

THE



"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

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HOW TRUTH CAUSES DIVISION

Of all the prayers that Jesus prayed, few meant more than His desire for unity among His people. *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me ... I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ..."*(John 17:20-23) Paul later added, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*(1 Cor. 1:10)

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Strangely enough, there was an instance where Jesus Himself caused a division. He had just finished making a statement on the Holy Spirit which was confusing to the people. *"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."*(John 7:39) Afterward, some were convinced that Jesus was "the Christ", while others could not accept this. **"SO THERE WAS A DIVISION AMONG THE PEOPLE BECAUSE OF HIM."**(John 7:43)

It usually shocks people to read John 7:43. How could Jesus be the cause of religious division? It appears here that Jesus has made a serious error. However, notice that it was His teaching that caused the division. What He taught (the substance of His teaching) is what made the people take sides and divide themselves. Some accepted His teachings and others did not. Thus, they formed different opinions as to the true identity of Jesus.

What Jesus taught was God's Word and we know the Word of God is Truth. Before His prayer for unity, He petitioned: *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."*(John 17:17-19) In the instance of John 7:43, it was Truth that caused the division among the people.

Truth is that which agrees with final reality. Thus, Truth will always agree with God because Truth is God's Word. Anything else will be short of the truth. Let's face it. Truth will also cause spiritual divisions. Truth will create a dividing line between right and wrong, between righteousness and sin. Recall again the prayer of Jesus in John 17:17, *"Sanctify*

them through thy truth". It was to be through God's Word (Truth) that the people were to be sanctified (set apart). In effect, Truth will separate, as is sometimes stated, the "contenders" from the "pretenders".

In Matt. 7:13-14 we read of two paths. *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* The broad way leads to destruction, the narrow way to eternal life. It is Truth that causes this division, or two directions. Truth determines which path a person will take. Those who follow after Truth will find the narrow way. Those who do NOT follow after Truth will find themselves on the broad way. *"That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."*(2 Thess. 2:12)

Perhaps this explains the many denominations in our country today. Every departure from Truth has brought about some new religious group. In the early days of the church, when ONLY the Truth was preached, there were no denominations! But soon men began to change God's Truth into their own lies.(Rom. 1:25) What has resulted is all the religious divisions we have in the world today. Friends, it is easy to see that we will have unity only when men everywhere decide to choose God's Truth over the lies and doctrines and creeds of man.

Jesus once tried to explain to the Jews the nature of division caused by Truth. Those who believe in Truth will be on the side of Jesus Christ. But those who refuse to abide in Truth will be considered on the side of Satan. *"Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the*

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devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."(John 8:43-47)

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11) That should be every Christian's desire. We must always put forth Truth in spite of what "other religious groups" say. Yes, it may cause divisions but Truth should never be compromised because then it would no longer be Truth. By just making one little change in God's Holy Word means a total deviation from Truth (Rev. 22:18-19). In order to please our Lord, we must have our "loins girt about with truth"(Eph. 6:14) and continue to walk in God's Truth. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."(3 John 4)

Often people will not be pleased to hear Truth, especially when it condemns them. Some may even think you to be crazy, as Festus thought Paul in Acts 26:25. "But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." It is very

likely that your friends will reject you when you tell them the Gospel Truth and your family may disown you. But stand tall and firm for the TRUTH (2 Peter 1:12). Someday it will save you!

RAY McMANUS

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. How old was Mephibosheth when he was dropped by his nurse and crippled?
2. What event caused Jesus to become well known in Capernaum?
3. What time of day was Paul converted as he traveled to Damascus?
4. In what book of the Bible does the phrase, "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself," first appear?
5. What one thing kept Esau from killing Jacob immediately after the deception?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who is buried under the great oak tree in Jabesh? SAUL AND HIS SONS (1 Chr. 10:12)
2. What two foods did the ravens feed Elijah during the drought? BREAD AND MEAT (1 Kings 17:6)
3. How many swords did the disciples have with them when they left the upper room? TWO (Luke 22:38)
4. According to John 5, in whom did the people set their hope? MOSES (John 5:45)
5. How many Psalms did Moses write? ONE (Ps 90)

WISE ADVICE FROM A COUNTRY JUDGE

A number of years ago when I worked for a large bank, it often fell my lot to prepare and present the bank's records in court. This was an interesting phase of my banking experience, for it offered opportunity to go behind the scene and observe lawyers, judges, and court proceedings in their raw reality. But all in our permissive, humanistic-trended society does not project doom. One incident among many glows with the promise that some (albeit far too few) in high-places still recognize age-old and time-honored values.

The court was convened in a small county seat north of Birmingham. Neither of the parties involved in the litigation was known personally to me, but I had brought records subpoenaed for the trial. It very soon became apparent that the judge was not familiar with the case before him. Perhaps he had come from another district to hear this case and perhaps the regular judge had removed himself due to his acquaintance with the litigants involved.

Upon learning that the case to be heard involved a divorce, the visiting judge said something to this effect.

Now, wait just a minute. I didn't come over here today to hear a divorce case. I just don't 'cotton' to divorce. It's not good for the parties involved. It's not good for the children. It's not good for the community. In fact, it's not good for 'nobody'! I'm not going to hear this case today; I'll reschedule it for thirty days from now. But let me warn you that before you again come before me, you had better get your problems straightened out and yourselves back together.

I was never recalled for that next hearing. I would like to think that perhaps the wise, stern words of that country judge just might have, indeed, caused that couple to straighten out their lives rather than mar them with the tragedy of divorce. What a refreshing trend it would be if more persons in positions of leadership and authority would emphasize Jesus' approach to this problem. He taught, "*Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so*" (Matthew 19:8).

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A man is never in worse company than when he flies into a rage and is beside himself.

WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING,
SOME PEOPLE STOP AT NOTHING!

THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile.
"What am I bidden, good folks," he cried,
"Who'll start bidding for me?
A dollar, a dollar---now who'll make it two--
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?

"Three dollars once, three dollars twice,
Going for three" ... but no!
From the room far back a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening up all the strings,
He played a melody, pure and sweet,
As sweet as an angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said: "What am I bidden for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow;
"A thousand dollars--who'll make it two?
Two thousand--and who'll make it three?
Three thousand once, three thousand twice
And going--and gone," said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We do not quite understand--
What changed its worth?" The man replied:
"The touch of the master's hand."
And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and torn with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd,
Much like the old violin.

A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine,
A game and he travels on,
He's going once, and going twice--
He's going -- and almost gone!
But the MASTER comes, and the foolish crowd,
Never can quite understand,
The worth of a soul, and the change that's
wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand.