

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

“REMOVE NOT THE ANCIENT LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET.” PROVERBS 22:28

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GOD'S VIEW ON LYING

by M. A. Brawner

We live in a sad day when we are exposed to so much lying that it becomes important for each of us to stop and review what God has said on the subject. As responsible servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a need to do this very thing. Recall that the Church Covenant hanging in so many of the Lord's Church buildings states that we will “religiously educate our children” and that we will “be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment”. How can we hope to be successful in any of these areas when we are exposed to so much lying that we find ourselves often numb to its presence? In an environment where such an intense degree of falsehood is present, becoming desensitized to the negative effects of lying could be a natural result. This being the case, it seems important to review this topic with the hopes it will prove beneficial to many.

Lying is defined as, “A falsehood uttered for the purpose of deception; an intentional violation of the truth; and, in the Bible, an idol and false doctrine are called lies.” See Noah Webster's Dictionary. The first definition in this list should catch our attention. We obviously live in a day when sports and competition are highly esteemed. Has anyone noticed that winning has become so important that following the rules in order to win is losing value? It is becoming more acceptable to “win at any cost” as long as you win. As a matter of fact, people who deceive another in order to win are congratulated and thought clever. When did it become alright to use deception in the pursuit of winning? Likewise, our society has become so competitive that we witness the use of deception in order to get our own way thinking this means we “win”. If we have to use lies and deception in order to do anything, we have already lost no matter who pats us on the back. May God help us get this fact firmly planted down in our hearts!

Let's consider what we find God to share with us in the Bible about lying. First off,

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD

by H. B. Little

Our Lord Jesus Christ spent much time teaching the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, or as He often referred to it, the Kingdom of Heaven. As they did during the Lord's earthly ministry, many people today misunderstand the nature of this great kingdom. Some believe this kingdom is a future state of bliss reserved for the saved in heaven itself. Others believe it is an invisible company of all the saved of all ages. But what does the Bible teach about the nature of the Kingdom of God?

Let's consider the teachings of our Lord concerning His kingdom. During His personal ministry, the Lord told the Pharisees, “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” Luke 16:16. In the first of this passage, the Savior makes a distinction between *the law and the prophets* and *the kingdom of God*. And He places His harbinger, John the Baptist, between the two. In other words, the law and prophets were before John and the Kingdom of God is after him. In the latter of the passage, the Lord observed men presently (28 A.D.) *pressing into it*, or entering into it.

From our Lord's plain statement of facts—not a shrouded parable—we can make two statements about the Kingdom of God. First, before John the Baptist no person had entered the kingdom. Second, in 28 A.D. people were entering into it.

Based on these facts, the Kingdom of God cannot be a future state of bliss for the saved in heaven or all the saved of all ages. The scriptures plainly teach men were saved and did enter this state of bliss before the ministry of John. Consider our Lord's history of the lives and eternal fates of *The Rich Man and Lazarus* found in Luke 16:19-31. In His message, the eternal fate of Lazarus is described as a state of bliss being one of the saved. At the same time, the miserable, hopeless, and eternally damned rich man

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TRUE REVIVAL

by Greg Dunham

Yearly we are overwhelmed with a common message from pulpits along with talk after talk. We sing the songs of Zion, and they have the same message, “Revive Us Again.” We have heard it and heard it, until it is like a sounding brass or tinkling symbol. It is familiar and comforting, but causes no immediate response. We as Old Time Baptists are not alone in this. A simple survey of websites and sermons from various denominations would show the universal knowledge that Christianity as a whole has lost its way. Locally, churches that have any vestiges of the truth regularly decry the wickedness that has become a part of our everyday lives. States are continuing to legalize sin and depravity, in its various forms, that wasn't even spoken of a few years hence. Nationally, toleration of sin, yea, even acceptance of sin is the norm. And across the world, we are looked at as being very intolerant and close minded, when the clear indications of God's word are that we have backslid as a backsliding heifer. Yet for all this revival doesn't seem to attend our prayers.

Why do we not see revival in the days we live? I know, from time to time, there are great meetings where good numbers are saved and God's people are made to rejoice, but there is no lasting change that is made in the congregation. In a few days, or weeks, or months, we are back to business as usual. Perhaps we are looking for the wrong thing. In days of old, our forefathers would talk about protracted meetings. The plan of these was simple. God would move their hearts, and they would continue with services for a space of time seeking to declare the Gospel to lost humanity. In time, we began to call these meetings revival meetings, regardless if they resulted in a reviving or not. I fear we have missed the idea that is inherent in the term revival. In the Old Testament, the word revive is used eight times. The Hebrew word translated as revive is “châyâh” and literally means to live. A

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TRUE REVIVAL

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quick search for the Hebrew word *châyâh* itself reveals it is used a total of 264 times in the Old Testament. It is translated to describe the life that the patriarchs had after they begat sons in Genesis 5. It is used to describe the preservation of the animals by way of Noah's Ark. It was used by Jacob to signify His hope of preservation for His seed when He had heard there was corn in Egypt. In Deuteronomy, Moses told the people to walk in the ways of God "that ye may live, and that it may be well with you." David used the word prophetically in Psalms to speak of the preservation of God's people. But no writer used it more than Ezekiel.

In the 37th chapter, Ezekiel recounted how the Lord sat him in midst of a valley of dry bones. The imagery was that a great battle had been waged long enough ago that the bones were very dry and scattered. God asked Ezekiel, "can these bones live?" Can they be revived? Ezekiel answered, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest." God went on to instruct Ezekiel to prophesy over the bones. They came together, after which sinews and flesh came upon them in like manner, but they were still dead. Afterwards, God instructed Ezekiel to prophesy again, "... Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." There my friends was the difference.

We can place everything together, bone to his bone, lay sinews and flesh upon ourselves, so that everything looks proper. Yet without the Breath, the Spirit of the Living God, there will be no life. We see that a church can be viewed thus in Revelations 3:1 "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." How many of our churches today look at a revival as a week long endeavor, and really nothing more? Remember the idea behind revival is that of being made alive, to which we have added the understanding that it is by the Spirit that this life indwells us. When we then look at a revival as being only an exercise in laboring for lost souls, what happens to us? Yes, we rejoice to hear the shouts of newborn souls and are thankful for additions to our churches.

But the new wears off that pretty quickly. Is there not something more? Will the Spirit of God not revive his children as well?

Let us look at Galatians 5:22-26. "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. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Do we walk in love, or do we envy our neighbor? Is our joy real, or do we call pride in our accomplishments as such? Are we attended daily by peace, longsuffering and goodness, or do we walk with troubles, stresses and sins as our companions? Do we walk by faith, or by sight? Is our life characterized by meekness and temperance or pride and excess? Have we actually laid down the old man, or do we still follow the same ways that we always have? Are we walking in the Spirit?

The work of revival should affect us, as Church members, in a profound way. Our eyes should be dabbed with eye salve that we might see, Revelations 3:18. The implication is clear. We do not see things the way God sees things, as His ways are higher than our ways. Therefore, we need to be made to see properly. This would involve a change in us, not in lost humanity. We do see sin on a daily basis, but too many times we are like Lot. It may vex our righteous souls, but we still sit at the gate quietly tolerating it. We need to be awakened, made alive, revived! Until we are, we may talk of living in the Spirit, because of Salvation. But Philip ran to join himself to the chariot that the Ethiopian eunuch rode on, because of the command of the Spirit. That is walking in the Spirit. We fight to keep from doing the will of God to the point that it is a badge of honor in our minds to say "I wasn't going to say anything, but..." or "I didn't want to talk tonight..." Why on earth would we not wish to speak for God? The Bible teaches "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Therefore would not the Spirit teach the same?

In Hosea 14:1, God calls thus, "O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." It is our sin that has caused a distance to be established between us and God. But there is hope. The Prodigal came to

himself in the hog pen and remembered the days of plenty at his father's house. He devised a plan to return and confess his faults with no hope of restoration to his former station but a willingness to simply be a servant. He then arose, left the hogs, and went to his father. There he found more than expected. He was clothed, fed, and shod. But above those things, he was loved. I believe the Father always loved him, although his actions were detestable. Yet repentance and a correct desire to walk right overcame those former failures. Likewise we find later in Hosea 14:7-8, "They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found."

Brethren, revival is not out of our reach. If we will return, we can be revived, and grow, and be a sweet savor in God's nostrils. But to return we MUST give up our idols, hear His voice, and consider His ways. Remember in Ezekiel that it required the Spirit of God to breath upon the slain before that life came into them. With that breath, they stood on their feet, an exceeding great army. By the Spirit of God entering the Church and bringing life back to us, we likewise can stand an exceeding great army, against which the forces of Satan would ultimately fall. Yet we cannot dare be in both armies. We must renounce the ways of the world and return to our God, not faintedly, but with our whole hearts. We need to start then by setting things back in order, or as God advised the Ephesian Church in Revelations 2:5, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." The Lord's Church has always stood and will continue to stand against the gates of Hell, but brethren let us be careful that we fail not in the grace of God and be found as those to whom a promise was left yet somehow came up short. Let us pray for a true revival of the cause of Christ and not JUST for the salvation of lost souls.

There is a difference between a "revival" and an "awakening". Christians are revived and sinners are awakened.

-Elder J. N. Hall

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let's be sure to remember that it is impossible to get away with any lie. We are reminded of this when we read, "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known," Luke 12:2. Every word we have whispered in an ear in private will be proclaimed out in the open. We are only lying to our own selves if we believe anything less. Likewise we learn from the Word of God that, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out," Numbers 32:23. Let's lay aside all excuses that may come to mind when we deal with lying. God guarantees us that they will come back around. Sooner or later, our sins will "find" us out.

In the Bible, we learn that lies are against the very nature of God. This is discovered when we read, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," Titus 1:2. Lying is so contrary to the nature of God that He is unable to do it. Knowing that lying is so outside of the nature of God, we should be intensely on guard against it. Going farther in the Bible, we find that lying is perfectly in accordance with the nature of the devil. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke the following words during His earthly ministry: "Ye are of your father the 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", John 8:44. Knowing who is the "father of lies" should cause any humble follower of the Lord Jesus Christ to cringe at the thought of being a part of any such practice. Rather, when confronted with evil ways, we need to remember that we are to, "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away," Proverbs 4:15.

Could any review of lying from the Bible be considered all inclusive without reviewing Proverbs 6:16-19? It's difficult to imagine. Here we find, "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren," Proverbs 6:16-19. In

the list of practices which are an abomination to the LORD, we find two which are associated with lying. The first is a clear statement that "a lying tongue" is an abomination. The second regards the "false witness that speaketh lies". Many minds will go to television shows and news programs after reading the last of these. If we fail to be careful, when so much lying is on public display, we could come to a point in our own life where we let lies creep into our behavior. We might conclude that everyone is doing it, so what's the big deal? We could even think it is needed purely for self defense. God forbid! When we see so many who have allowed themselves to be overcome by it, let's rather sound the alarm in our lives and in those around us. Lying is an abomination to God. Beware of it. Be on guard against it lest the strong river of lying carries us away too. God is taking note and the day of visitation is approaching. "Behold, the Judge is at the door!"

In light of such a day as we now live where exposure to lying is an every day event, how are we to respond? First and foremost, we need to come to God for help to be different than the rest of the world. A great request to God for help in this arena is found in the book of Psalms. Here we learn, "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips," Psalms 141:3. God is well able to bring such help into our lives if we truly want it and seek it that we might live a life that is truly pleasing in His sight. The children of God still possess an outward man that wants to run off like a wild animal to pursue what is going on around us in the world. A part of that outward man is our very tongue. We read of its nature when we find, "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," James 3:8. God knows this and is able to help us, if we come to Him early seeking "... grace and mercy to help us in our time of need", Hebrews 4:16. Today is a "time of need". Let us come to understand how much we need the help of God in this matter and lean on Him that we might receive it.

QUESTION FROM THE PAST

by H. B. Little

I have provided an excerpt from Elder G. W. Purefoy's *A History of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association*. It includes a portion of the minutes of the 1838 associational meeting followed by commentary from

Bro. Purefoy. The reader should note that this meeting in 1838 preceded the 1851 "Cotton Grove Resolution"—which some consider to be the beginning of the "Landmark" movement. These Baptists in North Carolina held Landmark principles before the supposed beginning of the Landmark movement. Bro. Purefoy writes:

Query from the church at Pleasant Grove: "Is it consistent with the spirit of the gospel, and according to the Scriptures, for any regular Baptist church to receive into her fellowship any member or members of another denomination, who have been baptized by immersion, without baptizing them again?"

Answer: "We think it is not."

The vote on this query, was unanimous. The Baptist is the only denomination that is not guilty of schism—of making a division when it came into existence. They existed prior to any pedobaptist denomination now in existence. Baptists have never seceded from any other denomination. All other denominations have either seceded from Rome or one another; they made a division when they came into existence, instead of receiving their baptisms as valid, they are to be marked and avoided for causing divisions. Romans 16:17.

We cannot admit the validity of their baptisms without admitting that they are true and scriptural gospel churches, if we, do this we unchurch ourselves, for God never set up or authorized but one Christian denomination. He is not the author of confusion, or of antagonistic denominations.

The Baptist is the only denomination that can claim descent from the apostolic churches, through the true persecuted and witnessing church, that fled into the wilderness for 1260 years. See Rev. 12:6 and 14.

That the Baptists have descended from this true church is susceptible of the clearest proof, This is not true of any other denomination. We all know the day when, and the man or men who set them up, and not one of them had existence before A.D. 1500. Ordinances cannot be validly administered by both Baptists and Pedobaptists, God is not the author of but one of them, consequently, we cannot receive members upon baptism administered by them, without repudiating the ordinances administered by ourselves. Pages 179-180.

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pleads for a resurrected Lazarus to witness to his living kindred. The response to the rich man's request was this, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Luke 16:29. It is evident these men lived when the witnesses were *the law and the prophets* and not John the Baptist or the Apostles. Lazarus lived before John's ministry, but this did not prevent his salvation nor his entering blissful heaven.

So what is the Kingdom of God into which men entered as early as 28 A.D.? It is the same kingdom which Daniel foretold would come in the days of the Roman Empire. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Daniel 2:44. Here Daniel shares particular characteristics pertaining to the Kingdom of God. First, the God of heaven is the founder. Second, the kingdom shall not be destroyed and shall stand forever.

The Son of God described His church as having these same characteristics: both divinely founded and indestructible. He described it thus, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Mat. 16:18. It was a church kingdom which Daniel foresaw. This church kingdom was founded by the "God of heaven"—our Emmanuel—when He organized the first New Testament church during His earthly ministry.

This view of the Kingdom of God harmonizes with our Lord's plain statement that no one entered it "until John." How could men enter the kingdom through the church which had not yet been organized? The Lord plainly gave the keys for its entry to the church. For He said to His church, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom", Matthew 16:19.

This view also harmonizes with another plain statement by our Savior regarding His kingdom. He was asked by the unbelieving Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come. He answered, "behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:22. Some, misunderstanding His answer, believe the kingdom is contained in the hearts of all believers. However, the Lord was speaking here to

unbelievers. How could the unbelieving Pharisees have the kingdom within their hearts? Our Lord was referring to His visible church which was with Him in the company of these Pharisees. The Presbyterian scholar, Dr. Marvin Vincent (1834-1922), explains this "within you" in his *New Testament Word Studies*. He writes:

Better, in the midst of. Meyer acutely remarks that "you refers to the Pharisees, in whose hearts nothing certainly found a place less than did the ethical kingdom of God." Moreover, Jesus is not speaking of the inwardness of the kingdom, but of its presence. "The whole language of the kingdom of heaven being within men, rather than men being within the kingdom, is modern" (Trench, after Meyer).

Dr. Vincent states that the idea of the Kingdom of God being contained in the hearts of believers is a modern notion. Our Baptist forefathers would give a hearty "Amen!" to Dr. Vincent's interpretation.

Let's consider the teachings of bygone Baptists on the nature of the Kingdom of God. D. B. Ray (1830-1922) in his *Baptist Succession* describes the Baptists' view of the kingdom as follows:

Baptists believe that the New Testament Kingdom of God, as foretold by the prophets, is the organic government over which Jesus Christ is the sole Law-Giver and Ruler, and whose laws and ordinances are administered through his churches as his executives, and that a local church possesses the only ecclesiastical authority on earth. The keys of the kingdom belong to the church to receive, try and expel members, and to give the gospel to the nations of the earth. Page 21.

Bro. Ray believed and taught that the citizenship of the Kingdom of God is made up of members of local churches. In other words, the Kingdom of God is a visible church kingdom of baptized believers and not an invisible kingdom of all the saved.

B. H. Carroll (1843-1914) wrote on the visible nature of the Kingdom of God in his *An Interpretation of the English Bible*.

All the context shows that a visible King had come; he was to be accepted by visible subjects, who would submit to visible ordinances, and be united for work

into a visible organization. For this visible organization officers would be appointed and laws established. This kingdom, while not of the world, was yet in the world... When we allow our minds to float off into fancies of invisible kingdoms and invisible churches, and to rest only on pure spiritualities without external visible forms, we do violence to the plainest laws of language. Volume 10, Page 110.

Bro. Carroll plainly believed and taught the Kingdom of God to be a visible kingdom "in the world" and not a future state of bliss for all the saved. Also he denied the notion of an invisible, universal kingdom of all the saved. He said such notions of "invisible kingdoms and invisible churches...do violence" to the Word of God.

The Kingdom of God, according to the plain teachings of scripture, is an aggregate of Christ's scriptural churches. This church kingdom was established during our Lord's earthly ministry with the establishment of the first church. It is a kingdom which has not been destroyed or left to other citizens. It has been and is presently composed of churches of like faith and order of the first church which the Lord organized. This view of the Kingdom of God was held by many of our Baptist forefathers and ought to be the view held by Baptists today.

WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This issue concludes the fourth volume of The Baptist Landmark. We are thankful unto God for His blessings upon this work. We are thankful unto you our readers for your correspondence, support and prayers. We are thankful for those who contribute articles, without whom this work would not be possible. We invite you to visit our website: www.thebaptistlandmark.com. There you can find former issues of this work on our archives page. We look forward to the new year and, Lord willing, a new volume of this work. May God richly bless you in the coming year. Merry Christmas.

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