

Beware friends. It may be "another testament" they bring, but it is NOT the testament of Jesus Christ!

Heaven-Centered Thinking

By B.J. Clarke

OH, how we need more heaven-centered minds! Many have forgotten that this world is not our home and that we're just passing through. Carnal-mindedness is rampaging across our land and it has even filtered into the Lord's body. So many are so wrapped up in the cares and affairs of this life that they have made little or no preparation for the next life. The Holy Scriptures constantly emphasize the need for heaven-centered thinking and living. Paul said, "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 earth" (Col. 3:1,2). The Colossians needed to revamp their thinking to be more heaven centered rather than earth-centered. A similar admonition fell from the lips of our Lord in his Mount Olivet discourse, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

In spite of the plain declaration of the preceding pas-

sages, a mad dash to accumulate earthly treasures has relegated laying up heavenly treasures to a place of secondary importance. When will we ever realize the futility of setting our affections upon a place that is temporal in nature? Peter reminded his readers of the certainty of Christ's coming and the attendant consequences. When the day of the Lord comes, the heavens will pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all of its works will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10). Peter then asked a question that we would do well to soberly examine. He said, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness..." (2 Pet. 3:11).

In other words, since the earth and all within it is going to someday be annihilated, should you be earth centered or heaven-centered in your thinking? Oh, how we need to emulate and imitate the heaven-centered thinking of the heroes of faith chronicled in Hebrews 11. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth (Heb. 11:13). They desired a better country, that is, an heavenly country (Heb. 11:16). They realized that here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come (Heb. 13:14). Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10). It was heaven-centered thinking that prompted Moses to choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25). Heaven-centered thinking explains why some were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35ff).

Likewise, heaven-centered thinking will enable us to remember to love not the world, neither the things that are in the world (1 John 2:15). Let us never forget that "the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:17).

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Schedule of Services

Sunday—9:30am
Wednesday—7:00pm

Evangelistic Efforts

Dubuque Advertiser &
TV Program

"The Bible Says"

Public Access
Cable Channel 16
Mon. & Thurs. @ 8:30pm
Tues. @ 2:30pm
Fri. @ 9:00am

Steps to Salvation

1. Hear the Word (Rom. 10:17)
2. Believe (Heb. 11:1,6)
3. Repent (Lk. 13:3)
4. Confess (Matt. 10:32-33)
5. Baptism (1 Pet. 3:21)
6. Remain Faithful (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:14)

IS OUR WORSHIP RIGHT WHEN OUR HEARTS ARE WRONG?

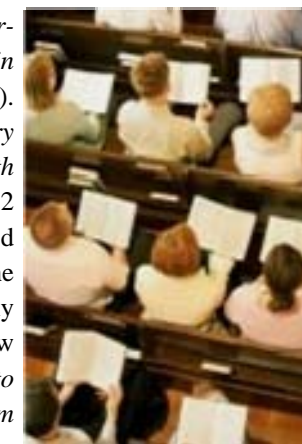
by Jimmie B. Hill

"Our worship is not wanted by God if it comes while we are holding a grudge and unwilling to go the second mile in order to make things right with our brother."

WORSHIP, in the church of our Lord, is one of the highest functions of which we are capable. It certainly must not be entered into lightly. Our worship to God must be done according to the truth of God's word and with a proper heart. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit. and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). Similarly Paul wrote, "every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give" (2 Cor. 9:7). The word "purposeth" here is from the Greek proaireo and is used only in this verse in the Greek New Testament. Its meaning is "to bring forward, bring forth from one's stores; to bring forth for one's self; to choose for one's self before another, i.e., to prefer; to purpose." There are two primary thoughts given in this word, namely, that we are to reflect seriously on the

amount we are giving and, that no one else can do this reflecting for us. The amount we give and the spirit in which we give it are to be determined by the following conditions in the verse, that is, "...not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." This principal can be aptly applied to all other facets of our work for and worship to our God.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). The Law of Moses encouraged the Jews to bring voluntary gifts to the altar to be consecrated to the Lord. This act was to show how much the giver was devoted to the Lord. These gifts were expected to proceed from the pure heart. However, if one refused to make a matter right with a brother who had a complaint against him, such a gift would be considered no more than mere



ritual. Ritualistic service to God can not be a substitute for humility and brotherly kindness.

Therefore, the command was given to postpone the altar service until he had made

things right with his brother. What is the principle that our Lord gives here? The quality of the gift is determined by the quality of the giver. Or, the acceptability of any act of worship is determined by the acceptability the worshiper. Our gestures of worship are meaningless unless our hearts are right with God and our brethren! The principle of John 4:24 and Matthew 5:23-24 is also found in Isaiah 1:11: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats." The Lord was asking Israel, "What do you think you will gain by your sacrifices?"

All of the items in this verse were commanded under the Law of Moses and were not innovations that were brought in by Israel. They had, however, become unacceptable to God because Israel had become so corrupt and sinful. They were doing what the truth demanded, in a sense, but their heart was not right. We have this lesson powerfully enforced by the prophet Micah. In the middle of a heated controversy with the Lord, Israel says, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul" (Mic. 6:6-7)?

Note that Israel asked the questions and then gave the appropriate answers. The things mentioned would have normally been acceptable but because of their corruption they knew they were not. Then we see the ignorance and arrogance of Israel as they go beyond what is expected by inquiring of the Lord concerning thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of oil. This is such an extravagant offering that only a king could bring such. Surely the Lord would be impressed. And they do not stop there. They then inquire about the offering of their firstborn thinking that not even Jehovah would doubt the sincerity of such a sacrifice. But the Lord responds through Micah, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Mic. 6:8).

Not even the sacrifice of a firstborn child is an ample substitute for genuine honesty, kindness, and humility. Again, the acceptability of the gift is determined by the acceptability of the giver. Our worship is not wanted by god if it comes while we are holding a grudge and unwilling to go the second mile in order to make things right with our brother. Sanctimony cannot cover up an unsanctified soul. Our God guards His altar against a profane spirit presuming to make up in worship what is lacking in humility and love. Our Lord has stressed the seriousness of right relationships. Our conscience may be clear. Any misunderstanding may be wholly on the part of the other. He may or may not have the cause for the unwholesome attitude. However, it is the duty of the worshiper to go and try to make reconciliation. The gift (our worship) should be left at the altar until we first be reconciled to our brother (Matt. 5:24).

Our worship is not right when our hearts are wrong.

Some Bible Fools

by Johnny Ramsey

IN the Scriptures the term "fool" refers to one who is guilty of moral folly. It is truly a serious matter to fall into the category of folk who turn their back upon God to follow their own manner of life. Shallow people who emphasize carnal values instead of the eternal verities are foolish indeed. King Saul admitted: "I have played the fool" (1 Sam. 26:21) due to his envy toward David. Such emotions result in a "rotteness of the soul" (Prov. 14:30).

In Jude 11 we read of three men overwhelmed in iniquity due to foolish decisions: "Woe unto them! For they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah." Cain, who hated his brother, allowed his jealousy to lead him to murder (Gen. 4:1-8). Balaam ran toward ruin due to an inordinate desire for wealth that produced imbalance in life (Num. 22). Korah yearned for honor and prestige and persisted due to his shameful folly (Num. 16:1ff). Jesus clearly taught that those who build their hopes on mundane matters are destined to crumble into dust. Only those who courageously stand strong for truth and spiritual values will endure when storms of life are raging. It's one thing to be counted as "fools for Christ's sake" (1 Cor. 4:10), by worldly people, but it is altogether different to be fools in the sight of God.

In Luke 12 we read of a man whom the world would praise for successful business acumen, but one whom the savior called "a fool" for his wrong priority system. Another well-known Bible fool is the one mentioned in Psalm 14:1: "The fool saith in his heart, there is no God." Those who praise the orderliness of the universe and the delicate balance of gravity, light and heat that keep life upon our planet safe and secure surely know such precision rules out chance. It is absurd to believe in atheism and evolution, but many pompous folk deny the obvious due to an arrogant bias based on pseudo-intellectualism. Several times in the Proverbs, we read of foolish children who disobey parents, and such disobedience results in chaos and rebellion and sorrow in the home. Many broken homes cry for respect for authority in God's earliest plan - marriage!

Many are foolish with concern for riches, as the Scriptures point out: "We brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content. But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6:7-10). Job and Solomon both realized the vanity of worldly possessions, and so should we: "I gathered me also silver and gold...so I was great, and increased more than all that were before me...then I looked on all the works that my

hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and behold, all was vanity and vexation of the spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Ecc. 2:8-11). A fool and his money soon shall part, but the value of truth endures forever.

One of the better-known verses on our subject of Bible fools is Proverbs 14:9: "Fools make a mock of sin." Indeed, just as wicked men laughed Jesus to scorn (Mk. 5:40), so do shallow folk today count abomination a slight matter (Ezek. 8:17) rather than a tragedy. Even in the church of our Lord we find members who flirt with error, wink at sin and laugh at preachers who still courageously denounce worldliness.

Matthew 25:3 tells us of the foolish virgins who most unwisely were unprepared to meet the Lord. They represent myriads through the centuries that were wise in earthly pursuits but fools in the spiritual realm. The door will be forever shut to such derelicts toward the divine mandates that emanate from heaven (Matt. 25:10). Better for them had they "never been born" (Mk. 14:21) than to miss out in the Day of Judgment. When we realize the beauty of salvation, we are foolish to delay, even for a moment, our obedience to Jesus.

The love of the Lord that drove Him to the cross, on our behalf, ought to create a gracious response in our hearts. Truly, Christ bore it all that we might live in glory forever more. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!



Another Testament?

By Tom Wacaster

THEY were very well dressed, and when they knocked on my door they asked if they could tell me of "another testament" that Jesus gave to men. Their offer puzzled me, since I did not recall any mention of "another testament" promised by either Jesus or the apostles. In fact, my Bible clearly teaches that the "faith" that was delivered to that first century church through the hands of the apostles was "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). A little study helped me to understand that Jude actually told us that "the faith" (*the Gospel*) was "once and for all delivered to the saints." In like manner Peter has told us that God's "divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus told the twelve apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth (John 16:13).

Why, then, would we need "another testament" such as that offered by these two "elders" now standing at my door? The answer is simple. We **DO NOT** need "another testament." In fact, if any man, or even an angel, were to "preach unto you any gospel other than that which we [*the apostles*, TW] preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Galatians 1:8). If their "other testament" contains **MORE** than my New Testament, it contains too much. If it contains any **LESS** than my New Testament, it contains too little. If it contains **EXACTLY** what my New Testament contains, then why would I need it?

Remember in Prayer

Special Prayers

- Garry Williams (David's brother)—kidney problems
- Raylyna Johnson—kidney problems
- Our new evangelism effort
- Lyra Grochmal (7 yrs)—spine cancer— more tumors are growing
- Laurie Davis—Multiple Sclerosis
- Wade Miller—diabetes
- Susan Noel— that she studies to understand God
- Russell Bender— that he studies to understand God
- Freeman Dudley—liver cancer
- Kaiser family
- Jones family
- Walker family
- Brother Odum (Abilene)—COPD
- Cody Ledesma—Drug Rehab
- Eric Boor—blood disease
- Rockfalls church of Christ
- Platteville church of Christ
- TV Program
- State of our Nation
- The closing of Planned Parenthood
- The church
- The erring & the Lost

Evangelizing the World

- Garret Derouin—Webster, Wisc.
- Scott Nedland—Rice Lake, Wisc.
- Brian Sherrell—LaCrosse, Wisc.
- Bernie Guzman—Philippines
- Fred Rhodes—Newton, Iowa
- Johnny Robertson— Martinsville, Vir
- James Oldfield—Riedsville, NC
- Derrick Brown —Jamaica
- Gary Workman—Ukraine
- Kolakaluri Prasad—Nalgonda, Dist., India
- G. Prabhu Kumar—Chennai, India
- John O'Neal—India & Ghana
- Tom Wacaster—India & Russia
- Holger Neubauer—South Haven, Michigan
- Ernie Lawrence—Hutto, Texas

Military

- Chip O'Neal—Afghanistan
- Jonathan Duckstein—Afghanistan
- Michael Chlamon—Ft. Drum, NY
- Daniel Heflin—Afghanistan
- Jason Cunningham—Stateside
- Jon McCain—Tech Training
- Military families who are coping while loved ones in harms way