

Be on Guard for Yourselves and For all the Flock

9- The Danger of Modern-Day Heresies

March 7, 2021

Ephesians 2:10-16

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands—

12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

To the Glory of God

Now as I told you on the first Lord's Day of 2021- God has burdened my heart to take a short "vacation" from our "journey" through the **Epistle of James** to begin this new year by preaching through a series of Sermons on the Danger of Heresies. And we see the great Danger of Heresies because of what Jude wrote:

Jude 3&4

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the

grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now as we discovered, Heresy attacks the “Essential Truth” of the Bible. And so, the Danger of Heresy is that, if a person *understands* the Heresy and *believes* it- that person is NOT saved. Because every individual, who is genuinely saved, MUST understand and agree with- Essential Truth. And this is what Jude was talking about when he wrote about the “Common Salvation” in verse 3. All, who are genuinely saved- MUST be in “one mind and one accord” with Essential Truth.

And then, we also discovered that Heresy can’t be killed. It is a Belief; a Teaching- and so, even though the Christian Church SHOULD confront it; defeat it; and cast it out- sadly, Heresy will simply go somewhere else; and deceive somebody else. And so, we must be ever vigilant in equipping the saints of each succeeding generation- about the Dangers of Heresy.

Now by what Jude wrote in verse 4- we see that there always have been and there always will be, “certain persons”, who will creep into the Church “unnoticed”; who have been “long beforehand marked out for this Condemnation”. And these certain persons will be “ungodly persons”, who attack the Orthodoxy of biblical Christianity along two main lines:

1. The Grace of God
2. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

Now even though there are literally *hundreds* of Heresies on the earth today- there are really only seven major “roots” or “origins” of all the False Teachings that exist today. And those seven major roots are:

1. Legalism
2. Lawlessness (Antinomianism)
3. Gnosticism
4. Modalism
5. Arianism
6. Pelagianism
7. Socinianism

... and interestingly enough- all seven of these major Roots- attack either the Grace of God or the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the first three heretical Roots (Legalism; Lawlessness; and Gnosticism) first occurred while the Books of the New Testament were still in production. And

so, the Apostles themselves defended the Faith against these “Doctrines of Demons”.

But it wasn’t long before the next three major Heresies began to deceive people. And by the end of the 5th Century- six of the seven major roots of all false Teaching had been confronted by the Leaders of the Church; defeated by Scripture alone; and formally and officially declared to be heretical. And the seventh Heresy- “Socinianism”- was brought forth on the heels of the Protestant Reformation back in the 16th Century.

So, now, as we continue to strive to obey what Jude was “moved” to tell us- and we...

... contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

... we come to some very horrible Teachings that have popped up in the last hundred years or so- that I think need to be examined. So, I would like us to look again at what the Apostle Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:14-16**.

**14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,
15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,
16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.**

Now I want your eyes to look at several phrases in this Passage like:

- **Who made both groups into one**
- **[Who] broke down the barrier of the dividing wall**
- **So that in Himself He might make the two into one new man**
- **[So He] might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross**

Now the language here is unmistakable. Paul is speaking about two different groups of people- who are normally divided. So, the first Question we need to ask is, “*Why?*” Why are these two groups divided? And then we read that “in”, “by”, and “through” Salvation in Jesus Christ- those two groups are united together.

Now on a shallow reading- most people understand that the two groups Paul speaks about here are:

1. Jews
2. Gentiles

... and so, there is a natural division between them. And Paul gives us the reasons for this Division in verses 11&12:

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands—

12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

... so, three things:

1. Circumcision
2. The “Commonwealth of Israel”
3. The Covenants of Promise

...helped to cause this Division.

So, Jews were circumcised; and Gentiles were not. Jews also had what Paul called, the “Commonwealth of Israel”- which refers to the “*Kingdom of Israel*” established under King David- which was a true Theocracy” where, originally, God Himself was their King; and His Laws and Will were carried out and adjudicated by a collection of godly Judges. The Gentiles did not have anything like this. And God had also given the Jews several different Covenants that contained Divine Promises- such as:

- The Abrahamic Covenant
- The Mosaic Covenant
- The Davidic Covenant

... which none of the Gentiles had.

So, these things (along with several other things) are what made the Jews “holy” or “separate” or “set apart” or “unique” among all the Gentile peoples of the world. And these three characteristics *supposedly* gave the Jew a “leg-up” on the rest of the world in regard to a relationship with God.

But in actuality- that was never true. Because God saves sinners by way of “Sovereign Election”- which is entirely “Unconditional”. So, no human has any “better” or “higher” quality about themselves that would make them attractive to

God; or that would cause God to favor them over anyone else. God chooses to “set His Love” on unworthy rebels- for no other reason than He chose to do so. So, God chooses who to save (and who to leave to themselves) *before* those people are born; and *before* they have done anything “Good” or “Bad”. And God did it that way- so that He alone would get all the Glory.

Now Paul also includes two other characteristics in this Passage- that is common with ALL humans born of woman- Jew or Gentile. He told the people of the Church at Ephesus that, before they were saved- they were:

1. **Separate from Christ**
2. **Having no hope and without God in the world**

... which is just two ways of saying the same thing.

You see, being “separated from Jesus Christ” (Lost) is what *causes* people to be without any, “**hope and without God in the world**”. So, ALL lost people are separate from Jesus- at the very moment of their Conception. And because they are entirely separate from Jesus- ALL lost people also have “**no Hope**” (in themselves); and as a result of this- they are also “**without God in the world**”.

But what we need to understand is that this is true about ALL lost people- both lost Jews as well as lost Gentiles.

Now the context where is that Paul was giving all five of these characteristics to the people of the Church that was at Ephesus around AD 60-62 when he wrote this Book. And he was giving this to them to *encourage* them; and to show them all that God had done for them in Salvation through Jesus.

But for the purpose of this Sermon this morning- I am going to bypass the two characteristics that are common with ALL lost people- and concentrate only on the three characteristics that have to do with only the Jews.

The Jews were circumcised. They had the “sign” of the Covenant in the flesh of their foreskin. And this served to make the Jew- “holy” or “set-apart” from everyone else. The Jew also had a theocratic Kingdom- which also served to make them and even their entire nation- “holy” or “unique” or “set-apart” from everyone else. And, finally, Paul says that the Jews had the “Covenants of Promise”- which also served to make the Jews “holy” or “different” from everyone else.

Now the fact that God had given the Jew so much and had done so much for them- was *supposed* to cause the Jew to be “holy”- NOT merely in the sense that they were “different” from the Gentile world- but to demonstrate that they had been chosen by God to be “set-apart” for God’s *use*; and for God’s Glory; and to make God look magnificent.

But instead- these characteristics made the Jews, who were not saved- to be Arrogant; and Self-righteous; and Condescending to the rest of the world. So, instead of making them humble- the unsaved Jew- took the glorious Truth about Sovereign Election as a means to sin with impunity; and to live their lives according to the dictates of their own hearts. And as a result of this- the Gentile world *despised* the Jews and the nation of Israel. Look at what **Psalm 106:41&42** says:

Then He [God] gave them [the Jew] into the hand of the [Gentile] nations, And those who hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, And they were subdued under their power.

Now keep in mind- the Jews and their Nation were NOT hated because of their love for God. They weren't despised by the Gentile nations of the world because of their great godliness and their Humility and their radical Acts born of Love. No, the world hated the Jew because God had put this Enmity into their hearts- so that *some* of these lost and unsaved Gentile nations- would come and subjugate the nation of Israel and act as a means of breaking the staff of their Pride and of causing them to repent and return to God.

But, outside of the few men mentioned in the Bible like Daniel- the lost Jews did NOT repent. They did NOT "return back to God"- because many of the lost Jews had never been with God to begin with. So, those people NEVER saw the corrective Hand of God. They NEVER understood that God wanted to humble them. They NEVER accepted the fact that they had sinned against God and that God was bringing corrective Judgment against them.

These unsaved Jews didn't pray that God would forgive them. They didn't think that ANYTHING they did was needing Forgiveness. Instead, they prayed that God would judge their Gentile overlords and give them Peace and Safety again- like they had under King David. And the more the Gentile nations ruled over them- the worse this Problem was.

So, as the Centuries went on- the hatred between Jew and Gentile grew- *exponentially*. And as their hatred grew- the Division between them also grew. And this culminated in the 1st Century- as Jesus was born. At that time- the Jew seethed in their hatred of the Romans, who ruled them without Mercy. And the Romans reciprocated this hatred. So, the Jew was routinely humiliated and beaten.

For example, it was common, for a Jew, who was walking down the street with his wife, to be stopped by a Roman soldier and humiliated in front of his wife and children. The pagan Roman would slap the Jewish man on his face; and he would forcefully rip the Jew's coat off him and take it for himself. The Roman

would walk alongside of the Jew- whispering blasphemy in his ear- daring him to respond- so the soldier could kill him.

Several times during the Roman occupation of Israel- the pagans went into the Jewish Temple and desecrated it by urinating on the altar; sacrificing pigs; and stealing the holy things to use for their drunken orgies. And all this did- was to cause the hatred and the division and the enmity between Jew and Gentile to rise and become worse and worse.

Yet the Jew would NOT humble himself. And so, when Jesus preached the “Sermon on the Mount”- in **Matthew 5:38-48**- He specifically mentioned these things.

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.'

39 But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

40 If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

41 Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

42 Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'

44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

48 Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Now today, even the lost recognize this Sermon by Jesus to be the greatest Teaching in the history of the world. But back then- the Jew didn't appreciate what Jesus was saying at all. Instead- they saw Jesus was being an “appeaser” with the enemy- which, without doubt- put the incarnate God in the category of being “Evil”. Surely, if Jesus was the Messiah, He would have begun to energize the Jewish masses to rise up and revolt against the “pagan occupiers”.

So, by the 1st Century, the religion of the Pharisees had nothing to do with any effort of being obedient to the inspired Old Testament. So, in “the name of” trying to get the people to return to God and to be holy- the Pharisees had created

their own religion- that had nothing to do with the 39 Books of the Old Testament. And so, instead of teaching the people to be humble; and to repent; and to cry out to God for Mercy- the religion of the Pharisees sought to accomplish only one thing: to recapture their ethnic “Jewishness”.

Now how do I know this is true? How do I know that the average Jew of the 1st Century was a “spiritual Gentile” and was NOT chosen by God? Because of the fact that average Jew did not immediately recognize Jesus and turn to Him for Salvation. But a few did.

Luke 2:21-35

21 And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),

24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."

25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;

30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

32 A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."

33 And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed—

35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

Now *when* did Simeon do all of this? When Jesus was eight days old! So, *before* Jesus ever preached a single Sermon; *before* He performed a single Miracle; *before* He was crucified; and *before* Jesus rose from the dead- Simeon KNEW that this eight-day old baby was the promised Messiah! How did he know that? God sovereignly revealed it to him. This is what Sovereign Election looked like before the production of the 27 Books of the New Testament. Simeon was chosen by God- and as a result- he recognized Jesus. And in verses 29- 32, Simeon said,

"Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Simeon said he could now die in peace- because he knew that the eight-day old baby Jesus was, "**Your [God's] Salvation**". And then he said

Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel.

So, in addition to Simeon knowing that Jesus was God's Salvation- he also knew two other things:

1. That Jesus- NOT the vanquishing of the Roman pagans- was the "**glory of Your people Israel**".
2. And Jesus was **A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES**

Now if *anyone* should have maintained the Old Covenant- it was Simeon. He was a very old man when he saw the baby Jesus. And he had lived his entire life underneath the Levitical Priesthood; the sacrificing of animals; and the Sanhedrin Court. It's all he ever knew. And yet, as he watched a poor but devout couple bring their baby to be circumcised and dedicated to God (which he had no doubt seen many times before)- Simeon KNEW this was the Messiah. And he worshipped the baby and called Him, "God's Salvation".

This is what it looks like for a Jew, who lived his entire life under the inferior Old Covenant- to be chosen to believe on Jesus. And then there was Anna:

36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of

**Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,
37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.
38 At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.**

Dr. Luke included the Testimony of these two aged Jewish saints to demonstrate the Power of God in overcoming tremendous obstacles in order to save His chosen people. Simeon and Anna gave great credibility to the New Covenant in saving devout Jews.

Now normally speaking, the word, "Gentile" refers to *anyone* who is NOT a Jew. So, every nation that wasn't Israel was a pagan, "Gentile nation". However, as Jesus lived and died and rose again; and as He brought forth the superior New Covenant- that distinction was radically changed. Look at how the Apostle Paul wrote about this change from **Romans 2: 28&29:**

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Now based on this part of infallible, absolute, Divine Truth- we may no longer say, "*The Jews are God's chosen people*"- as a blanket statement. The infinitely superior New Covenant changed that- forever. Rather, we must say, "*Some Jews are God's chosen people. But some Gentiles are God's chosen people as well. Therefore, whoever is chosen by God for Salvation- they are God's chosen people.*" Okay, but how do we know who is chosen by God and who isn't? And the Answer is: "*Whoever believes on Jesus and is saved- they are God's chosen people.*"

You see, all, who are chosen by God- will be saved before they die. And all who are saved- will be saved- because they believe. And all who believe- will believe- ONLY because God *allowed* them to believe. And all who are allowed to believe- will love Jesus. And all who love Jesus- will delight in *obeying* Jesus. And this is true- whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

So, under the inferior "First" or "Old Covenant"- things like Ethnicity and Bloodline and Nationality and Sex- was EVERYTHING. But under the infinitely superior New Covenant- things like Ethnicity and Bloodline and Nationality and

Race and Sex- became completely irrelevant. Okay, but what does matter under the New Covenant? Two things:

1. A New Heart
2. A New Spirit

Ezekiel 36:24-27

“For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

... and this is done through the Miracle of the New Birth.

And that is glorious. But then we must also say that those who are NOT chosen by God- will NOT believe. And those who will not believe- will NOT love Jesus. And those who do not love Jesus- will NEVER delight themselves in obeying Jesus.

And this is true because these people are all “spiritual Gentiles.” And that is true- whether they are natural- born Jews or natural-born Gentiles. And these people can try to blame God- as to why they aren’t saved. And they might offer this excuse, “*God didn’t choose me*”- as to why they aren’t saved. But the Reality is that when these “spiritual Gentiles” stand before God, and God asks them, “*Why didn’t you believe in Me? Why didn’t you love Me? Why didn’t you find the fulness of your Joy in Me being glorified?*” These people will have only one Answer: “*Because I didn’t want to.*” And they will burn forever.

So, based on this- it is entirely possible that a natural- born Jew is actually a “spiritual Gentile”- where the word, “Gentile” no longer means: “a non-Jewish person” but rather, an “unbeliever in Jesus”. And it is also entirely possible that a natural-born Gentile is actually a “spiritual Jew”- where the word, “Jew” no longer refers to a particular

ethnic group- but a person, who has been sovereignly chosen to believe in Jesus.

Yet in the midst of all this Animosity and all this Hatred and all this Enmity that existed in the 1st Century- God was still saving souls. And God was still drawing His chosen people to Jesus. So, neither satan; nor the perverted Teaching of the Pharisees; nor the Bitterness and Anger and Hatred and Division that existed

between the Jews and the Gentiles of the 1st Century could thwart God's Plan to save all of those He had chosen from before the foundation of the world.

Now there is one more piece to this Puzzle. Over in **Matthew 10: 2-4**- the Apostle Levi wrote about Jesus choosing His twelve Apostles. And Matthew (Levi) said,

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

Now here in verse 3, Matthew called himself, "**Matthew the tax collector**". Now back in the 1st Century- tax collectors were the most despised people in all of Israel. Why? Because they had to buy a "tax franchise" from Rome; and some of the money they collected went back to Rome to help pay for the all the soldiers that were stationed in Israel that were brutalizing the Jewish people. So, tax collectors were seen as betraying their own people.

In addition to this betrayal, tax collectors also employed very violent men, who went around to *forcefully* collect the taxes from the average Jew. Now keep in mind, there were "official taxes" that the Roman Government had authorized the people to pay. But then there were taxes that the collectors just made up- that they imposed on the people like "axle taxes" which forced people to pay confiscatory taxes based on how many axles their wagon had. And there were many more.

So, all of this combined made the tax collectors despised among the Jewish people. And this is why Jesus equated people, who lay claimed to be saved; who were members of the Church; who were caught up in raw Sin; and who refused to repent- even after repeated attempts- as a "**Gentile**" (an unbeliever) and a "**tax collector**"- or someone who has betrayed his own people with sin. (**Matthew 18:17**).

Yet Matthew (Levi) had been saved and was now part of the men Jesus personally chose to carry on His Message; with His Own Authority- to the nations of the world- that were called "Apostles".

But then in verse 4, we read where Dr. Luke included another man,

Simon the Zealot...

... and by identifying him like this- Luke was showing us the great transforming Power of God that Salvation brings to all men. Simon was a "zealot"- meaning he

was a part of the group of Jews in the 1st Century called, the “Sicarii”. And the Sicarii were named after a small, curved knife that they carried in the sleeve of their shirt; that they used to slice the neck of people they considered to be traitors to Israel and the Jewish way of life.

So, the Sicarii were the first terrorist organization in Israel. They looked at themselves as the real patriots- who were willing to die and willing to kill- in order to restore Israel to her former Glory. So, blackmail; assassination; murder; torture; and other barbaric acts were a part of their Plan to rid Israel of the pagan Roman army and give the Promised Land back to the Jew- only.

Members of the Sicarii stood behind Roman dignitaries as they watched a parade go by. And they would reach out with their small knife and slice the throat of that person and then blend back into the crowd in order to avoid detection. So, members of the Sicarii were fierce; dedicated; and willing to kill anyone- who they thought was betraying their cause. They even assassinated people within their own ranks- who they determined to NOT be brutal enough.

Yet, in spite of his background, Simon was also chosen- not only to be saved- but to become an Apostle of Jesus. And what is fantastic- is that normally- Simon and Matthew (Levi) would have been mortal enemies. Levi (Matthew) had betrayed the Jewish people to help prosper the despised Roman pagans; while Simon was skilled at murdering people just like Matthew. And yet there is not a single word that these two men even had an argument- much less were violent to each other.

Now keep in mind, the 40 writers of the Bible had no problem airing out all the dirty laundry of the men they wrote about. We can read about Moses murdering a man; and David committing Adultery and of having Uriah, David’s faithful servant, killed in battle so he could have the man’s wife. We read about Peter’s betrayal and of the Jews laying the clothes of Stephen at the feet of Paul.

So, Dr. Luke would have had no problem writing about the great Division between Matthew and Simon- but he didn’t. And so, we are left to conclude that the reason he didn’t write about it- was because there was NO Division between these men. Why? Because they were now saved; and Salvation ends these kinds of Divisions! Paul said,

Ephesians 2:13-16

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus

establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

... so, part of what it means to be “in Jesus Christ” is that Politics; and Past Grievances; and Perceived Sights; and Animosity; and Bitterness; and other causes of the Sin of Division are removed; they are cast off; they are discarded and dropped. And everyone, who is saved, now focuses on living their lives- with abandon- to the Glory of God.

And as we see, from the “Silence of Scripture”- evidently both Matthew and Simon actually did this. We read about no anger; no hostility or animosity; no bitterness over actual wrongs that had occurred over the Centuries between these two men and their families. Later on, in this same Epistle, the Apostle Paul wrote to the saved people in **Ephesians 4:29-32:**

29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Now if that is true- and Salvation brings to an end of things like:

- Bitterness
- Wrath
- Anger
- Clamor
- Slander
- Malice

... then whatever Teaching *allows* for these things; or that *promotes* these things; or that *perpetuates* these things- is fighting against Salvation; and is the enemy of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ. And that is true- whether we are talking about political talk shows or so-called Patriotism, or Anarchy. *Whatever* Teaching; *whatever* Doctrine; *whatever* is being taught- that *promotes* people to live in Bitterness; or to stay angry all the time; or to live our lives in such a way that we

are splintered and separated from other believers to cause Division- is in itself a false Teaching and a Heresy.

Now why am I bringing all this out this morning? To demonstrate how Salvation in Jesus brings to an end the normal and natural Enmity and Bitterness and Anger and Unforgiveness and Hostility that exists between various groups of people, who lay claim to be saved.

And in our day- “Racism” has been determined to be the most important Issue of our day. And Racism has been defined several different ways- but one of the most helpful ways is: *Bias against people because of their Race*. So, acting wrongly or sinfully against another person- solely because of the color of their skin is: Racism.

And barely a day goes by now that we don’t hear about Racism in some form or fashion. And yet, the Holy Bible doesn’t mention Racism. At all. Not even once. And that is why I don’t believe in what the pagan world calls, Racism. Firstly, because I don’t believe that the fallen, pagan world is qualified to define what is or what is not important- especially as it pertains to believers. Secondly, if something is important- then the Bible addresses it- and it addresses it thoroughly. No other Book in the history of the world deals with “Heart Issues” like Hatred; and Anger; and Bitterness; and Unforgiveness; and Wrath; and Malice; and Injustice- like the Bible does.

And that tells me that the way that the lost world deals with these problems and the way that God through Christ deals with these problems- is much different. In a nutshell, what God says- works. And what the pagan world teaches- doesn’t.

But while the Bible doesn’t even mention, “Racism”- the Bible does mention, “Division”. And so, part of the Fall is that people are divided- because of several different things, such as:

- Old versus Young
- Rich versus Poor
- Educated versus Uneducated
- Cultured versus Uncultured
- Male versus Female

... and part of this Division is the Animosity; and the Anger; and the Bitterness; and the Enmity; and Unforgiveness between people of different races. But it isn’t like the Media portrays it. It isn’t just between Blacks and Whites. It is between

- Blacks and Whites
- Blacks and Yellows
- Blacks and Browns

- Yellows and Browns
- Yellows and Whites
- Yellows and Blacks
- Whites and Browns

... and every other color and race imaginable. We are divided because of a number of things- both present and past. And out from this Division has sprung fairly new false Teachings such as:

- Critical Race Theory
- Black Liberation Theology

.. which basically says that all the Evils of the world have been perpetrated on Humanity by White people. And these Heresies promote and sustain the very things that true Salvation brings to an end: Anger; Bitterness; Wrath; Malice, etc. So, these Teachings are false; they are ungodly; they fight against the true, biblical Gospel of Jesus that simply does not allow people, who have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth to walk and live and exist in Unforgiveness; and to hold grudges; and to hate other people; and to justify Anger; Malice; Bitterness; and Wrath.

Now the reason I am addressing these two Issues and I am NOT addressing other Organizations like “Black Lives Matter” is because these two are actually *religious* Teachings- they are perversions of the biblical Gospel. These two Teachings are in the Church- being preached and taught from the Pulpit as being the Gospel. And as such- both of these are Heresies- while the other is a purely political movement. Now I’m not agreeing with BLM- I’m just not going to address it here.

First of all- what Critical Race Theory and Black Liberation Theology teaches- isn’t true. For example, white people didn’t create Slavery. Slavery existed for 5,000 years before there were white Europeans. Slavery exists even today- all over the world. And Slavery is an Evil that needs to be destroyed.

But it was primarily white Europeans, who through the genius of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, that put in motion the “System” that could finally end Slavery- at least in the United States. Now it was hard; and it was brutal and bloody; and it almost destroyed our country. But it happened. And it happened here better and more productive than anywhere else.

But I would remind all of us- that it wasn’t the Politicians that ended Slavery. It wasn’t the local or State Governments that ended Slavery. Those Institutions passed laws and enforced laws that kept Slavery intact and kept it profitable. It also wasn’t the Supreme Court that ended Slavery either. The Dred

Scott Decision of 1857 declared that black people were not actually human beings and therefore, were NOT entitled to “Life; Liberty, or the Pursuit of Happiness”- or “Due Process”. So, they could be bought and sold like cattle.

But it wasn't the Legal Profession that ended Slavery either. No, they argued in favor of Slavery. And it wasn't the Medical Profession that demanded an end to Slavery. Those people, who swore and Oath to “do no harm”, did great harm to the slaves.

So, why did Slavery end? It was the people of the Church- who read and studied the Bible- who became outraged at the atrocity of human beings made in the Image of God- owning another human being made in the Image of God. And as the people of the Church rose up and began to teach and preach; and to refuse to obey unjust laws; and to go against the Government- Slavery began to end.

But it is amazing to me that the Arguments that people made in favor of Slavery back then- are the very *same* Arguments- using the very same logic they make now- in favor of Abortion.

And God honored the Church's efforts in the United States to end Slavery and to finally end Segregation- which absolutely WAS Institutional Racism. But stopped it and we codified it in law- so that it could never rise up again like it once was. And I pray that I will live to see the day when God will honor our efforts to end Abortion. One of the greatest Mysteries to me- is why God hasn't already done with Abortion what He did with Segregation. And I don't have any Answers- but I press on.

But what we need to understand is that godless Marxism won't cure Injustice either- not even *perceived* Injustice. It will only magnify it. And Critical Race Theory and Black Liberation Theology is simply Marxism disguised as Christianity. And because these things go by the Name of Christianity- I oppose them whole heartedly and reject what they teach- absolutely.

All that Critical Race Theory and Black Liberation Theology does- is change the Race that is being oppressed. It doesn't make a single life better or solve a single problem.

But Jesus does. And everywhere that Christianity- true, biblical Christianity dominates a Culture- the people flourish. Art and Science and Music and Commerce and the free-flow of Ideas and Concepts- with new technological advancements in Medicine and Education that help us to understand the Bible better- flourish and prosper- when Christianity dominates a Culture. It is as good as it gets here on earth- when the biblical Christian Ethic dominates- so that more people may know God; and love God; and enjoy Him forever.

But, sadly, there are people and groups, who go by the Name of Christianity or the Church- who do NOT represent us correctly. And they have committed

unspeakable atrocities against other people. And as a result of this- many in the lost world- label *all* believers with that same banner.

But white people can't stop being White. And nobody can erase the past. But attacking people based on their color- is attacking the God, Who made us different colors- on purpose. Because it is God's Will that He will call people- out from- every nation and tribe and tongue and race- to Salvation. And those who are called- will come. And those who come- Jesus will receive. And those whom Jesus receives- will be saved. And those who are saved- will love each other in the Beauty of Holiness. And they will be tender-hearted; and kind; and merciful; to each other- forgiving and being forgiven. And those who are chosen to live like this- and to love like this- will be washed and forgiven and made righteous and saved and glorified. Because the Gospel fixes these problems. And Salvation ends the Division.

Now there is one final heresy that I must warn you about. And this Heresy rose up in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries as a perversion of a particular Eschatological view called, "Post-millennialism". And it is now called, the "Social Gospel".

Post-Millennialism teaches that Jesus will NOT return to this earth until **Psalm 100:1** is fulfilled that says,

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

In other words, Post- Millennialism teaches that Jesus is "ruling and reigning" right now- as King of all other kings and as Lord of all other lords. And He is now seated at the "Right Hand" of the Majesty on High- interceding for us. But what is Jesus paying? Post- Millennialism says that Jesus is praying that all those whom God has chosen to be saved- will be saved. He is also praying that all those who are already saved- will stay saved. He is also praying that the Influence of the Church will spread across the world; and that pagan nations will bow to Christianity; and that pagan people will be converted to Jesus.

And as more and more people are saved- they will then begin to dominate every Culture in which they live. And so, there will be Christian lawyers and doctors. And there will be Christian policemen and firemen. And there will be Christian business owners and entrepreneurs. And there will be Christian Scientists and Engineers. And there will be Christian Journalists and Editors and Writers and Actors and Producers and Artists and Musicians. And there will be Christian Farmers and Plumbers and Housewives and Carpenters. And so, as the

Gospel triumphs in saving all of God's elect- Christians will gradually take over the earth and dominate in every country in which they live.

And as these believers live their godly lives- this is how Jesus will Rule and Reign until all of God's enemies are made a Footstool for His Feet.

And so, the Second Coming- is a triumphant Event- a final cherry on top of the magnificent Work of the Grace of God- in saving the majority of Humanity through the preaching of the Gospel. So, in Post- Millennialism- Jesus wins. The Gospel triumphs. And the Kingdom of God is built- one soul at a time.

This was the Eschatology of the Puritans; and the Theologians like Jonathan Edwards. It was also the View of the great Missionaries like William Carrey and Dr. Livingstone; and the great Preachers like Charles Spurgeon and George Whitefield. And it is today, the eschatological View of the Presbyterians.

But during the mid- 29th Century with three titanic Events (two World Wars and Israel becoming a nation) Post- Millennialism fell out of favor. But it didn't just die- it changed. And it changed by morphing into what is now called, the "Social Gospel".

And so, today, the "Social Gospel" teaches that by "doing Good"- Christians change the world. Now that may sound great. But the problem is that the Social Gospel ONLY deals with "doing Good" and has all but eliminated things like: Preaching; Teaching; Repentance from Sin; Belief in Jesus; and then pursuing Holiness- as articulated in the Bible.

The Social Gospel says that by building homes for the homeless; and by feeding the hungry; and clothing the naked; by helping drug addicts get treatment; and by passing laws that help minorities- that this IS the Gospel. That the Gospel is NOT, "*Repent and Believe*"- but the Gospel is all these Social Issues that people, who are already saved- should engage in.

So, the Social Gospel- emphasizes what believers should do for poor people- at the expense of preaching the biblical Gospel- so that lost people may be saved. And this is a warping of what the Bible says that Jesus came to do. The angel told Joseph,

Matthew 1:20b&21

... do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

... and so, Sin- not homelessness; Sin- not Poverty; Sin- not low minimum wages- is the problem. Sin is what separates people from God and Sin is why there is a Hell. Now I'm not promoting Poverty or Homelessness or low wages. Those things are terrible and they need to be fixed. But trying to fix those things is NOT

what Jesus came to do. So, “Salvation” is God rescuing unworthy sinners from His Own Wrath against their Sins. And as these people are saved- and IF it is God’s Will- God will move and help them get out of those situations.

But we must remember that this world is broken and cursed and this world will always have Troubles and Trials. But God desires to have the most magnificent chorus of voices- comprised of people from every race- rising up in a crescendo of praise that will worship the Lamb- forever! And that is where our focus should be.

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.