

American Immortality

By Al Distelkamp

If we can believe the opinion polls which have dominated the news in recent days, the vast majority of Americans have become apathetic toward the problems of immorality. Behavior which was once recognized as immoral has come to be viewed as acceptable.

It is our belief that God, as our Creator, has the right to declare something to be right or wrong. When He does so, it is our responsibility to honor His word on the matter. God has not remained silent on the subject of sexuality. Listen to what His word says: "Marriage is honorable among all, the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

Americans once listened to God on this subject. Since the so-called "sexual revolution" the conscience of America has been seared to such an extent that when we dare to point out God's condemnation of sexual immorality we are ridiculed as prudish, judgmental or suffering from some form of phobia.

There is no doubt that God has greatly blessed our nation, but it would be a mistake for America to take those

blessings for granted. The Old Testament is filled with examples of God blessing nations as long as they furthered the cause of righteousness, but later bringing down those same nations when they persisted in wickedness.

God ordained governments for our good (Rom 13:1-7) and said our leaders are "sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good" (1 Pet. 2:13-14). Our government is developing a pattern of doing just the opposite-praising evil and punishing those who do good. God has a warning about this too: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil..." (Isa. 5:20).

America has been famous for its pride. The time has come for America to be ashamed! "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a shame to any people" (Prov. 14:34).



Classes This Week

Tuesday 8:00 PM Truth-seekers Campus Study in Room 2225 in Student Center	Thursday 10 AM Ladies Class on "Women of the Bible" at the Rouses	Thursday 7 PM Men's Class at Walker Davis' on Elders and Deacons	Saturday Night Classes 6-8 PM - 1st-5th Grade at TBA 6:30-8:30 - 6th-12th Grade at the Daniel's
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Sick

Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom)	Jim Trull (Phillip Box's grandfather)	Mark Dean (Father of Logan Dean)	Jerry Foropoulos (Anna Jean's Uncle)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Bob Cannon (Friend of Holly Law)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Amy Baswell Hall	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	John Marvin Rhodes (Toni Herd's cousin)
Toni and William Herd	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkins' Dad)	Toni and William Herd	Austin Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Grandfather)

March Birthdays

- 1-Amanda Cagle
- 2-Maddie Norman
- 2-Chase Harrison
- 2-Bryan Golden
- 2-Angela Fowler
- 2-Elizabeth Barham
- 3-Shaun Oliver
- 5-Sophie Borden
- 7-Josh Pender
- 7-Lily Walton
- 8-Carmen Herd
- 10-Pepper Humphrey
- 10-Parker Godwin
- 11-Beky Harris
- 12-Brad Hartsell
- 17-Susan Sullivanne
- 18-MaKenzie Anderson
- 18-Victoria Holland
- 18-Alaina Barham
- 20-Jimmy Roberts
- 21-Carter Hunt
- 21-Rachel Bobo
- 22-Will Hollis
- 27-Shelby Freeman
- 27-Roxie Rodriguez
- 29-Rachel Simpson
- 29-Makenzie Reynolds
- 30-Amanda Stephens
- 30-York Smith

News and Notes

- ☒ - Lets keep in our prayers our expectant mothers, Laura Humphrey, Nichole Pender and Jana Hall!
- ☒ - Larry and Joanneta Lauderdale have identified with the University church!
- ☒ - We rejoice in the baptisms of Latisha Redmon and Jasvir Singh Grewal.
- ☒ - This year's VBS will be June 8-11. VBS topic: "Heroes of the NT"
- ☒ - Wishing all the senior vet students well as they leave soon for their preceptorships: Mason Chandler, Leah Donahue and Justin Padgett.
- ☒ - We have two websites for your consideration: www.aubeacon.com and www.auchurch.com. Share these sites with your friends and neighbors.

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Reason and Revelation

By Jerry C. Ray



Thoughts to Ponder

And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak

(2 Corinthians 4:13)

Elders
Walker Davis
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

It is vitally important to understand the proper relationship between reason and revelation. The skeptics, in ridiculing Christianity as a religion of faith, define faith as "believing in some- thing you know is not so." But this is incorrect. The Bible is a book of evidence. It was written by men who knew Christ, who saw him work miracles, and who beheld him after his resurrection, and by contemporaries of these eyewitnesses.

The skeptic's mistake lies in his misunderstanding of the proper role of reason. Reason does not determine the plausibility or lack of plausibility of the evidence. Reason's function is to judge the merits of the evidence and determine their worth. The skeptic says, "I do not believe Jesus arose from the dead. It doesn't seem reasonable, because I've never seen or heard of any such thing happening in my lifetime." Thus reason is misused, and one's own personal experience becomes the standard. Let me illustrate this point:

1. Does it seem reasonable that the Egyptians three thousand years ago, without the benefits of modern science, research, and knowledge, could embalm bodies so that remains are extant now? Yet, such is the case.
2. Does it seem reasonable, or possible that man unaided by modern machinery and architectural knowledge, could have built the gigantic pyramids of Egypt?

But evidence cannot be set aside because it does not coincide with our idea of what is "reasonable." Christians are perfectly willing to let the Bible be examined upon this basis as would be the case in a court of law inquiring into the authenticity and veracity of any ancient document.

3. Or had you lived a hundred years ago, would you have believed that one-day man would fly in machines heavier than air? Or that human voices could be transmitted through the air for hundreds of miles by means of radio? Or that images could be transmitted across the United States, and now even to Europe by something called television?

4. Even the courts of law recognize this truth: "The law cannot permit clear and unimpeachable evidence to be set aside on the basis that it does not coincide with the lack of experience of the object- or." (Rimmer, The New Testament and the Laws of Evidence, p. 111.)

Perhaps you remember the supposedly true story of the man's reply to the charge that his views were "incredible":

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"Mr. Chairman, I cannot allow my opponent's ignorance, however vast, to offset my knowledge, however limited." And who hasn't heard the joke about the lawyer whose client was accused of stealing chickens. To offset the opposition's star witness who had seen the defendant steal the chickens, the lawyer produced one hundred witnesses who had not seen him steal the chickens!

I trust that this will cause you to see that "reason" is not the final court of appeal. The function of reason is not to determine the plausibility or lack of plausibility, but to examine the evidence. Belief, then, is the result of honest examination of the evidence, which evidence is sufficiently strong to merit acceptance. Unbelief is the result of the weakness of the evidence, or of a failure to honestly examine the same. But evidence cannot be set aside because it does not coincide with our idea of what is "reasonable." Christians are perfectly willing to let the Bible be examined upon this basis as would be the case in a court of law inquiring into the authenticity and veracity of any ancient document.

"How Do I Know?"

The skeptic might reply that it is just the Bible's word against his as to whether the things written are so. (This is the attitude manifested today by many who say, "How do I know these things happened? How do I know that John or Peter or Matthew didn't just make up these things?")

But it is not just the skeptic's word against the Bible because the Bible has the weight of over 1900 years on its side. This book was written by men who were contemporaries of Christ and this book was published abroad during the time and among the people who could examine the writings and the men and certainly could have discredited the book if it were not true. The very fact that the book was in circulation during the time when there were many eyewitnesses to the events recorded is of the greatest amount of weight in favor of its reliability.

As brother James D. Bales (Miracles or Mirages, pp. 29-30) has pointed out, there are actually some lines of proof that are stronger today than they were in the days of the first converts: 1. The argument from the spread of Christianity under the conditions and by the means by which it was propagated; 2. The argument from the influence of Christ as testified to by about 2000 years of history and experience; 3. The argument from the fulfillment of certain prophecies and statements, which were not fulfilled as completely and definitely in their day as in ours (Examples.

John 8:12, Jesus is the light and life of the world; the great apostasy of the church; prophecies spoken by Christ); 4. The argument from the fact that after 2000 years of thought and action, no one has been able to surpass the teaching and life of Jesus Christ.

So to the person who says the New Testament writers made up these things concerning Christ, I say, "Where is your proof. You say it is so, you must have a reason and proof for such statements. Prove it." As stated in law, "When documents purporting to come from antiquity and bearing upon their face no evident marks of forgery, are found in the proper repository, the law considers such documents to be authentic and genuine, and the burden of proof to the contrary devolves upon the objector." (Rimmer, p. 19.)

Now, upon what basis can this skeptic prove his case and overthrow the Bible. 1. He can bring forth new evidence that proves the falsity of the Bible. This has not been done. To the contrary, all new evidence produced by archaeology has only further proved the reliability of the Biblical record. All alleged discrepancies between the Bible and the Sciences, which have been settled by further evidence, have been settled in favor of the Bible.

2. He can discredit the witnesses (the writers of the Bible.) The weight of the testimony of the witnesses depends upon (1) their honesty, (2) their ability, or competence, (3) their number and consistency of their testimony, (4) the conformity of their testimony with experience, and (5) the coincidence of their testimony with collateral circumstances.

There is not a man living who can produce proof that discredits the Bible or the witnesses (Writers of the Bible.) Until such time as such proof is forthcoming, the burden of proof lies squarely upon the person who assumes, without proof, that the Bible is not correct.

Now back to our original line of study. The only point at which the skeptic can even begin to make a case would be on "(4) the conformity of their testimony with experience." But, as Rimmer puts it, "if seven men testified they had seen a lion in the back alleys of a city, their word would carry more weight in court than that of seven hundred men who testified that they had not seen one! All the writers of the New Testament record the fact that they had seen miracles performed by God Almighty when He walked the earth in the days of His flesh." (p. 111.)

Christian, let no one destroy your faith in God's Word.

Truth Magazine - October 1962



Making Difficult Decisions

By Steve Klein

Daily life presses us to make decisions. Many are fairly inconsequential, but some have far-reaching ramifications for ourselves and our loved ones. Choices regarding employment, marriage and a place of residence will greatly impact the story of one's life. The local church to which a Christian joins himself may, over the course of a life time, be the difference between making it to heaven's rest or falling short of it (cf. **Hebrews 4:1**). Just think of the spiritual peril one would have put himself in by deciding to become a member of the church at Laodicea and allowing himself to be influenced by their attitudes (cf. **Revelation 3:14-19**). Other significant life decisions may relate to choosing friends, disciplining children, and participating in civic or social activities.

Such decisions are important. The thoughtful, mature Christian will see the significance of these decisions, but he will not allow the difficulty involved in making them to detract from the joy he has in Christ. I have observed (and the Bible reveals) that there are three practical steps successful Christians regularly take when faced with difficult decisions.

#1 They Pray

God is ready and willing to hear the requests of His children (**1 John 5:14-15**). The apostles relied on Him in making the difficult decision regarding who would replace Judas (**Acts 1:24**). No matter what hard decision confronts us today, we may still, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 4:6-7**).

#2 They Consider the best and worst scenarios

When faced with the choice of living or dying, the apostle Paul recognized that either scenario was good and would please him. To live on was needful for others and would mean increased fruit for his labor, but to "depart and be with Christ" would be "far better" (**Philippians 1:23**). Sometimes in life the "worst that could happen" is something we could tolerate if our attitude is right. If we, like Paul, believe that the most important outcome of any decision is how it affects our relationship with Christ and His

cause, then we will realize that all the alternative outcomes of some decisions are acceptable.

#3 They Determine Pro's and Con's Based on Scripture!

God's word is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (**Psalms 119:105**). It is the most practical tool there is for making life's decisions. In it God has provided for the Christian "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (**2 Peter 1:3**). While a few decisions Christians may face are not specifically addressed in scripture, many are! Those that are not specifically addressed are often addressed in principle. The wise decision-making Christian will take all of the truth that applies to his situation and use it to make his decision. He will not make a decision based on what feels good to him or what he likes best. Rather, he will rely upon God's word to make the determination. Specifically, before a decision is made, he will have considered (1) whether or not any option he could choose would hinder his obedience to Christ and (2) whether or not any option he could choose would adversely affect the spiritual condition of others. Even a choice which would not lead oneself into sin may be "a stumbling block to those who are weak" (**1 Corinthians 8:9, 13**).

Sadly, there are not a few Christians who fail miserably at making difficult decisions precisely because they do not follow these steps. Often it happens that these individuals will seek advice from others for making tough decisions. When you ask them, "Have you prayed about it?" the answer is, "No, I didn't think about doing that!" Ask them, "Have you considered what God's word says about it?" and you might hear, "Oh, I didn't even know the Bible said anything about it!"

Proverbs 3:5-6 instructs us to "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." The wisdom of an all-knowing God is at our disposal to help us make difficult decisions. We must trust in Him and avail ourselves of it.

