

# THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

God's solid foundation stands firm. 2 Tim. 2-19

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Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,  
but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in  
the house.

Matthew 5:15

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For A Conservative Anabaptist Perspective

## **From The Editor's Desk**

### *Never Too Old To Learn!*

I'm sure many of us have heard that said and possibly used it ourselves and it is I believe a true statement no matter our stage of life.

It is why we read, listen and explore many facets of our existence and as we do that with the discernment that God gives through the Holy Spirit then we are able to make the choices that will not only be for our good, the good of others but ultimately for His glory and honour, Isaiah 43:7.

Psalms 90:12 advises us to number our days so we may apply our hearts unto wisdom and in the same Psalm in verse 10 our expected numbers of days is set out and it is the testimony of many who are at or past that period of time we certainly number our days and hopefully it is with the view that we have yet much to learn and can still be of service in the Kingdom of God.

I noted during some transcription work the following observation/call made by the preacher to his congregation about learning no matter our age:

“I ask you to consider what is your calling in life, what is it only you can do, what is it about your life, your background, your journey, your calling, the equipping that you already have experienced, what is unique to your time and place that puts you in a position to have an impact in this generation.

What is it? God did not randomly drop you here for nothing He put you here for something do you know what that is?

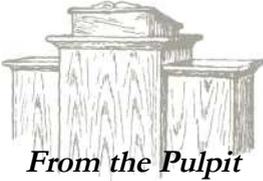
Unfortunately many people in the church today, many people across Christianity are more consumed with figuring out what the scope of their rights are and then indulging in those rights and defending those rights and being sure that they can consume in all areas of Christian liberty and human rights and they accomplish absolutely nothing for the Kingdom of God. Have you narrowed down your life, are you willing to invest where God has placed you, where God is calling you, are you willing to strive for a fuller potential, a greater impact by relinquishing some of the rights that are yours as a believer letting them go.

It is voluntary it is not mandated but your effectiveness for the kingdom of God is determined by whether or not you surrender, let go and let God.”

A motto used by one of the churches we attended years ago was this:

***God's People Doing God's Will God's Way!***

May we make that our own no matter our age, it will get us to heaven! *JvL*



*From the Pulpit*

## THE NEWBORN KING

*A Christmas message by Brother Merle Ruth*

On one occasion during the Christmas season a merchant and a minister were conversing together;

When Christmas is over, said the merchant, it is my job to rid this store of Christmas in one day.

I beg your pardon, said the minister, I have a bigger job. My job is to keep Christmas in the hearts of my people for a lifetime. I like it that way.

But what does it mean to keep Christmas in our hearts?

May I suggest that it means keeping in view the Christ of today, crucified, risen and now reigning King of Kings. It means doing what David did: I have set the Lord always before my face because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. [Psalm 16:8](#)

It means running the race of life with your eyes glued upon Jesus. It means seeing Him not only as the shepherds saw Him as a babe in a manger but also as the writer to the Hebrews saw as Him crowned with glory and honour.

My sermon title for this occasion is "The Newborn King." Those wise men from the east were right, they perceived that what they had come to see was more than a newborn child. That one who once occupied a manger was soon exalted to a throne and for nearly 2000 years He has been out of His manger and on His throne.

I raise now this question: Was there are any indications that the long anticipated Messiah would be a king?

There definitely were.

That very title itself Messiah was an indication of this fact. Daniel in his unique 70 weeks prophecy refers to the coming one as the Messiah, he thus identified him as the anointed one for that is the meaning of that title. [Daniel 9:25-26](#)

When Simeon spoke of having seen the Lord's Christ he too was identifying him as the anointed one. [Luke 2:26](#)

These two terms Messiah and Christ mean the same. Why then are they different in construction? Because the one is drawn from the Hebrew and the other is drawn from the Greek. But they denote the same thing.

Now if you were an anointed one what did that mean?

For an Israelite it meant that you were either a prophet, a priest or a King. Like no one else Jesus combined all three offices, none of his predecessors were able to even fill one office as well as he as he fills all three.

This morning my purpose is to highlight just one of those offices namely the kingly office. David was Israel's humanly anointed King, Jesus for all of God's people their divinely anointed King.

Another Old Testament indication that the one to come would be a King, and perhaps the earliest indicator appears in [Genesis 49:10](#): "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah or a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh comes."

The sceptre was a token of kingship and Shiloh was perhaps the earliest title for the coming Messiah. Already as early as that time of Jacob kingship was associated with the one who was to come.

Balaam inspired of his mixed motives spoke in similar terms: "There shall come a star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel and shall smite the corners of Moab." [Numbers 24: 17](#)

That last clause depicts the coming King as defeating the enemies of God's people.

The same note is heard in Psalm 2, a Psalm which is definitely messianic in character, in verse two of that Psalm direct reference is made to the Lord and his anointed. In the picture drawn there they, the Lord and his anointed, are being fiercely opposed but then God is shown to be in complete control in verse six his triumphant voice is heard making this declaration: Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. [Psalm 2:6](#)

The context leaves no question whatsoever about the identity of that King, it was from this very song that the Apostles quoted shortly after the day of Pentecost when attempts were made to prevent them from preaching the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. They perceived that they were experiencing a part of the conflict depicted in that Psalm.

In second Samuel 7:12 one can hear the prophet Nathan promising David that God would establish the throne of his son for ever, and that surely looked beyond his immediate son Solomon to a greater than Solomon, [2 Samuel 7:12](#).

Isaiah in chapter 9 foresees a Prince of peace upon whose shoulders shall rest the government of the kingdom and his 32nd chapter opens with this prediction: Behold a King shall reign in righteousness. [Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 32:1](#).

Jeremiah writes repeatedly about a coming King under the figure of King David. [Jeremiah 23](#).

In Ezekiel 21 God pronounces judgment upon the unrighteous Kings of Judah. In verse 27 he is heard to say: I will overturn, overturn, overturn and it shall be no more. It, the right to rule, shall be no more until he come whose right it is and I will give it him. [Ezekiel 21:27](#)

I understand God to be saying I will overthrow repeatedly the leadership in Judah until the appearance of the true messianic King.

The prophet Micah is used of God to name the very birthplace of the one who was to be what? The future ruler in Israel. [Micah 5:2](#).

Finally Zechariah speaks to Israel about the non-worldly character of the Messiah King: Behold thy King cometh unto thee. Already he is on the way and surely he will arrive in the fullness of time. He is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass. [Zechariah 9:9](#)

These prophetic glimpses were all deliberately provided clues designed to help the faithful Israelites to identify the Messiah when he did appear for

there was obviously going to be something about him different then other kings.

Well this brief survey has made it very apparent that the kingly role was definitely a part of the messianic expectation, there is wide agreement over this fact.

Now we must raise a further question: Has this expectation past into realization? Is Jesus presently exercising his kingship role? In more recent times because of the appearance of men like John Darby and C.I. Schofield there appears to be a growing cleavage of opinion on this point. The point of disagreement is the time of His predicted messianic reign.

When did that long predicted reign begin? Did it begin at His first coming or does it await a second coming?

Some believe that God's original plan called for the establishment of a temporal earthly type Jewish flavoured kingdom right in the wake of his first coming. In their opinion the non-realization of their hope or the non-realization of this hope was the large scale rejection of Jesus by the Jews.

Those of us who don't accept this view refer to it as the postponement theory because it teaches that the kingdom supposedly needed to be postponed. This concept is one of the underlying assumptions of the dispensational system of eschatology, however people that accept that theory have a hard time reconciling their belief with the fact that the Jews wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him that kind of King but He rejected their offer.

Others believe that the Jews were right in expecting an earthly Jewish flavoured kingdom but that they were merely wrong in their timing. The correct time for that development supposedly is when Christ returns the second time or maybe the third time.

Still others believe that that neither of those two expectations agree with the Bible when it is rightly interpreted, although I respect those roles are their views I personally identify with this latter view, I believe that accordingly they rightly interpreted the Bible kingship of Jesus is a present reality and that the kingly aspect of His Messiah-ship began to find immediate fulfilment in the wake of His first coming.

This view is in agreement with first Peter 1:11 wherein it is stated that the Old Testament prophets testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. [1 Peter 1:11](#)

I do not believe in separating those two by millenniums of time. Among the gospel writers John especially depicted the sufferings of Christ as for him the road to glory and it turned out that way, exactly that way, for his exultation followed almost immediately on the heels of his crucifixion.

I am moving now to a survey of other biblical data that appears to support this view, the present kingship of Jesus.

For a start you may turn to Luke chapter 1 and we will pick up at verse 31, this is the Angel Gabriel speaking to Mary: [Luke 1:31-33](#): "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. <sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: <sup>33</sup> And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

I believe God has already done for His Son what Gabriel said He would do, there is no indication whatever that the carrying of this transaction was to be contingent upon His acceptance by the Jews, no indication of that whatsoever. As already mentioned when Jesus was yet very young those wise men came from the East saying: Where is he that is born King of the Jews? Jesus holds the distinction of being the only born King.

Nathaniel upon meeting Jesus for the first time was so impressed that he said: Rabbi, thou art the son of God, thou art the King of Israel. [John 1:49](#)

The gospel accounts also show us Jesus deliberately taking steps to fulfil Zechariah's prophecy, the one that we previously lifted out where Zechariah said: Behold thy King cometh. [Zechariah 9:9](#)

Jesus entering Jerusalem, on that occasion referred to as the triumphal entry, accepted and approved the homage of the multitudes, He even justified their hosannas. On that occasion before Pilate the question was put to him

very pointedly: Art thou a King? His answer was: Thou sayest. That was equivalent to Yes. [John 18:37](#)

Just prior to His ascension our Lord in addressing a group of His followers made this incomparable claim: All power, (meaning really all authority), is given unto me in heaven and in earth. [Matthew 28:18](#)

My friends that is the language of a King. Furthermore if you have all there is of something there is no more to be had. Christ possesses presently all the power, all the authority he will ever have. Time is coming however when he will use that power in ways that he is presently not using it. Since Jesus did not assume the typical kingly posture his non-spiritual Jewish contemporaries became his enemies and for the same reason his nearest friends, the disciples, were perplexed and at times were even critical of him but a sudden change came upon them in the wake of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

I am turning now to Acts chapter 2 so that we can listen to a portion of Peter's sermon on that memorable day. Acts chapter 2 beginning at verse 29: [Acts 2:29-31](#): "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. <sup>30</sup> Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; <sup>31</sup> He (David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ." It sounds to me as though Peter is saying this is the fulfilment of that promise and this is what David himself and there are divine inspiration wrote about in [Psalm 110](#).

This chain of events, [Acts 2:32-36](#), "seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ that is soul was not left in hell neither his flesh did see corruption. <sup>32</sup> This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. <sup>33</sup> Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, <sup>35</sup> Until I make thy foes thy footstool. <sup>36</sup> Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Here is an enlightened Peter that the man whom they had so recently crucified was actually David's Lord and that the shedding forth of the Holy Spirit was evidence that He had begun His messianic reign, God had done what Gabriel said He would do, He had given Jesus the throne of his father David. Evidently we are meant to see in the earthly throne of David a type of the heavenly throne to which our Lord returned in glory. Peter now perceives that the enthronement of Jesus consisted of His being raised from the dead and placed at the right hand of the Majesty on high. No other man on his way to kingship began so low and rose so high so soon.

Let's turn now to Philippians chapter 2 and break-in at verse eight: [Philippians 2:8-9](#): " And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"

This is Paul's way of stating the same truth that Peter stated in Acts 2 and although the term ascension does not appear here that event is definitely in view, the ascension as described in Acts 1 was the preview to His exultation, in fact those two terms ascension, exultation are sometimes used almost synonymously but there is this difference; the term ascension speaks of our Lord's visible departure, the term exaltation speaks of an act of God and seen by human eyes by which God gave the ascending Christ the place of power at His right hand.

In Ephesians 1 those two ideas are virtually fused together, Paul writes of God raising Christ from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and every name that is named. The throne of the Jews would have been as nothing in comparison with the one he was given by His Father. [Ephesians 1:20-21](#)

The next passage [Colossians 2:15](#) is a report of the victory that our Lord won in the spirit world, the express purpose of our Lord's coming was to confront and destroy the one who had become the adversary of God and man, here in Colossians 2:15 we have the outcome of that conflict: "And

having spoilt principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

Jesus gained the throne by defeating the devil and all his demonic supporters as is stated in [Ephesians 4:8](#) He came out on top: "He took captivity captive and gave gifts unto men." That last clause refers to a practice that was commonly observed in those days following a military victory, drawn from the spoils of victory the victorious general upon his return home would bestow gifts upon those whom he sought to honour, especially those who had been loyal to him.

Jesus upon His return home bestowed upon His followers on the day of Pentecost a greater gift than any other victor could bestow and to this day that gift is still being received by every newly made saint of God. All of which is suggestive of the fact that the ascension was the end of a fierce battle from which our Lord emerged victoriously. It is that which moved the hymn writer to pen those inspiring words: "Look ye saints the sight is glorious, See a man of sorrows now from the fight returned victorious; Every knee to him shall bow."

It would be proper I believe to think of Christ as doing for us what David did for all Israel when he defeated Goliath.

And now I invite you to turn back into the Old Testament to the book of Daniel chapter 7, I'm going to look at verses 13 and 14: [Daniel 7:13-14](#):

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. <sup>14</sup> And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. "

Here the central figure is clearly this one that is like unto God, the Son of man. He is being established upon a throne and where is this throne located? Is this an earthly scene or a heavenly scene? What is the direction of the movement depicted here?

Is this Son of man descending to the earth or is he ascending up on high? Well obviously the movement is toward heaven for He is said to have come to the Ancient of days, meaning God the Father, the legions of heaven brought Him into the presence of the Ancient of days and then verse 14 indicates that all people should serve this newly made King whether or not they do but they should.

There is in my opinion a striking correspondence between this and those just looked at New Testament passages. I wonder if the hymn writer might have been drawing inspiration from this Daniel passage when he penned those familiar lines: Crown the saviour, angels crown Him, Rich the trophies Jesus brings, In the seat of power enthrone Him, While the vault of heaven rings.

We are looking at reasons for believing that the long predicted reign of Christ began upon his return to heaven. Those reasons have still not been exhausted, turn with me now to Luke chapter 19 and let's begin reading at verse 12, this is a parable of our Lord he said: [Luke 19:12-15](#): " He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. <sup>13</sup> And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. <sup>14</sup> But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. <sup>15</sup> And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."

And now yet verse 27: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." [Luke 19:27](#).

It was during His absence that these persons have rejected His kingship. In Romans 15 Paul defends the right of Gentiles to hold membership in the church. How does he do it? He quotes repeatedly from the Old Testament, one of those quotes appears in verse 12 ([Romans 15:12](#)) and is the prediction that Christ would rise to reign over the Gentiles. There you have that same sequence, rise to reign. In perfect agreement with all this the Apostle John in [Revelation 1:5](#) identifies Christ as being already Prince of the kings

of the earth, that means their ruler. Likewise in perfect agreement with all this Peter in his first epistle declares that Christ is gone to heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him. [1 Peter 3:22](#)

In first Corinthians 15 it is further stated that He must reign until He has put all enemies under his feet, again implying that He is presently reigning. If then Christ is reigning now it follows that there must be now a kingdom over which He is reigning and indeed there is. In a very significant Old Testament passage we hear these words: In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed and a kingdom shall not be left to other people but it shall break into pieces and can assume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever. [1 Corinthians 15:25](#)

The gospel of the kingdom, you and I ought to be declaring is the good news that through the agency of Jesus Christ God has established that kingdom. Immediately after His temptation Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God saying: The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel. [Mark 1:15](#) Why did he say that? Because that is the condition upon which entrance into the kingdom is granted. The Ministry of Jesus brought the kingdom of God into the midst of the people of Galilee, Judaea and surrounding countries, the sick were healed, the unclean were cleansed, broken lives were mended and devils were cast out, Jesus indicated that all this and more was indicative of the fact that Satan's house was being broken into, his kingdom was being assailed, deliverance is being offered to the captives of Satan, men and women were being translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son. [Colossians: 1:13](#)

The carnally minded, nationalistic minded Jewish contemporaries of Jesus were totally blind to what God was doing right before their eyes, in an attempt to open their eyes Jesus on one occasion said that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom before you. Then already it was happening, the kingdom was being entered then already. Because His kingdom was so misunderstood Jesus found it necessary to tell Pilate: My kingdom is not of this world. [John 18:36](#)

It is still necessary to clarify the nature of Christ's kingdom because at so many points it is not like the kingdoms of this world, it is not nationalistic, it is not naturalistic, it is not materialistic, it is not militaristic and neither is it futuristic only. What then is it? It is Christ reigning now in the hearts of his people, it is that wonderful realm into which sinners are being translated by the grace and power of God.

In this connection I would like to call to your attention an interesting shift that appears in the New Testament. In the gospel accounts you repeatedly come upon this expression, the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, but after you get out of the gospels and into the epistles that expression is very rare, however for the word church the pattern is the reverse of that, in all four gospel accounts the word church appears only twice but then in the remainder of the New Testament it appears more than 100 times. Did you ever wonder about that? What might account for that reversal of an emphasis?

By way of an answer I offer these two observations:

First in the gospels Jesus for the most part was speaking to Jewish people, people who were familiar with Old Testament concepts and terminology, they understood kingdom language. In contrast to that the epistles were addressed to churches that were largely made up of Gentile people who were not Jewish, who did not have that Jewish background.

Secondly I believe that change in terminology is indicative of the fact that the kingdom of God which Jesus came announcing and preaching was receiving its New Testament name, that corresponds with what Jesus did for Peter, He gave Peter another name, a new name, it corresponds to with what happened at Antioch, the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch, some names are interchangeable. Entrance into the Church is equivalent to entrance into the kingdom. [Acts 11:26](#)

Some day, maybe very soon our King is going to return from that far country and then His spiritual kingdom will take on an externally glorious form, indescribably glorious. A man about whom you all know put on record this testimony: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." [2 Timothy 4:18](#)

To have that kind of assurance one needs to enter the kingdom here and now. Have you my friend done that? Have you become by the grace of God a citizen of the kingdom of God, the kingdom that Christ established? If you have not the door into that kingdom is before you now waiting to be entered. Jesus the Prophet, Jesus the Priest, Jesus the King is also the door: By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved. Surely no one should question the credibility of that claim for He is that one like unto whom there is none other, He is the great Prophet who reveals God, the great Priest who redeems man, and the great King who rules a kingdom the like of which there is none other, never was nor ever will be.

Why should any mortal being be ashamed to identify with one so great, Jesus, and shall it ever be; A mortal man ashamed of thee, ashamed of Jesus sooner far less evening blush to own a star, He sheds the beams of light divine for this benighted soul of mine.

Those wise men fell down and worshiped Him and as a part of their worship they gave Him the very best they had, should we not do likewise?

And what is the best we have?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that where a present far too small; Love so amazing, so divine demands to my soul, my life my all.

Are you ready my friends to present to Jesus that gift, that gift of yourself?

Let us pray.



### **Watchmen...Awake**

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence. Isaiah 62:6

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion" (Isaiah 52:1). "Watchman, what of the night?" (Isaiah 21:11). "Awake thou that sleepest" (Ephesians 5:14). These scriptural statements portray the great magnitude and serious consequence of our lesson today. Synonyms for spiritual watchmen are guards, shepherds, prophets, and fathers. Words that indicate the response

required for the situation are careful, diligent, alert, vigilant, observant, and wide-awake.

Sinners are doomed to eternal punishment and must be told of the impending judgments of God. To be true faithful watchmen, we must eat the book (God's Word), and digest it until it becomes a burning fire in our bones (inner man). This burden and compassion for lost souls then turns sweet as honey in our mouth and prepares us to tell the wonderful story of love. The gospel of Jesus Christ must be told.

The books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are rich in instructions for and examples of God's watchmen and shepherds. Ezekiel 34 is a stern reproof to the false shepherds of that day. All spiritual leaders should read this chapter.

Ezekiel was given a roll to eat. This roll symbolized God's Word. Ezekiel was to eat the roll. The Word was to become real and alive to him so he, with sincere conviction and power, could deliver the message to God's people. Many times God's messengers in the Old Testament were reprovved because of only performing a formal function in dispensing their duties.

When John the Revelator ate the book the angel gave him (Rev. 10:8-12), it became bitter in his belly. This symbolizes the burden, weight, and seriousness of the warnings of the judgments of God. Then it became sweet as honey in his mouth. This symbolizes the beauty of God's message and its redemptive effect when it is received into human hearts.

So the roll became as honey for sweetness in Ezekiel's mouth. Now he was prepared to speak to the people. "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears" (Ezek. 3:10). All the words of God were important. Revelation 22:18-19 makes this very clear. If any man adds to His Word, God will add unto him the plagues that are written in His book. If any man takes away from His Words, God will take away his part out of the book of life.

Ezekiel, by the power of the Spirit, sensed the burden of God's message, and without doubt the burden increased when he sat with the captives for seven days. The Lord again confirmed his responsibility as a watchman unto the house of Israel.

God's people were many times a stubborn and rebellious people who would not hear, but the watchman was to be faithful in the commission of

warning. This responsibility and the consequences of faithfulness or unfaithfulness are clearly outlined in God's word to Ezekiel. He desired the people to hear and live, but if they would not, the watchman had delivered his soul.

"Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 29:19). The term "rising up early" is used numerous times in the Old Testament. This shows that God's love and mercy gave ample warnings in opportune times.

Jeremiah 9:1 demonstrates the heart of a true watchman. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." What an awesome responsibility and accountability the watchmen on the walls of Zion have.

This message treats on the solemn and great responsibility of spiritual watchmen. This truth is taught and exemplified in both the Old and New Testaments. Our lesson text and related scriptures clearly show what God expected of His watchmen. Severe judgments were pronounced upon them when they failed in their post of duty. Paul's example in spirit and concern is voiced in Acts 20:19-38. Especially notice verse 27: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Also verse 31: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Easy, rich living seems to hinder us from taking our responsibility seriously; however, this does not lessen our accountability to God and the ones over whom we are to be keepers. The ministerial staff comes into focus first. They need love and compassion for the sheep coupled with a kind firmness that will declare the whole counsel of God. The martyr brethren and our forebears left us a good example of not being permissive or lenient with sin in the camp and of dealing in a loving, redemptive way. How will we be free before God on Judgement Day if our children and grandchildren are lost because the shepherds have neglected to keep the church clean and pure?

Every Christian is to be a watchman. God told Ezekiel in [Ezekiel 3:17-21](#) when He said: <sup>17</sup> Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house

of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. <sup>18</sup> When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. <sup>19</sup> Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. <sup>20</sup> Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. <sup>21</sup> Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

Surely this applies to us today and even more so with a great sense of urgency as we observe the times and the accelerating slide of the world into all forms of depravity and anti-God behaviour.

We all have a post of duty, and a place on the wall to guard. In the very beginning of human history Cain asked the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain surely should have been his brother's keeper. He, as the older brother, had a responsibility for his younger brother's welfare. Instead, in anger he slew his brother and then was very guilty before God. This has a spiritual application. Some brother or sister is younger, less fortunate, has greater struggles or burdens than we have, they need concern, love, and care in a spiritual way from us.

Parents today face a tremendous task and challenge. We are responsible for the welfare and salvation of the children God has given us. To succeed in this responsibility will certainly take a good measure of God's love and grace and a clear vision of the devil's intent to destroy our children. At times it seems an almost impossible charge to keep, but with God's help it is possible to fill our place of duty as parents.

The final and bottom line is eternity. Either heaven or hell awaits every soul. This brings our charge to another dimension. Every minister and dea-

con, brother and sister, father and mother, and youth should ponder this reality. How can we live so we will not come up short and someone's soul will be required of us on the great Judgment Day? Let us put our hand to the plow and not turn back.

Are the warnings and judgements of God sufficiently emphasized today? Probably not as many churches confessing to be Christian are giving in to the spirit of the world and accepting divorce and remarriage. May the words of our Lord be a warning and incentive to us to be wide awake watchmen. Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.



### Love Not the World

*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.* Colossians 3:1-2

What is the "world"? Maybe sometimes we think of people as the world. But the world, as scripture teaches, is a kingdom of which people are only the subjects. The "world" then would be antichrist, or all that would oppose Christ and the Christian. Is it any wonder then, that John, by the inspiration of the Spirit, would say not to love that which would be in direct opposition to Christ? May we, as we study this lesson, honestly answer the question, Where is my love?

1 John 2:15-26 <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. <sup>18</sup> Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. <sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. <sup>20</sup> But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all

things. <sup>21</sup> I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. <sup>22</sup> Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.* <sup>24</sup> Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. <sup>25</sup> And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even eternal life.* <sup>26</sup> These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

All of us want the love of the Father in us. Indeed, we must have the love of the Father in us in order to be saved. However, our text says the lust of the flesh will crowd out the Spirit. Jesus says if any man will come after Him he must deny himself. The lust of the flesh would then be opposed to Christ, or antichrist. How often do we pamper our flesh? We make ourselves as comfortable as possible in our homes, cars, vacations, and even the earning of our livelihood, even to the point where we may put ourselves in financial difficulties. Are we denying ourselves or are we indulging in the lust of the flesh?

To discern the lust of the eye we may need to examine ourselves carefully. Maybe we deny ourselves many fleshly desires but find ourselves coveting a luxurious life and all that goes with it. Do we look on with admiration at those who can take an ocean cruise, drive expensive cars, or build extravagant homes? That too, is the world.

Could the pride of life be a lust for power? We see much of this in the world today. People want to be "boss," and they want recognition. What about us? Do we desire a "position," maybe even in the church so that we might be recognized? Could we as a church have our own "pride of life"? What a blessing that God did not leave us in the dark on these matters but gave us that unction from the Holy One. Let us be keen to that unction.

When a person receives Jesus as his Saviour and is born again, he is made a new creature. Friendships and possessions that he once valued highly now become of secondary importance. There is a new "first love" in his life. He does not need to be told to love God. As he considers that Jesus has forgiven his sins, erased all condemnation, brought him into a free rela-

tionship with God, and given him a bright hope of eternal life, his heart is filled with gratitude toward his Master.

What would cause one to turn from the love of Christ to the love of the world? Paul asks, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" Galatians 4:9. God's Word makes it clear that we choose what or whom we love. Our love will follow our thoughts, activities, and desires. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" Colossians 3:1-2).

Love is something we all possess. But where is our love placed? Our lesson text says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." If Christian life is a life of constant self-denial, could it be that my love is misplaced? If I love the world and its things, I become a martyr to what I consider Christian life. The very life that should be abundant, I find to be painful, full of temptation, and miserable. True, Christian life is a life of self-denial, but if my love is on self or the world and then I still try to deny the very thing upon which my love is fixed, what tremendous conflict I experience. No wonder life is miserable! When my love is fixed on Christ, all that puts our relationship in jeopardy becomes the world.

There are two forces at work today, trying to win our souls. We cannot be our own master, but amazingly enough we have the power to decide who will be. How can it be that between these two powerful forces, God on one side, and Satan on the other, we nonchalantly wonder at times which course we should take?

We might do well to look at our commitment to Christ. Maybe we can compare it to a husband-wife relationship. As a couple, at the marriage altar, we promised without hesitation that we would keep ourselves only unto our spouse as long as we both shall live. We both realize that any person or circumstance that would threaten our relationship would need to be avoided. Suppose your spouse began to develop a close friendship with someone of the opposite sex. As that friendship would deepen, your spouse's love to you would naturally lessen. Now suppose that friend would give your spouse a watch. There would be nothing wrong with the

watch in itself, but because of where it came from you would hate even to look at it. The world is Christ's competition for our love, for our very soul. "For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). If that which is highly esteemed is the world, and the world threatens my relationship with God, does not that begin to answer many questions of "What is wrong with it?"

A Christian husband does not consider it a trial to keep himself only unto his wife. Because he loves her, he does not consider it an undue denying of himself to be faithful to her in all things. Neither does he find it difficult to guard against outside influences that might bid for his love. We hear sometimes that self-denial and nonconformity are legalistic. Is it legalistic to abide by one's marriage vow?

A baptismal vow that merits pondering is, "Are you now resolved to forsake the world with all its lusts, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow the Lord Jesus Christ, being obedient to Him and His Church as long as you live?"

May God bless those vows that we made.



### **Love – The Christian's Banner**

*And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. 2 Thessalonians 3:5*

The title suggests that love is the visible mark that identifies the Christian. Jesus says in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Is our banner still clear and bright, or has it become soiled with the pressures and events of life? Jesus' desire is to draw the world to Himself by the shining example of Christians who love each other. He wants their love to reach out to the people around them. To help or cause us to reexamine our banner of Christian love let's read from the letters of John.

1 John 2:8-11 <sup>8</sup> Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. <sup>9</sup> He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in

darkness even until now. <sup>10</sup> He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup> But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

1 John 3:14-18 <sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. <sup>15</sup> Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. <sup>16</sup> Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of *compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? <sup>18</sup> My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

1 John 4:7-12 <sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. <sup>8</sup> He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 1 John 4:20-21 <sup>20</sup> If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? <sup>21</sup> And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

The Christian way is a new way of life. It is not a reformation of the old way. True Christian love can only issue from a heart that has been changed by a new birth experience. It is not possible for Christian love to radiate from an unregenerate heart. This is truly a new commandment, and this new commandment will lead us into actual deeds of love.

This love will often be expressed in tangible ways. The needs and desires of others will be considered. The dictionary definition of compassion is sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. In a Christian, the realization that everyone has a living soul adds a dimension to compassion that makes it come alive. The world sees Jesus when a Christian expresses the love that is in his heart.

In the text scriptures we are warned not to hate our brother. The dictionary says the feeling of hatred is usually derived from fear, anger, or a sense of injury. Are we struggling with these emotions? Have we allowed them to linger in our hearts? The text scriptures tell us there is no room for hatred in a Christian's heart.

The last verses show us a simple way to measure our love to God. The fact that the First Epistle of John was a letter to the general church and not addressed to a particular group is worthy of consideration. These commandments are for everyone. They work regardless of our station in life. When put to use, they are a blessing in any setting and in any occasion.

It is likely that our love for others is one of the most tested areas in our Christian life. Satan knows that the banner of love is a compelling witness to the world. His work is to magnify all the minor differences among us into things that test our fellowship. By God's grace these tests can cause our love to take on a deeper and richer shine.

Much good can be accomplished as we show love to each other in meaningful ways. The courage of faltering soldiers of the cross can be lifted by very small acts of kindness. Hardened hearts that might rebel against advice or reproof can be reached by acts of love. Confidence can be built up in young people by kindly interest, encouraging them to continue courageously in the Christian fight. A faithful Christian is usually unaware of his own acts of kindness. His love and concern for others is practiced without thought of himself.

Almost every one of us, at some time in our life, has been on the receiving end of an act of kindness. It seemed as if we were unable to rise out of our troubles on our own. Without the loving outreach of our brethren we would have suffered shipwreck, and all that we had striven for would have been lost. God's love reaches out to us through our brother. It may be that a touch on the shoulder or a few kind words will offer enough encouragement to help us through a very dark time.

The story is told of an orphan who asked for an explanation of the meaning of love. The woman who was caring for him found it difficult to give a good definition. So she took the little lad into her arms in a very warm and tender embrace. When she let him go the boy looked up and said, "If that is love, I want more of it." An outward expression of love often needs little explanation.

Another aspect of love is the care that brethren have for each other. Love

is unselfish and puts others first. Spiritual need in someone we love can bring to us a time of soul-searching. We wonder what our responsibility is. Is the need we sense real or just imagined, or is it the way our brother was brought up? Will the Lord be able to reach him, or are we supposed to be a message bearer?

This is a good time to prove the spirit in our own heart. A feeling of aggravation or personal affront usually leads to confrontation instead of winning a person back to the Lord. It is good to be prompt with our concerns but not hasty. Sometimes a day or two of prayer helps us discern the right way to help.

Perhaps the best way is to go and listen to our brother. As we listen we realize we share the same human struggles. Except for the grace of God, we would both go astray. Often the truth kindly spoken in a few words can accomplish our part of the Lord's work. To neglect Jesus' teaching of giving and taking reproof (Matthew 18:15-17) will only result in more sorrow. Love in our hearts helps us to notice the needs of the world around us. Beneath the veneer of gaiety is often sadness and heartache. Broken homes and shattered dreams take a heavy toll in the hearts of men. Life without a personal Savior and without faith in God is difficult. God has work for His children among the troubled people of this world.

Living under the banner of love should start early in life. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" Matthew 22:37-40. Spiritual depth gained early in life is a blessing that yields rewards throughout life.

May God bless us as we practice this commandment in everyday life. It is not a commandment only, but a way of living that adds joy to our own life and to the lives of others. Even though "no man hath seen God at any time," a reflection of Christ is seen in the life of the obedient Christian.



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