew 9 and Luke 5, where Jesus referred to what “man” does to preserve wine and wine skins, by putting new wine in new bottles, for if it was put in old bottles it would cause the bottles to burst and lose the wine. However, the context of what Jesus said is in reference to Pharisees. John’s disciples had raised the question of why they and the Pharisees fasted often, but

Jesus' disciples did not. Their inquiry had nothing to do with Jesus endorsing "wine making." It was simply an illustration from what happens in the fermentation of grape juice becoming alcoholic. This would be like those in the world who may be like those who would do so with new wine. In essence, what Jesus did was to present a common sense argument against wine making, rather than for it. For His disciples to "fast" would be LIKE the making of wine in old bottles.

By referring to those who MIGHT (if not very smart) vainly do so by putting new wine (juice of the grape) into old bottles) was to incorporate a judaistic custom or practice into His ministry, at least at this time. Just because Jesus introduced a possible dumb practice does not mean He was endorsing that practice for something else in the Christian era. For instance;

1) To refer to what the hypocritical Pharisees did in covering up their corruption by painting their sepulcher's white (Mat. 23:25-28)

2) To refer to what SATAN does in blinding the minds of men, does not mean Jesus endorsed Satan's action (2 Cor. 4:4).

3) To refer to what MEN of the world do in getting drunk at night does not mean that Jesus approves of getting drunk at night (or any other time) (1 The. 5:7).

FOURTH—*Jesus turned water into wine so it is okay for us to drink it.*

In John 2:1-11, we have the record of Jesus' first miracle in Cana of Galilee, in which He manifested His glory. It is indeed a stretch to attempt to prove that Jesus turned water into intoxicating wine. There are several words of special interest in this passage. There are several words in John 2 that we shall consider.

"Wine"—The first word is the word *wine*. It is from the Greek word *oinos*, a general word for any juice of the grape, with its context determining whether it is fermented or not. It is usually used to describe fresh grape juice. We believe it is clearly referring to the latter, as we shall see, for several reasons.

"Good"—The occasion was a wedding feast. The custom was to begin the feast with the best wine, and afterward bring on a lesser quality. Here, they ran out of wine early in the feast for whatever reason. Mary informed Jesus that they were out of wine. He ordered the servant to fill six water pots with water to the brim. They drew the liquid from out and brought it to the ruler of the feast. The ruler of the feast tasted the wine made from the water and was amazed that it was "so" good. Thus, he compared it to what was normally done on such an occasion, but this was different somehow. The word *good* comes from the Greek word *kalos*. It always refers to "that which is intrinsically good,...goodly, fair, beautiful," according to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, page 274). This wine had not been

corrupted or changed with yeast.

"Drunk"—This word is from the Greek word *methuo*. It means "filled," but that with which they were filled had to be named. Here, they were filled with the inferior wine, they could taste that this was better. (see Eph. 5:18). The word here does not describe folks who were "well intoxicated." The word simply means "filled" in its general sense. It does not mean that they were "well intoxicated," for they all knew that there was something better before them, contrary to many other wedding feasts of the day.

"Well"—This word lets us know that there was more involved than merely tasting, but were "well" filled, and yet it was still good to the taste. All in all, we have a word picture of a civilized social event.

"Glory"—Now, if it had been a drunken feast, and Jesus contributed to it by providing intoxicating wine for everyone there, what would God do about His Son's conduct?? Note, that John 2:11 states that what was done here was a manifesting of His "glory" and not to "shame." In Habakkuk 2:15, God said the drinker AND the one who provides such for others does it to "shame instead of glory." Not only would Jesus have failed to glorify God, but would have done a "shameful" thing, and was to be a recipient of the "woe" God pronounced upon such a person. Would it have been a sinful thing for the Lord to have done such?? Yet, we know Jesus never sinned or did anything that would have brought shame to God.

Perhaps there are other "excuses" church members attempt to use in seeking to justify their drinking of beverage alcohol, but one of the main "reasons" is for people drinking alcohol is to lose the inhibitions as they become more and more intoxicated. They like the feeling so much they are will to undergo the misery of the consequences of being drunk. Let US never, for one moment, bring shame to God instead of glory, by drinking beverage alcohol or encouraging others to do so.

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SOUND TEACHING FROM

J. W. SHEPHERD

True love for any person makes one seek to deliver the loved ones from wrong. Sometimes people uphold their husbands, wives, children, and friends in a wrong course, and say they do it from love. This is not true and helpful love. Love says get them pure and right before God, and insists on the discipline needed to purify them. Not to do this is to encourage them in their own ruin. A selfish determination to uphold one's family or friends in a course of wrong is not love. It is really hatred, in a Bible sense of the word (J. W. Shepherd – *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles*, Volume 3, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, TN, 1976, p. 37).~

—Deceased

GOD THE AVENGER

A Sermon Outline

Roelf L. Ruffner

Text: Nahum 1: 1-15 NKJ

INTRODUCTION:

A. Background:

1. Nahum lived in the Southern Kingdom of Judah perhaps during the reign of King Hezekiah.

2. The city of Nineveh (capital of Assyria) had been brought to repentance by the preaching of the prophet Jonah 100 years earlier (Jon. 3:5).

3. Assyria had taken the Northern Kingdom into captivity in 721 B.C. destroying Samaria (2 Kin. 17:15)

4. Now God turns against the Assyrian Empire and it is destroyed in 612 B.C. by a coalition of nations. Medes (Kurds), Neo-Babylonians (Iraqis), Persians (Iranians)

B. God today also works in the affairs of men (See Dan. 2:21; Jer. 27:5; Acts 17:26)

C. But now Assyria had reached a tipping point and God was punishing them.

D. Will God punish America—Has the tipping point been reached?

1. Moral filth allowed and promoted: lasciviousness, dancing, and pornography.

2. Abortion on demand: murder of babies

3. Euthanasia

4. Profanity rampant

5. Gambling: legalized theft

6. Legalization of hallucinogenic drugs

7. Legalization and promotion of homosexual activity

8. Same sex marriage, gay adoption.

9. Massive theft by politicians: debt and deficit spending.

E. Some seem to believe that because God has not struck down America then everything is fine, but they have forgotten who God is (Jude 18).

F. Nahum reveals a side of God that is often overlooked or conveniently forgotten—God the avenger.

I. God is angry with sin (Nah. 1:2-3).

A. God had not forgotten how the Assyrians treated His people—the Northern Kingdom of Samaria—and that they had invaded the Southern Kingdom of Judah

1. Took many into slavery

2. Killed and mistreated many

3. Arrogantly promoted idolatry (2 Kin. 18:22, 35)

4. Is God angry with you and me? Our nation?

B. God is a jealous God.

1. “Jealous”—“not envious; zealous; His holiness does not tolerate competitors or those who sin against Him.

He is the sole object of human worship and does not tolerate man’s sin” (*Vines*, pp. 124-125). (Exo. 20:5).

2. God takes notice of unauthorized worship of Him (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:22).

C. God is angry with sin and punishes it—“revenges,” “furious,” “vengeance.”

1. God was angry with how the Assyrians treated His people and He sought justice, not human vengeance.

2. Do I view God as angry with my sins (Psa. 7:11)?

D. God must be angry with our nation – “**He reserves wrath for His adversaries**” (v. 2).

1. Generally speaking, is He angry with the church’s failure to see the urgency to spread the gospel (Eph. 3:10-11).

a. Is it not a part of the “**manifold wisdom of God**”—morality and godliness (Tit. 2:11-12)?

b. Pattern of ungodliness: worldliness, social drinking, profanity, immodest dress, unauthorized worship, compromise, fellowship of false teachers, neglect of God’s Word (Rev. 2:4-5).

2. Our nation must be at the breaking point in God’s view (Gen. 6:5-6; Lev. 18:25).

3. What about my own individual life? Am I ready?

a. If I do not repent, I will share the same fate as the ungodly (Eph. 5:6,7; 2 Pet. 2:20).

b. God’s vengeance is a horrible thing. Vengeance—“(that which proceeds) out of justice,” not, as often with human “vengeance,” out of a sense of injury or merely out of feeling of indignation (*Vines*, page 659). Legal wrath (Heb. 10:29-31).

c. This does not compare to the “sentimental, tolerant” image of God found among many (Isa. 55:8-9)

II. God is patient with me, but not infinitely so (Vs. 3).

A. God’s patience with humanity is amazing.

1. Gave mankind 120 years to repent of sin before the Flood of Noah.

2. He gave the Canaanites 400 years to repent (Gen. 15:13).

3. Did not destroy the children of Israel when they initially rejected the promised land (Exo. 34:6).

4. Period of the Judges (450 years).

5. Dealt with wicked kings of ancient Israel: Manasseh (reigned 52 years), others.

6. Did not destroy the ancient Gentile world (Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:30).

7. Did not destroy humanity when they crucified His only begotten Son.

8. Gave ancient Israel 40 years to repent before destroying it in A.D. 70.

B. Why is God so longsuffering with me?

1. Understands who I am and loves me.
 - a. Made in His image (Heb. 2:7).
 - b. Short existence (Job. 14:1, 2).
2. He knows I am lost in sin without Him (Rom. 3:23).
3. He knows I must repent and obey the gospel (Acts 2:38; Rom. 2:3-4)

II. God’s majesty and holiness demand justice (v. 4-14).

- A. The Assyrians were not to believe that God’s longsuffering nature had caused them to escape His wrath.
1. Am I to believe that since God has not struck me dead, He has overlooked my sin (Acts 12:22-23)?
 2. There is no “statute of limitations” on unrepented of sins.
- B. No man can stand before God’s indignation: A general warning to all (v. 3-6).
1. Nature.
 2. Catastrophe: tornadoes (v. 3); drought; (v. 4); geology (v. 5). Sound familiar (Job 38:1-4; Job 42:1-6).

IV. God’s assurance of judgment on the wicked (vs. 7-14).

- A. **“He knows them that trust in him”** (v. 7).
1. God had appreciated those in ancient Israel who still followed Him (1 Kin. 19:18).
 2. The Christian’s relationship with God through

- Jesus Christ is a personal one (John 10:27-29; 2 The. 2:16).
- B. God promised Israel He would deal with the Assyrians and **“make an utter end”** of them (v. 9).
1. He promised to decimate them in their idolatry (v. 14).
 2. After civil wars, in 605 BC, their enemies defeated the Assyrians and Egyptians at Carchemish (2 Kin. 23:29; Also 2 Chr. 35:20-24).
- C. God has promised that He will deal with evil nations and evil men and women (Jude 7; Psa. 9:5).

V. Our only hope is the gospel of Jesus Christ (v. 15).

- A. Nahum gives a prophetic glimpse into the future (Rom. 10:14-16).
- B. The only protection America has from God’s vengeance is the gospel.
1. Not in politics, economic reform, philosophy, science, technology, charity, space exploration, the United Nations, religious pluralism, etc.
- C. Please obey the Gospel while there is still time.
1. Believe Jesus as God’s Son (Rom. 10:17; John 8:24).
 2. Repent of all sins (Acts 17:30).
 3. Confess Jesus to be God’s Son (Rom. 10:9,10).
 4. Be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

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(Editorial, Continued From Page 2)

and advocate the same cannot allow the people to whom they preach their nefarious messages to hear a scriptural sermon, logically and systematically presented so as to clearly delineate truth from error. I see no reason to think that whether it was Elijah, A. Campbell in years past, or any other person who is diligently seeking the truth today, that they would not conclude the same about many preachers as did Elijah and Campbell did false prophets and preachers in their day.

THE KIND OF PREACHING NEEDED

The kind of preaching needed is not what the majority desires. Our Lord warned us about that (Mat. 7:13). Thereby many have been turned from the truth (1 Cor. 15:33).

Preaching needs to be distinctive. Who can engage in such mental flights of fantasy that they can hear Noah, as he built the Ark, preaching to the wicked people, “Something good is going to happen to you?” Noah was a preacher of righteousness, thus, we know that he condemned in no uncertain terms the evils of the world of his day (1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5).

By faith I can see Jeremiah crying out against adultery, idolatry, and the many evils of his nation. Furthermore, following the king’s “pen knifing” of the Word of God in his

feeble and vain efforts to “thumb his nose at God,” Jeremiah, in obedience to God, took,

another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words (Jer. 36: 21-32).

Who is it that can honestly imagine the forerunner of the Christ, John the Baptist, preparing the Jews to receive their Messiah by preaching, “Smile, God loves you.” But we do read of him preaching, **“O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”** (Mat. 3:7). And, to King Herod he declared of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, **“It is not lawful for thee to have her”** (Mat. 14:4). John was beheaded because of his uncompromising preaching. But as I heard that late brother B. C. Goodpasture say of John: It would be better for a preacher’s head to end up where John’s did because he preached the truth unapologetically, than for a preacher to compromise the truth so he could keep his head on his shoulders, but lose his soul. We also remember hearing the late Franklin Camp say, “Jesus was not crucified for saying, ‘Consider the lilies.’ But he was crucified for saying, ‘Ye have made my Father’s House a den

of thieves.” And who can imagine Stephen being stoned if he had only preached, “Bless your hearts, let’s sit down together with our cups of coffee and dialog as we get to know one another better.” (See Acts 7:51-60).

We do not need a social gospel. Curing social ills is not the fundamental and primary concern of God’s church. The gospel is the only thing that will cure the greatest ill of mankind—SIN. Christ is the only one who has solved the sin problem (John 14:6; Rom. 1:16). The church is to make known the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10), not build gymnasiums and the like. We are to preach the church of Christ as it is revealed on the pages of the Bible, especially the New Testament. Worldliness needs to be exposed and rebuked. All false doctrine needs to be publicly refuted and those who teach it marked for the false teachers they are. (Rom. 16:17, 18).

The preacher is to preach with urgency. Jeremiah declared that the Word of God “**was in mine heart as a burning fire shout up in my bones**” (Jer. 20:9). Paul wrote of himself, saying, “**Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel**” (1 Cor. 9:16). In his sermons, the preacher is to reprove (1 John 4:1; 1 The. 5:21), to rebuke (1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2), and to exhort— “**Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men**” (1 Cor. 5:11). He will be long suffering as he preaches the truth in love, not only loving the lost and the brethren to whom he preaches, but also loving God and God’s truth that is preached. Thus, compromising the truth is out of the question for the faithful gospel preacher.

One of the saddest and hurtful things to the Lord’s church and His cause is the preacher who preaches the truth, but who will not deal candidly and frankly with certain topics (issues). He is a coward at heart. Some of these topics in which error is taught and that some preachers ignore are: marriage, divorce, and remarriage, fellowship, corrective

church discipline (withdrawing fellowship from the unfaithful and the conduct of faithful brethren toward the withdrawn from impenitent church members), women’s work in the church, parallel first day of the week worship assemblies, biblical modesty, elders (their qualifications, authority, and work), the responsibility of the church to obey faithful elders in the area where they have authority, the error of elders ruling only by example, the error of the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders, biblical repentance, and a general refusal to address problems by name.

When they were found to be harboring false teachers, promoting error, and/or engaged in erroneous fellowship practices, some preachers have trembled at the thought of opposing these modern Goliaths—the schools of higher education, other educational institutions, and other brotherhood projects. Furthermore, the average church member has little to no idea about the erroneous “anti” doctrines that in the past divided the church and continue to divide it.

The fact of the matter is this, many people do not care much about doctrine (Hos. 4:6; 2 John 8-11). They just want to do as they please. Sadly, too many elderships are made up of like-minded brethren. Basically they are good humor men, who will do almost anything to placate ungodly brethren under their oversight. It is not hard to imagine the kind of preachers such spineless unfaithful characters will keep in the pulpits of their pastorates.

Sadly, weak church members appoint weak elders. In turn, those elders pick spineless preachers to scratch the itching ears of the people (2 Tim. 4:3-5). The best such preachers can say is something like, “Sin is bad and I’m against it.” But, identifying the sin and those guilty of it is a rare commodity. Sadly, the people love to have so.

—David P. Brown, Editor