

REDEEMING THE TIME

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

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Living in Evil Days

BY BRAD K. GSELL

These are evil days in which we live. Most of us are amazed at the speed at which moral decay and bold attacks upon Christ and His Word have developed in the United States and around the world. In seeing events transpire around us, we would all concur with Paul that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).

Who would have thought two decades ago that sodomite “marriages” would be legalized in some states? Who would have thought that while the Ten Commandments are being forcibly removed from schools and courthouses, the Washington, DC, transit system would accept ads for the sides of its busses which say: “Why believe in a god? Just be good for goodness sake.”

As perplexing as these and other things may be, we are not in a unique situation. Throughout history, there have been incredible periods of wickedness. Jeremiah 17:9 says that “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked....” Fallen men, under the control of Satan, are destined to bring forth evil.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:16 that the days in which the epistle was written were also evil. Does Paul instruct the Ephesians to wring their hands and

simply curse the darkness? Did he tell them to be filled with anxiety and fear? No! Paul tells them that they are to “redeem the time, because the days are evil.”

What Does It Mean to “Redeem the Time”?

The name chosen for this publication—*Redeeming the Time*—is taken from this verse. What exactly does this mean?

Matthew Henry writes: “Good Christians must be good husbands of their time, and take care to improve it to the best of purposes,

by watching against temptations, by doing good while it is in the power of their hands, and by filling it up with proper employment—one special preservative from sin. They should make the best use they can of the present seasons of grace. Our time is a talent given us by God for some good end, and it is misspent and lost when it is not employed according to His design.”

The child of God should not wither in the face of evil or retreat from the battle. Calvin wrote: “Such corruption having infected the age, the devil appears to have obtained tyrannical sway; so that time cannot be dedicated to God without being in some way redeemed. And what

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Is There Not a Cause?

BY MARK W. EVANS

As you view “Volume 1, Number 1” in the masthead above, you may be asking, “Why a new publication?” In brief, we begin with the goal of proclaiming the old truths of the Christian faith and to stand for the Cause of Jesus Christ. The Word of God is our only rule of faith and practice. Our doctrinal statement is set forth in The Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

This undertaking is dependent upon the Lord. Our Savior said, “without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). We are not “sufficient

for these things,” but we are resolved to declare the teachings of God’s Word and to inform the Lord’s people of important issues facing the Church. As Fundamental Presbyterians, we believe it is imperative that we “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

Apostasy and compromise, sustained by man-centered theology, has reaped a grim harvest. Our beloved country is in spiritual distress. Leaders are crying, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (*cf.*

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Ignorance of Our History a Peril to Liberty

Not only Americans going to the polls, but even our elected officials, are dangerously ignorant of the principles which made our nation great. The Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) recently released a report entitled *Our Fading Heritage: Americans Fail a Basic Test on Their History and Institutions*.

The general population actually did BETTER than elected officials, but there are no bragging rights. The average score of 2,500 randomly selected Americans was 49 percent, while that of those identifying themselves as having served as public officials was 44 percent. Both, of course, would earn an F minus on the report card. Only .8 percent received an A.

"Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"

Of the 33 multiple choice questions asked, less than 70 percent of elected officials knew that the Declaration of Independence listed "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as basic human rights. One can only imagine the score if they had been asked who gave us these rights. A clue: it starts with the letter "G"; and NO, it is not Government.

The First Amendment

Both the general public and officebearers received low marks when asked to name just one freedom guaranteed in the First Amendment (79.58 percent and 73.32 percent respectively). Can there be any

wonder then why only 18.92 percent of the general public knew where the phrase "a wall of separation" between church and state originated. Most thought it was in the Constitution. With only 15.07 percent



Let those of us who are Christians seek to be exemplary, well-informed citizens. Let us "proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10)—the words which the early American colonists had emblazoned on that great symbol of freedom, the Liberty Bell.

of public officials knowing the answer, need we question why freedom of religion is suffering in America in the 21st century?

The Puritans

One question dealt with the Puritans, whose strong Biblical principles played a significant role in developing the foundation of our American republic. Only 19.1% of citizens, and 17.32% of officials could identify that the Puritans "stressed the sinfulness of all humanity." When two of the other choices were "colonized Utah under the leadership of Brigham Young" and "were Catholic missionaries escaping religious persecution," one cannot help but be alarmed.

Limited Government and Free Enterprise

Other categories, dealing with limitations on government and the basis of our free enterprise system were in the F category as well. Two of the highest overall scores dealt with a phrase from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I Have a Dream" speech and the historical significance of Susan B. Anthony.

In discussing these sad statistics in a recent column, Washington Post Writers Group columnist Kathleen Parker put things in perspective. She writes: "More than twice as many people (56 percent) knew that Paula Abdul was a judge on 'American Idol' than knew that those words ['government of the people, by the people, for the people'] come from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (21 percent)."

Josiah Bunting, III, Chairman of ISI's National Civic Literacy Board

writes: “It is disturbing enough that the general public failed ISI’s civic literacy test, but when you consider the even more dismal scores of elected officials, you have to be concerned. How can political leaders make informed decisions if they don’t understand the American experience? Colleges can, and should, play an important role in curing this national epidemic of ignorance.”

“People may be listening to television experts talk about economic bailouts and the platforms of political candidates, but they apparently have little idea what our basic economic and political institutions are,” observes Dr. Richard Brake, ISI’s Director of University Stewardship. “Our study raises significant questions about whether citizens who voted in this year’s landmark presidential election really understand how our system of representative democracy works.” Later, Dr. Brake stated that “The nation’s ignorance of the kind of knowledge necessary for informed and responsible citizenship—and the failure of our nation’s colleges to effectively address and fix this problem—would certainly be unacceptable to our founding fathers, who believed that the university would create leaders to preserve liberty.”

Evil and Ignorance

As much of a threat as ignorance may be, a greater danger is our nation’s increasing wickedness and rejection of God and His Word. John Adams, the second President of the United States, wrote: “We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution is designed only for a moral and religious people. It is

wholly inadequate for any other.” At the time Adams wrote this, the United States was populated almost entirely by Protestant believers.

Exemplary Christian Citizens

Let those of us who are Christians seek to be exemplary, well-

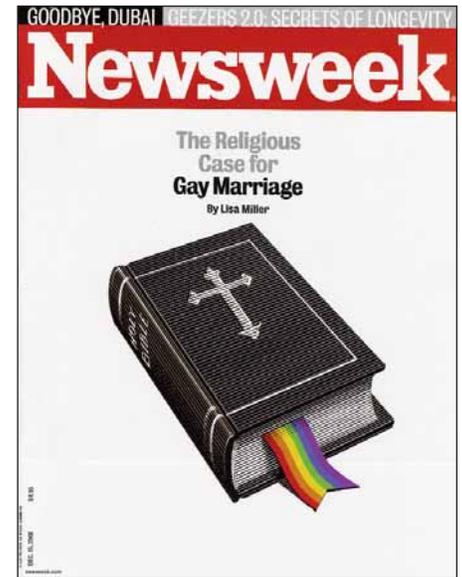
informed citizens. Let us “proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof” (Leviticus 25:10)—the words which the early American colonists had emblazoned on that great symbol of freedom, the Liberty Bell.

The Church and the Homosexual Agenda

The time is fast approaching (if not already here) when Bible believers and Fundamental churches may be forced to suffer persecution for maintaining a consistent Biblical stand for marriage only between one man and one woman, and against homosexuality.

The December 15, 2008, issue of *Newsweek* featured on its cover an article by Lisa Miller entitled “The Religious Case for Gay Marriage”—complete with the homosexual rainbow symbol as a ribbon coming out of a Bible. Miss Miller’s article revealed the embarrassing shallowness of her grasp of theological issues and hermeneutics (method of interpretation), yet it will be readily accepted by millions who likewise do not know their Bibles.

Of particular concern was the editorial by *Newsweek* Editor Jon Meacham, who proceeded to compare the Bible’s teaching on this subject to racism, anti-Semitism and other evils. Meacham states: “This



conservative resort to biblical authority is the worst kind of fundamentalism.... it is more than intellectually bankrupt—[it] is unserious....” He continues by stating as fact that homosexuality “is as intrinsic to a person’s makeup as skin color.” He therefore believes that “The analogy with race is apt.” He concludes by saying that history is on their side, because the younger generation is much more in favor of gay marriage.

As this thinking gains more and more acceptance, government assaults on liberty in the form of legislation and judicial opinions will undoubtedly increase. Individual Christians, churches and other Christian ministries must be prepared to stand for what the Bible teaches, no matter the cost.

The Good News...

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit...” (Romans 8:1).

LIVING IN EVIL DAYS

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shall be the price of redemption? To withdraw from the endless variety of allurements which would easily lead us astray; to rid ourselves from the cares and pleasures of the world; and, in a word, to abandon every hinderance. Let us be eager to recover it in every possible way, and let the numerous offences and arduous toil, which many are in the habit of alleging as an apology for indolence, serve rather to awaken our vigilance.”

How Do We “Redeem the Time”?

The Apostle Paul tells us how to “redeem the time.” In Ephesians 5:17, he says: “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

The Bible is replete with passages which tell us how this is to be done. Psalm 1 tells us: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that

bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” The godly man is one who “departs from iniquity,” and rather spends time in sweet communion with God and in meditation on His Word.

Many Christians have, unfortunately, absorbed far too much of the world’s thinking. John Calvin says concerning this: “Everything around us tends to corrupt and mislead; so that it is difficult for godly persons, who walk among so many thorns, to escape unhurt.”

“Our time is a talent given us by God for some good end, and it is misspent and lost when it is not employed according to His design.”

Matthew Henry

Far too many Christians rest content in staying on the “conservative” edge of the culture in which we live—giving some heed to Biblical principles, yet maintaining a certain level of respectability with their worldly friends and acquaintances. However, this mindset is dangerous, and will inevitably lead one further and further from the truth.

In contrast, Paul tells us in Romans 12:2: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” If we believe that the Bible is God’s Truth (John 17:17), then it is to be “our only infallible rule of faith and practice,” as stated so well by the Westminster Divines.

The child of God must constantly heed the words of Peter: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he

may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). No matter what the reason, if we accommodate in any way the sin around us, Satan is winning in our lives and our testimony for Christ is soiled and compromised.

In 2 Timothy, after pointing out the worsening iniquity they would face, Paul immediately instructs his young son in the faith: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them” (2 Timothy 3:14).

In our passage, Paul tells the Ephesians not to be “unwise.” Here in 2 Timothy, he continues by telling how one can be wise: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (verses 15-17).

Conclusion

As we see our society becoming more evil and corrupt, may we as Bible-believing Christians take heart and “rejoice in the Lord” (Philippians 4:4)! Let us “always abound in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58) and “REDEEM THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL”!

*Rise up, O men of God,
Have done with lesser things;
Give heart and soul
and mind and strength
To serve the King of kings.*



Mr. Brad Gsell is an elder and minister of music of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, NC, and Vice President of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

REDEEMING THE TIME

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IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

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Jeremiah 6:13-17). Only the Lord Jesus Christ and His saving doctrines can turn our land from destruction. Sadly, many seem unaware of the eternal consequences of rejecting the Bible and Jesus Christ.

The Reformers of the 16th and 17th centuries declared the teachings of the sacred Scriptures and our Savior blessed His truth to the salvation of countless souls. Multitudes came out of religious superstition and false teaching propagated by Roman Catholicism. The same Scriptures protected the true Church from radical movements akin to novel “theologies” arising in today’s evangelicalism. True liberty came to those who looked with saving faith to the bleeding Lamb of God. This freedom in Christ led to the founding of our nation.

We shudder to think of modern leaders in the “Reformed community” daring to suggest that they can improve upon the theology of the martyrs. We believe they are fatally wrong. Did the Lord wait some two thousand years to reveal the true Gospel to certain individuals embracing Shepherdism, the Federal Vision, and other distortions of “the faith once delivered unto the saints?” The blessed Spirit of God did not give us the infallible, inerrant Bible so that self-arrogating intellectuals could devise new doctrines and practices. We grieve at those who should know better, even some we counted as stalwarts of the faith, compromising with dangerous doctrinal innovations. When man-made doctrines and devices are allowed to fester in Christ’s Church, spiritual disaster inevitably follows (*cf.* Galatians 5:9).

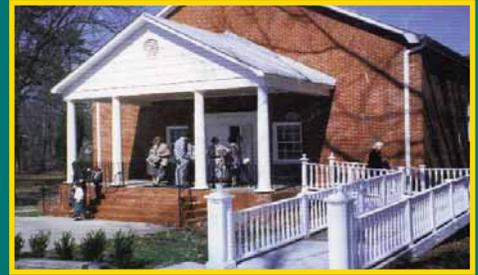
We believe our spiritual fathers were right to separate from the compromising spirit of Neo-evangelical-

SPRING MEETING OF THE *Bible Presbyterian Church, Faith Presbytery*

Friday, March 27, 2009
8:30 a.m.



Bible Presbyterian
Church of Charlotte
6237 Rumble Road
Charlotte, NC 28262



For more information, please contact:

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ism, a movement that introduced methods of accommodation and dialog, erasing the lines between truth and error. Today, this false appeasement has produced a façade of a church, corrupt in doctrine and practice, powerless against a world perishing in sin. Although it seems that the spirit of the Reformers is almost gone, we rejoice that our Savior has all power in heaven and in earth. He has promised, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

Our present perplexing and confusing religious environment should move our hearts to approach the throne of grace and plead for true revival. Sadly, many who once stood for the faith have lowered their banners. We must pray for them, with the hope that our gracious Savior will enable them to renew their zeal and stand steadfastly for the crown rights of Jesus Christ and the crown jewels of the Gospel. We are thankful for the Lord’s faithful servants, who are standing for the Word of God and contending against Christ’s enemies. They need our prayers and support. May the Lord raise up a new generation of faithful ministers. Jesus said, “Pray ye therefore the

Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:38). Our hope is not in new programs, mission statements, and theologies. Our hope is in the Lord. The Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, admonished the followers of Christ: “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:15-17).

We deeply appreciate your prayers and support. Our stand is not popular, but we hope to encourage and strengthen the hands of those who are resolved to stay on the old paths. If you believe the Lord would have you contribute toward the cost of this publication, please send gifts to:

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The Rev. Mark Evans is pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC, and is moderator of the Bible Presbyterian Church, Faith Presbytery.

The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22,23

Introduction

by Brad K. Gsell



In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul describes for us the fruit which is to be found in the life of every Christian. This is the first in a series of articles which will discuss these characteristics of the Christian life.

The Great Struggle: The Fruit of the Spirit Versus the Lust of the Flesh

The Word of God is full of contrasts: life vs. death (John 3:36; Romans 5:17, 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15); truth vs. error (Proverbs 8:7, 14:22; 1 Corinthians 13:6); light vs. darkness (John 3:19, Acts 26:18, Ephesians 5:8); fruitfulness vs. barrenness (Psalm 107:34, John 15:4,5); the temple of God vs. idols (2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:9). The list could go on and on.

In Galatians 5, Paul once again uses a bold contrast to bring forth the truths of God with great clarity—the fruit of the Spirit vs. the works of the flesh. Paul presents this not just as a simple choice which needs to be made, but, rather, as a mighty struggle which confronts every Christian every day of his life.

Galatians 5:17 says: “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

Paul offers a formula for prevailing in this struggle—which at the same time may seem simple to comprehend, yet is impossible to implement by our own efforts. In verse 16, he says: “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

In Romans 7, Paul tells us of this struggle in his own life: “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.... For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to

*“And I will put my
spirit within you, and
cause you to walk in my
statutes, and ye shall
keep my judgments,
and do them.”*

Ezekiel 36:27

will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So

then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

After describing this struggle, Paul begins chapter 8 with the great assurance: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

The Bible in several places refers to our carnal sinful nature as “the old man,” and the spiritual nature of all the Redeemed as “the new man.” Ephesians 4:22-24 says: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

This process of “the new man” prevailing over “the old man” is commonly referred to as sanctification. Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 35 asks: “What is sanctification? Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.”

Just as man can offer nothing for his justification, he also is incapable of producing sanctification in his life. Isaiah 64:6 says that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Even the best that we can offer in our own strength is not pleasing to God.

The Scriptures give all credit for our sanctification to God. Ezekiel 36:27 says: “And I [God] will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Paul tells us in Philippians 2:13: “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Peter writes: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3).

In writing to Titus, Paul speaks of those who claim to be Christians, but obviously are not. Titus 1:16 says: “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” In contrast, he speaks of those who have truly been saved in Titus 2:14: “Who [Christ] gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

A number of places in the Scriptures give us a list of the virtues which should increasingly be found in the man of God (e.g. 2 Peter 1:3-8; Ephesians 4:24-32) and the vices of the unregenerate (e.g. Romans 1:21-32; Colossians 3:5).

In our passage of study, Galatians 5, Paul lists the following as works of the flesh: “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness [morally impure], lasciviousness [any form of excess; often with sexual overtones], Idolatry, withcraft, hatred, variance, emulations [rivalry with the goal of being superior to others], wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (verses 19-21).

Immediately following this list, Paul again brings the contrast into high relief. Verse 22 begins with the conjunction “but.” This small word, only two letters in the Greek, carries a force which could be compared to the “v.” or “vs.” in a lawsuit (e.g. *Roe v. Wade*, or *Engle v. Vitale*). In both instances, what precedes the word is in great opposition to what follows the word.

Paul says, in effect, “I have given you a list of things which are carnal and at enmity with the Spirit of God; **BUT** now I am going to give you a list of those qualities which are attributes of the Spirit of God, and should be found in all of those who

are redeemed by Christ and are obedient to the Spirit of God.

In verses 22-25, Paul writes: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

Although the meaning of these virtues listed may seem self-evident, there is great depth of meaning found in God’s Word concerning them. We look forward to discussing these in future issues of *Redeeming the Time*.

Find the Verses: See if you can find every word in Galatians 5:22 and 23. If the word appears twice in the verse, it also appears twice in the puzzle. Words appear horizontally, vertically and diagonally. Galatians 5:22,23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

L	B	R	E	T	H	U	N	D	E	R	B	E
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