

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

BIBLICAL GENDER ISSUES

By Michael R. Baggett

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3).

Gender is a hot topic in our society today. Our society is so gender crazed that some states allow parents to put “other” on the birth certificate. Some believe a man who thinks he is a woman should be allowed to go in the bathroom of his choice. Our society has accepted two men as parents to children. Women are entering more and more into traditional men’s line of work and leadership roles including more activity in the military. Sadly, some churches are feeling compelled to expand women’s roles in the church and to be more open-minded to same-sex marriage. Do the wind changes of society set the standard for truth in the church, or does the word of God?

Recently, the Southern Baptist Convention elected a new President. I am not endorsing this organization, just reporting what I read. One man who was up for the President of the Convention stood firmly on marriage being only between a man and a woman, believing in the husband as the head of the wife and rejecting the idea of women preachers. The other candidate was more open-minded to expanding women’s roles and to other gender related social issues. The more conservative candidate was elected, but not without some challenge. The reporter giving the report seemed to endorse the loser who is said to be looking to the trends of society and saying the church must weigh in on the new directions our society is headed and adjust the sails accordingly (paraphrased). I just wonder how many others secretly think like this. People need to get in the word of God and read it and believe and stick to it! The faith has been fully delivered and it is our duty to defend it whenever it is attacked on any Biblical matter. Troublesome times are here, but Jesus will deliver His faithful.

Everyone must remember that the attitude that sent Israel down the path to destruction in the days of the Judges is the desire to have a king like the nations around them (1 Sam. 8:5). In desiring a king, they rejected God. Oh, how man messes things up when he ventures out all on his own (Jer. 10:23)!

We serve a God who does not change His mind about right and wrong (Heb. 13:8; Jas. 1:17). The Bible reveals the mind of God, and His Word does not come with the latest updates like an I-phone. Just like God, Himself, the Bible stays the same in every generation (Psa. 89:7). Until religious people get this point, they will never come to the whole truth concerning the organization of the local church or the home. Many will pick and choose what they will believe as if viewing the word of God through a pair of glasses that see current social trends as a standard to filter what to pick and what to reject from God’s word.

The church should be as open-minded as God is and as close-minded as God. The standard for our beliefs and practices must be rooted and settled in the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles. Even if our society were to agree 100% that women’s roles be expanded in the churches and that boys who think they are girls belong in the girl’s bathroom, we must stand on the side of God and His word. Right and wrong is not determined by the number of people who believe a matter. The people of God have always been in the minority. Noah and his family were in the minority in the days of the flood (Gen. 6-7). In the judgment, few will be saved compared to the large numbers of people who lived (Matt. 7:13-14). The Bible says, **“Though the wicked join hand-in-hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered”** (Prov. 11:21).

Churches do not need conventions, Bible colleges or groups of men to tell them which way to set their sails in

the churches to determine what to believe or how to worship and serve Christ. The matter is settled forever in Heaven (Psa. 119:89). We must not follow the multitudes to do evil (Ex. 23:2). If numbers of church members decide to leave because the local churches will not change their minds about gender issues; then let them leave! The Lord wants people who are right down the line in following His truth. You can call me strait-laced or legalistic or whatever, but in the end, I want to be called faithful! If you attend a congregation that is setting its sails according to the winds of our society, it is time for you to leave! ■

Satan Loves Watermelon

By Kent Heaton

I was cutting into a fine watermelon the other day when I realized that Satan also likes watermelon. To cut the melon into quarters, I always begin at the heart. This particular melon was a seeded melon; I think the heart is usually the sweetest part and has fewer seeds. As I cut into that fine melon flesh, it occurred to me that this is exactly what Satan does with us—he aims for our hearts.

In Genesis 3, we read of Satan's appeal to Eve. He did not come with showmanship and big bands and direct appeals for her to rebel against God. He went right for the heart. He said, ***"Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"*** (Gen. 3:1). He did not bring the fruit to her or force her to partake of it. He sought for Eve's heart first to move her in the direction of rebellion. ***"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate"*** (Gen. 3:6).

The heart is the battleground of righteousness and unrighteousness. Jesus said of the Pharisees, ***"Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"*** (Matt. 12:34). The apostle Paul declared, ***"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"*** (2 Cor. 10:4-5). This is where battles are won and lost. Satan always seeks to bring our hearts under his submission.

In the parable of the Sower (Matthew 13), the Lord compared the different types of hearts to soil (ground) types—wayside, rocky, thorny, and good ground. The way a person receives the seed (God's word—Luke 8:11) depends on his heart type. Satan takes the seed away from hardened hearts; kills it in weak hearts; and causes the ***"cares, riches, and pleasures of life"*** (Lk. 8:14) to make good hearts unfruitful. The only heart over which Satan has no control is the heart broken of its hardness—the heart that has removed the rocks of worldliness and refuses to allow the weeds of life to choke the good ground's productivity.

God has always wanted our hearts. In Noah's day, He destroyed the world because the ***"thought of [man's] heart was only evil continually"*** (Gen. 6:5). In Psalm 19:14, David penned, ***"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer."*** Later, the Holy Spirit would say that David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). To win the battle of the heart, we must ***"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength"*** (Mk. 12:30). Satan cannot control such hearts.

To protect against the unyielding oppression of Satan's influence, we must allow the ***"peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, [to] guard [our] hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"*** (Phil. 4:7). That is the only way to keep Satan from cutting out the heart. Refuse to open up to him and refuse to allow him to influence your life. ***"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you"*** (Jas. 4:7). When we submit our hearts to God's will, the devil cannot stand. He cannot touch our hearts. Resist him! — ***Knollwood church of Christ Articles***, August 2009. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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