

*A Quarterly Journal*

# "LIGHT FOR OUR AGE"

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*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."  
Psalm 119:105*



## Feature One: Editorial

**Now that it is legal, and the law of the land, will homosexual marriage be acceptable to God?**

To begin our study, consider a Bible story that you have probably know since childhood. In the Book of Daniel chapter 6 is the well know story of Daniel and the lion's den. For review, this is what happened. King Darius was planning to promote Daniel over all of the other high officers in the kingdom of the Medes. They did not want this, so they talked Darius into making a law found in Daniel 6:6-9.

Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live forever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

These high officials knew that Daniel prayed to God three times daily and would be in violation of this law, or decree. Remember, once the king signed the decree it became the law of the land; and it could not be changed. The men then began to watch Daniel, and verse eleven tells us that they found Daniel "praying and making supplication before his God".

They then went back to King Darius and reported what Daniel had done and reminded the king that the law could not be changed. The rest of the story you probably know. Daniel was cast into the lions' den, according to the law. God protected Daniel and he was released to a very happy king the next day. The king then ordered those that accused Daniel to be cast into the lions' den.

The point is a simple one. It matters not what the law of the land says if it violates God's laws. Daniel would pray to God no matter what the law might say, and no matter what the consequences. So what does God say about homosexuality? Let me just insert some scriptures for your consideration. While the Old Testament also condemns this action, I will confine our study to just the New Testament, for it is under this covenant that we now live. I am using the English Standard Version for its clarity of our present day language.

Romans 1:26-31

"Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness...."

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Jude 1:7-11

"Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day- just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion."

While there are others, these passages speak plainly about the sin of homosexuality. However, it should be noted that God is opposed to all sexual immorality. The Roman text shows us that God gave them up to dishonorable passions including homosexuality. The 1 Corinthian text states that men that practice homosexuality will not inherit the kingdom of God, and the James' text referred to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah as being punished for the sexual perversion, which a reading of Genesis 19 will show.

As to marriage of homosexual partners, God has already declared this lifestyle sinful and has said those that practice this will not be in His kingdom. They will be lost for all eternity. Yet there is hope. In the 1 Corinthian text there is a reference that some of the members of the church in Corinth had at one time practiced homosexuality and the other sins mentioned, but they had given up these practices when they became Christians. Certainly God loves all mankind. He came to save all mankind. He was accused of eating and drinking with sinners and publicans, and his answer found in Matthew 9:12-13 was:  
"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Those that practice homosexuality are indeed spiritually sick, and Jesus came to teach them and show them the right way. Concerning marriage, this is what Jesus said. The text is found in Mark 10:2-12.

"And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. ' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

While the theme of this text is divorce, notice what Jesus said about marriage. Marriage as God created it was between a man and a woman. There is no justification for anything else. Marriage was created by God, and He, through Christ, has set forth the rule of law for the Christian.

It is true that we now live in a land that has changed what God has taught. We, like Daniel, must comply with the law that God gave us. It mattered not to Daniel that the law was changed and denied him the right to pray to God. He complied with what God expected of him even if it might mean his death. We can do no less. Yes, I expect that these people will look to persecute those that follow what God says. If it comes to that, we must face the persecution and honor God and his word.

## **Feature Two: *an article by R. C. Oliver***

### **From notes for a chapel program at Freed-Hardeman:**

The Bed Is Too Short And The Covers Too Narrow  
Isaiah 28:20

A bed is where we hope to find rest and sleep and rejuvenation. What is more disappointing than to go to bed to find that it offers just the opposite to that for which we had hoped?

I took three young people to Ohio with me one Saturday, after I had worked all day, perhaps getting up about 6:30 that morning. I was to begin a meeting the next morning where their grandparents attended services.

They were afraid I might go to sleep driving that night, so knowing that I like to stop along the way and get a cup of coffee, they kept insisting that we stop and get coffee. When we did, they dropped some no-nods in my coffee of which I was unaware.

We finally arrived, and though Brother Cope said the preacher usually gets the best bed, my bed reminded me of a valley down between two high mountains. I lay there in sleepless distress with my head resting on one mountain peak while my feet rested on the other. I simply could not go to sleep-what misery this was. I even tried to jackknife myself in the bed but the covers would not properly cover me, for my neck and knees stuck out in the front and my feet and other parts stuck out in the back and only a little strip of my body was covered.

There I lay until the morning. It was miserable! But this is the way it is going to be with a lot of people some day, for the bed can be too short and the covers too narrow.

Let me explain. Denominational doctrines that promise us rest, but cannot give peace will be such a bed. Jesus said that we should beware for, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:8-9).

Cheating while you are in school will be like this when you get out in the world. What you should have picked up in school will not help you out there in the world if you did not learn it.

Marrying, thinking that this is a bed of roses might well be a bed that is too short the covers of which are too narrow. If you are marrying thinking that you can then be your own boss, you had better change your mind, for the bed won't be that comfortable. Or if you marry to leave home and get away from problems you will really have trouble, for now you will be a part of two families, and you will have your spouse and all of their family to tell you what to do.

Therefore, before you get into a preverbal bed, make sure you are not getting into a bed where the bed is too short and the covers are too narrow.

## Feature Three: Sandy's Women's Corner

### WHERE DOES THE ROAD GO?

My Bible class of 4th and 5th graders has been studying the divided kingdom. We started with David and have traveled with the Israelites through the division of the nation, through evil king after evil king, idol worship, and now captivity.

I have inserted the prophets where they belong, and they have learned far more about idols and idol worship than I thought they were capable of learning. Since we read from the Bible, they have also learned to pronounce difficult names. They still don't understand why so many of the kings' names start with "J".

Bible geography has been high on the list of information for this class, and that has been the biggest surprise to me of all. The children have learned what happened where, and they can identify on a map where those places are located.

Recently, I did a little experiment with them. Between our auditorium and one of our classroom wings is a courtyard. On Wednesday evening we ventured into the courtyard with maps in hand and laid out some basic sites. We placed cards in the proper areas with names of the Sea of Galilee, The Jordan River, and the Dead Sea written on them. Then I assembled the children and asked questions regarding different places we have studied.

"So" was king of what nation?

Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal here.

God sent Elijah where after He met with him in the cave on Mt. Horeb?

Locate the Mediterranean Sea.

Rehoboam set up his palace in this city.

Jeroboam placed idols in these cities.

They each had a turn to answer the question and then placed their card in the proper location. Needless to say, we teachers were proud when every question was answered and every place identified.

Why is this of any importance? It is important because they are learning "the facts". They are learning where things happen, and that strengthens their overall Bible knowledge. They should be able, by the end of the summer, to do this without a map. Not many adults can do that.

As we begin the Life of Christ in September, they should be able to add a significant number of cities to their knowledge and be a little more knowledgeable about where and why things happened as recorded in the New Testament scriptures.

Where the Jews traveled, where the Lord walked, where the people of the Bible lived helps us to understand the stories with which we are so familiar.

One of the things we study is how the Samaritans came into existence and why they were so despised by the Jews. It is an interesting story, and the location of Samaria figures prominently into several of the things we study about Jesus.

I am finishing a Bible geography class taught at one of our local congregations. I have learned a lot, and hopefully I will be a better teacher of Bible geography than I am now.

I think it is important for us to know where the roads go. When the Bible refers to "up" or "down", we need to understand what that means and why does it look the opposite on the map.

The most wonderful thing about this study has been that we have learned a lot of these things together-students and teachers reading, studying, and remembering together, having fun as we go. Who said learning isn't fun? They never taught a Bible class!

## Feature Four: Our Communication

### Assume Best Intentions

With the increase in texting and short e-mails, it's often hard to know the intended tone of communication. I regularly hear people complain about someone's attitude from a perfectly innocuous email. People end up reading in the emotion that supports their own point of view. If any animosity exists between the parties, the perceived tone goes south, fast. With any short communication, always start with the assumption that the intentions are good on the other side. If there's any doubt, pick up the phone and give them a chance to insult you directly--just so you can be sure.

<http://www.inc.com/kevin-daum/8-ways-to-improve-your-communication-right-now.html>

## Feature Five: Bible Question

Answered in Light, May, 1955 by R C Oliver

### **"Will you please answer, what is the church?" -Mrs. I.R.**

Paul identifies the church as the "house" of God in his epistle to Timothy - 1 Timothy 3:15. Here the apostle writes: "These things write I unto thee...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God."

The word "house" as used here by Paul is that figure of speech we call "metonymy" -the use of one word for another that it suggests as the effect for the cause, the cause for effect, the sign for the thing signified the container for the contained et., etc.

In our text, as well as in Acts 16:31, Hebrews 11:7, and many other places, the word "house" is used to signify those who live within the house, that is, it is used to signify the family that resides within. In our text (1 timothy 3:15) it therefore signifies the family of God. We must conclude therefore that the church is God's family.

This conclusion should help my readers to see the folly of thinking that one can be saved outside the church; for if a man can be saved outside the church, then he can be saved outside the family of God; but if one can be saved outside the family of god, he can be saved without being a child of God; but if one can be saved without being a child of God, he can be saved without being a Christian; but if one can be saved without being a Christian, then he



can be saved apart from the sacrifice made by our Lord; but if one can be saved apart from the sacrifice of Christ, then Christ has died in vain! Who can believe it! Yet this is the conclusion to which all are forced who teach that one doesn't have to be a member of the church in order to be saved.

To teach that church membership is not necessary to eternal life is equal to rejecting the sacrifice of Christ and is a repudiation of the whole remedial, or Christian, system that was introduced to the world through Him, The church is God's family, and men must be in God's family, they must be children of God, in order to be saved.

## Humor

Terri asked her Sunday school class to draw pictures of their favorite Bible stories. She was puzzled by Kyle's picture, which showed four people on an airplane, so she asked him which story it was meant to represent.

The Flight to Egypt, was his reply. Pointing at each figure, Ms. Terri said, "That must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus, but who is the fourth person? Oh, that's Pontius-the pilot."

## In Closing

Time passes so quickly. It is good to be able to send this little paper again. I trust you will find it useful in your study of God's word. If you know of anyone that would like to subscribe, just send me an email to that effect. You may also see past editions at the web address given below.

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