

South Florida Bible College
& Theological Seminary
Journal

Volume II
2014

1100 S. Federal Highway, Deerfield Beach, FL 33441
(954) 545-4500
© 2014 South Florida Bible College

CONTENTS

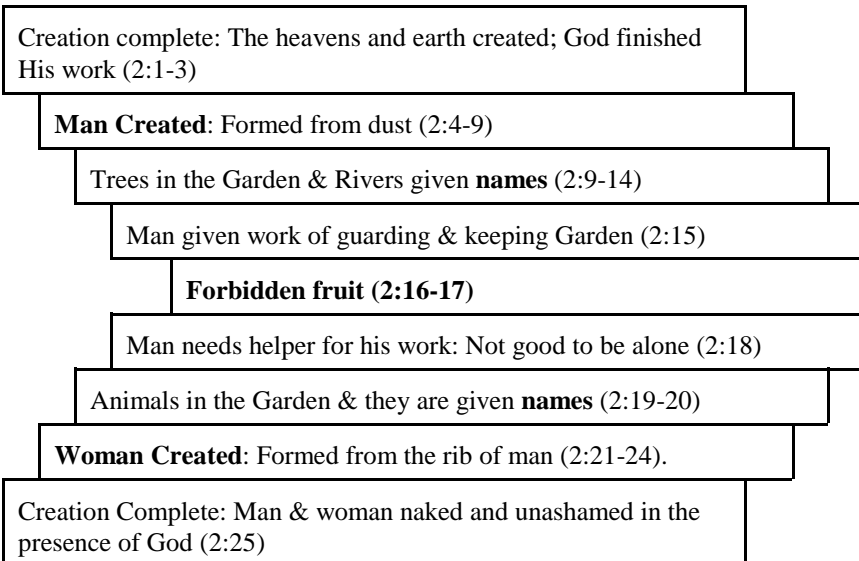
The Prophecy of Death in Genesis 2:16-17 John T. Stevenson	1
A Dwindling Candle – A Reflection of Human Vanity Christopher Jack De Giovanni	10
God’s Image Claudy Jean Baptiste	18
A Holistic Approach to Pastoral Care Gayla Reid	25
Understanding Your Purpose & Destiny in Life: The Blood Covenant Tom Drabik	40
Marriage in an Unmarried World Sandra Osori	45
The Message, Not the Messenger John V. Mezzacappa	55
Jesus and the Woman of Canaan Pamela R. Smith	67
Abstracts of Recent SFBC&TS Theses & Dissertations	
Helping Children in the Church When Their Parents Are Divorcing The Experience of the First Brazilian Baptist Church of South Florida Rosemayri Da Cunha Damacena	72
A Synopsis of a Reading Curriculum/program for English Language Learners (Ells) Carla G. Calistrato	73
The Writing Connection: A Transferable Model for Developing Writing Skills for College Preparation Robin Vickers	74

The Prophecy of Death in Genesis 2:16-17

John T. Stevenson

The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17).

This prophecy that will be the central focus of this study was given by the Lord at the very beginning of creation and contains both a permission, a prohibition, and a prophetic warning of what would take place if the prohibition were ignored. It has been noted that this section occupies a central and even pivotal position in the second chapter of Genesis.



The purpose of this study will be to examine the specific fulfillment of the consequences contained in the warning against eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Before we look at that fulfillment, it will be beneficial to note the specifics of the promise.

The promise seems to be quite clear as God tells Adam and Eve, “in the day that you eat from it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:17). The Hebrew text literally

John Stevenson is Academic Dean and a professor at South Florida Bible College & Theological Seminary in the Divisions of Biblical Studies and Christian Ministry and holds a Doctor of Ministries degree.

says, “dying, you will die” (בֹּרֶת תִּמְוֹרֶת), though we should understand this, not as speaking of two deaths, but as a Hebrew figure of speech indicating the certainty of that which is promised. The translators of the NAS correctly capture this idea when they render it, “You will surely die.”

Not only is the certainty of death given in this prophecy, but the time element in the prophecy is quite specific. This certain death would take place “in the day that you eat from it.” It should be noted that the term “day” had been previously defined in Genesis 1 as that which encompassed evening and morning. Though there have been a number of differing interpretations of the true meaning of the six days of creation, few have tried to attach such explanations to Genesis 2:17. Indeed, the serpent echoes this reference to the day by making the claim that “God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). Thus we have a contrast between what God says will happen on the day that man eats versus what the serpent says will happen on the day in which man eats. Leupold takes this a step further to say that “the thought actually to be expressed is the instantaneous occurrence of the penalty threatened” (1975:128).

What would take place on the day that man ate of the forbidden fruit? He would die. We have already noted that the double reference to death in the Hebrew text is a figure of speech underscoring the certainty of that death. But this does not in itself tell us what would be the nature of that death. Waltke follows Leupold in claiming that this death was primarily spiritual. He does this because it is very evident in the subsequent chapter that when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they did not immediately fall down and die. Instead we read in Genesis 5 how they continued to live what seems to have been long lives. We are not told this in the case of Eve, but we read of Adam living to an advanced old age of 930 years.

This brings us to the crux of our problem. It is a problem between promise and fulfillment. The promise from God was that eating would lead to death on that very day. The fulfillment as recorded in Genesis 3-5 sees physical death taking place only after a very long period of many hundreds of years. The question of how we are to reconcile the difference between the promise and the fulfillment has brought forth a variety of interpretations..

The promise is that this death would take place “in the day” (בַּיּוֹם) in which the forbidden fruit was eaten. It has been argued that the phrase “in the day” is not necessarily always meant to be taken with rigid literalism. For example, Genesis 2:4 speaks of “in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens” and the previous chapter describes the making of heaven and earth as a process that spanned six days. Likewise, we read in 1 Kings 2:42 of the ordinance of Solomon that “on the day: that Shimei left Jerusalem he was to die. And while Shimei was subsequently put to death for his infraction of that ordinance, the fact that it took place after his trip from Jerusalem to Gath and back again is an indication that it did not take place on that exact day. Hamilton uses these examples to argue that “the verse is underscoring the certainty of death, not its chronology” (1990:172).

Notwithstanding, the great majority of indications where we see an action promised to occur “in that day,” the natural and expected understanding is that the corresponding result will indeed take place on that very day and not at some distant

time in the future. This means that we most likely should look for the fulfillment to the warning from God within the pages of Genesis 3 where we read of the specific results of Adam and Eve’s eating of the forbidden fruit. This brings us back to the original problem in that it is evident from the words of Scripture that Adam and Eve did not die on that day.

One can understand the temptation to explain away this seeming contradiction by reinterpreting the promise of death as referring only to spiritual death. Waltke is not alone in taking this approach. But does this particular passage support or even allow such an interpretation? When we look into Genesis 4 and 5, each of the many references to death refer to physical death. Cain kills Abel and is subsequently afraid that someone will find him and kill him. Lamech kills a young man and writes a song to boast of the fact. Throughout the lengthy genealogy of Genesis 5, we hear the constant refrain, “And he died,” and we understand each of these references to speak of physical death. Nor does this pattern change once we come to the later chapters of Genesis.

Though we can agree with Chafer when he describes the three forms of death in the Bible as being spiritual, physical, and eternal, neither spiritual or eternal death are specifically mentioned in the book of Genesis or anywhere else in the Pentateuch. This is not to deny that spiritual death took place at the fall, but it is legitimate to ask whether the language of Genesis 2 is necessarily referencing that sort of separation. Given the fact that all other descriptions of death within the context of the entire book of Genesis are limited to the physical, we should expect the same to hold true to this passage.

The Immediate Results of Sin

As we read of the account in Genesis 3 of the fall into sin, we do read of a number of immediate changes that were brought about as a result of the eating of the forbidden fruit. Among these were certain changes that had, at least in part, been predicted by the serpent.

Serpent’s Prediction	Result of Eating
“You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened , and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:4-5).	Then the eyes of both of them were opened , and they knew that they were naked... (Genesis 3:7).

Wenham argues that “on first reading at least, God seems to have tried to deceive his creatures by issuing threats he subsequently did not fulfill. The snake told the truth, not the Lord God” (1987:74). In echo of the serpent’s words, we are told that the eyes of the man and the woman were opened and that they did come to have a knowledge. But if we look more carefully, we see some vital differences between

the serpent’s prediction and the subsequent result.

We do not read that they came to know good and evil. Instead, their newly opened eyes brought an awareness of their nakedness and this led to shame. We should remember that this is written to those who lived in an honor/shame culture and that the weight of this shame would have been felt to a much greater degree than might be felt in a western culture. Their attempt to respond to this sense of shame by the manufacture of coverings of fig leaves is seen to be less than adequate when they hear the sound of the Lord in the garden and they hide themselves.

The Lord comes and questions both the man and the woman to bring them to the point of admitting their infraction. A series of judgments are then passed upon all parties as seen in the following chart:

Person	Description	Judgment
The Serpent	Had been described as more crafty than any beast of the field	Cursed more than every beast of the field
The Woman	Had eaten and given the fruit to her husband	Multiplied pain in childbirth and ruled by her husband
The Man	Had listened to the voice of his wife instead of God	The ground (<i>Adamah</i>) is cursed and he will die and return to it

This chart demonstrates the applicability of each of the judgments. The serpent who had been described as more crafty than any beast of the field would not be cursed more than every beast of the field. He would “eat the dust.” There is a similar American expression that speaks of one’s death and defeat that says, “He bit the dust.”

The woman who had taken the lead in eating of the forbidden fruit and then giving it to her husband would find her pain multiplied in childbirth and her husband would take the lead in ruling over her. Despite this, her desire would be for a husband. That is, she would continue to want a husband and children, even though that husband would rule over her and even though children would be accompanied by multiplied pain.

The man who had listened to the voice of his wife instead of the command of God would find that the ground which served as his namesake (the Hebrew word for ground is *Adamah*) would now be cursed so that he would need to battle with the ground to coax crops from its soil. Ultimately, the ground would win the battle as he would die and return to the dust from which he had been taken.

However, prior to that, we read that *the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them* (Genesis 3:21). This is in obvious response to the issue of their nakedness and shame that had been brought about by their sin in eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The fact that this is written to an honor / shame culture means that this act of clothing Adam and his wife has a great deal more import than it might to our western minds. The next time the Biblical

account will speak of nakedness is when Noah is uncovered within the confines of his own tent and that will be of such import that one of his descendants will be cursed as a result of the shame that is brought to bear (Genesis 9:20-25).

For many years, students of the Bible have seen this act of providing garments of skin the first sacrifice. It is true that we are not told how God provided the coats of skin and it is admittedly possible that they were created on the spot, but it seems a more obvious implication that they were brought about through the death of an animal. When we come to Genesis 4, we shall see Cain and Abel bringing sacrifices to the Lord and, in the case of Abel, that will involve bringing animals from Abel's own flock as a sacrifice. It is not too much of a stretch to see this action as having its initiation in the first sacrifice that God had made through the slaying of an animal in order to provide the coats of skin that would cover the shame of Adam and Eve.

If we are correct in our assumption as to the origin of the coats of skin, then Genesis 3:21 is the first death to have taken place in all of recorded history. Whereas the warning of death had been given in the previous chapter and the expectancy of timeliness for that death would take place "on that day," so now it was on that very day that a death took place in the presence of Adam and Eve. Instead of them dying, they witnessed the death of an innocent substitute. The shame of their guilt was covered by the garment of skin that was provided through that death.

The Promise of a Seed

Genesis 3:15 describes a perpetual enmity that would be established between the serpent and the woman that would continue to manifest itself in two seeds. The fact that this is a promise between two seeds is striking, for the idea of a seed had already been introduced in Genesis 1 as a picture of that which perpetuated life. The plant kingdom had been described as "yielding seed" and being created "with seed in them" in Genesis 1:11-12. By the same token, mankind had been told to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28) and a sign of the divine provision for that multiplication had been "every plant yielding seed" and "every tree which has fruit yielding seed" (Genesis 1:29).

The promise of Genesis 3:15 takes on a lyrical quality, setting forth a pattern of conflict that will shape the rest of the book of Genesis as well as the rest of the Bible:

*And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel (Genesis 3:15).*

The first seed was to be the seed of the serpent. It was the seed of rebellion. It was the seed of sin. It is made up of all who walked in the way of Adam in turning against God. But there is also a second seed promised. It is the seed of the woman. This second seed is set over against the first seed. The two seeds are at war with one

another and God has decreed that the second seed shall ultimately win.

Ross says this verse “suggests that some force behind the serpent would perpetuate the struggle that took place in the garden. Accordingly, many interpreters over the years have concluded that the curse is on satanic forces as well as the reptile” (1988:145). This is appropriate when we remember how Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 speak of “the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan.” But we must also note that the writer of Genesis did not have the book of Revelation in his day and would therefore not necessarily make such a connection. That means we can look at this prophecy from two different perspectives. The first is through the eyes of Moses as the presumed author and his original readers and then through our own perspective that is informed by the New Testament writers. In doing so, we will see both an immediate as well as an ultimate fulfillment to this prophecy.

The immediate fulfillment begins to be seen in the next chapter and through the rest of the book of Genesis. It is the story of two seeds. First we read of Cain and Abel. Although they are brothers who are physically descended from the same father and mother, Cain shows himself to be of the spiritual seed of the serpent by murdering his brother. In this action, he is giving outward expression to an enmity that echoes back to this original promise in the Garden of Eden.

God subsequently replaces murdered Abel with Seth and we are given a genealogy of both Cain and Seth. Cain's seed, listed in Genesis 4, leads us seven generations to Lamech, a man who is willing not only to murder a man, but to compose a song in which he boasts of his deed. By contrast, Seth's seed in Genesis 5 leads us seven generations to Enoch who walks with God, and from there to Noah who finds grace in the eyes of the Lord and is spared the destruction of the Flood.

The story does not stop there. Noah has three sons. One of them performs a shameful deed which demonstrates that he is of the spiritual seed of the serpent. He and his descendants through Canaan are cursed. The impact of this cursing would not have been missed on the Israelites for whom Moses wrote the book of Genesis as they were expecting to enter the land of Canaan and bring that curse to fruition.

Noah's other son, Shem, is given the promise of blessing. The Babel Rebellion is therefore an account of men trying to make a *SHEM* for themselves as Shem is the Hebrew word for “name.” They are dispersed among the nations but there is one who is called out to be a blessing to the nations. His name is Abraham and God proclaims that all the world will be blessed through him. He has two sons. One can be seen to be spiritually as the seed of the serpent, not because he is intrinsically evil, but because he is not chosen by God as the promised one. Ishmael is cast out while Isaac is chosen as the spiritual seed of God.

Isaac also has two sons. They are twins. But one demonstrates a lack of loyalty to the birthright and shows himself to be of the spiritual seed of the serpent. Esau does not hold the blessings of God in high esteem. The promised seed instead passes through Jacob. Kline summarizes the import of this movement:

God's pronouncing of the curse of enmity was a declaration of holy war. The Lord had come, therefore, not to bring peace (at least not yet), but a sword, to turn history into a struggle that would issue at last in the final

destruction of the devil's power. God's avenging counterattack would begin where Satan's assault began, with the woman. It would then continue unrelentingly through the generations of human history so that from the expanding family of man God would rally the holy army of the new mankind who were one with Eve in her divinely initiated hatred of the devil, a spiritual family of the woman which would continue to wage the holy war against the devil and his brood among men (2006:133).

As Moses writes the book of Genesis, the children of Israel are in the wilderness. The question before them is this: Which seed are they to be? Will they follow in the footsteps of the serpent? Or will they show themselves to be of the seed of the Lord? Each new generation will determine which seed it is. Will it continue in the covenant relation to God and show itself to be a part of the promised seed? Or will it turn from God to join and be a part of the seed of the serpent?

This holy war finds its climactic battle when Jesus come on the scene, born of a woman, living a sinless life, and then dying upon the cross. He is the ultimate seed of the woman whose death was pictured in the original promise as a bruising of the heel. Kline's description is worthy of note:

What is in view in the all-decisive battle is a judgment ordeal by individual combat, fought by a champion from each of the opposing armies. Mention of a wound to be suffered by the champion of the woman's army does not throw in doubt the decisive victory he is to gain for them (2006:134).

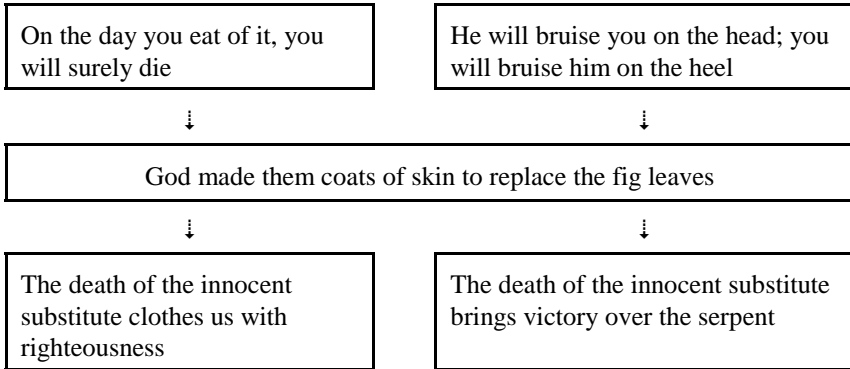
This means that the death that was promised for those who had sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit would be ultimately embraced by the seed of the woman who would serve as the champion all humanity. That champion is Jesus. His description as "the seed of the woman" is seen, not only in the fact that He comes to conquer the sin that had begun at her hands, but in a very real sense, we can see him as the seed of the woman in the circumstances of the virgin birth. He came from a woman in a way that was apart from the seed of a man.

Later prophets would speak about Him being bruised for our iniquities and, while we can see the description of His heel being bruised as a reflection of the suffering and death of His body and His human nature, it is also true that there were literal nails utilized in the bruising of both hands and heels.¹ In going to the cross, He would die the ultimate death that had been first promised in the Garden of Eden.

However, we have already noted that the promise of death looked to an

¹ The Roman practice of driving a nail through the heel of the victim of crucifixion was graphically demonstrated in the 1968 archaeological find of the bones of a crucified man in which a nail had been driven through his heels in order to fasten him to a cross. See *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Jan/Feb 1985, pg 44-53.

expectation of immediate fulfillment; it was to take place “on the day you eat.” When the Lord appears on the scene in the garden after Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, the reader expects Him to carry out this promised sentence of death. Instead, He gives a promise that, in its final and complete form, looks to that sentence of death being meted out to the promised seed of the woman. We read that his heel would be bruised, even as he carried out his ultimate victory over the serpent. Though this would not take place for many thousands of years, we have seen that there did take place on that very day a substitutionary death that served as both a type and a promise of the ultimate sacrifice that was to come. Notice the parallel between the promises of Genesis 2:17 with that of Genesis 3:15.



At the same time, the passage comes to a close with the expulsion from the garden and the stated reason this takes place is because of the possibility that man “might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” (Genesis 3:22). Sarna points to the earlier reference to God’s creation of the tree of life and suggests that its presence “presupposes a belief that man, created from perishable matter, was mortal from the outset but that he had within his grasp the possibility of immortality” by the continued eating of that tree (1989:18-19). Accordingly, he views the prohibition warning, not against the enforcement of capital punishment, but of the immediate removal from the life-sustaining tree of life, “in other words, inevitable expulsion from the garden” (1989:21).

The death that took place on the day in which Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit involved their removal from the presence of that which sustained their life. They were cut off from the tree of life and now entered the realm of death. By contrast, we have come by faith to the ultimate seed of the woman who was nailed to a tree of death in order to bring us into the realm of life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brueggemann, Walter

1982 *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press

Davis, John J.

1975 *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker

Gaebelein, Frank E., Ed

1992 *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Old Testament Set, 7 Volumes*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

Hamilton, Victor P.

1990 *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans

Kessler, Martin & Deurloo, Karel

2004 *A Commentary on Genesis: The Book of Beginnings*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press 2004.

Kline, Meredith G.

2006 *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock

Leupold, H.C.

1975 *Leupold on the Old Testament: Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker

Ross, Allen P.

1988 *Creation and Blessing: A guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker

Sarna, Nahum M.

1989 *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*. Philadelphia, PA: JPS

Wenham, Gordon J.

1987 *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 1: Genesis 1-15*. Columbia: Thomas Nelson

Waltke, Bruce K. & Cathi J. Fredricks

2001 *Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

A Dwindling Candle – A Reflection of Human Vanity

Christopher Jack De Giovanni

Mankind has an innate, compulsory desire to pass along their accumulated knowledge and wisdom to the generations that follow. The means of accomplishing this task takes many forms: an aging father lectures and encapsulates his experiences for his children; a sage retreats to a quiet study, where he pours the remainder of his frail life into volumes of books; and a poet almost magically etches into history his thoughts and unanswered questions through the writing of neatly compiled proverbs, stanzas, and rhymes. Their efforts to preserve life experience are not in vain; for mankind has an equally built-in unction to scour and devour the words, thoughts, and conclusions of those preceding their own sadly, transient lives. The wiser and more renowned the father, sage, or poet, the greater the thirst is for their perspectives and thoughts on human life.

Amongst those offering the treasures of their wisdom is a man said to be wiser than all before and after him: the Hebrew King Solomon, who was father, sage, and poet. The Holy Scriptures alone accredit the authorship of 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs to the wise king. Aside from a wealth of intellect and wisdom, King Solomon was also no stranger to earthly means; for in his day, the coveted metals of silver and gold were said to have been as plentiful as stones; silver itself being considered worthless. So renowned was this son of David that the kings of the world are said to have come from afar in thirst of his wisdom. Nothing was hidden from the king: the questions long pondered, and the thoughts that baffled the human mind found clarity in the light of Solomon's GOD-given wisdom. As this unique man of unsurpassed human intelligence neared his later years of frail existence, he was not exempt from the desire to pass along the legacy of his experience and wisdom. As a father, sage, and poet, the aging King Solomon sought to organize his thoughts into a final and conclusive homily; in which he would share with his children, disciples, and adherents the destination that his divinely bestowed insight had led him. The opening words of this sermon have been preserved in the Book of Ecclesiastes for our own edification; and, it is the purpose of this paper to discuss and trace the development and intent of Solomon's opening statement: "*Vanity of Vanities*", says the Preacher, "*Vanity of Vanities! All is vanity.*"

Background – *Vanity of Vanities*

In the prospect of sales, it is said that there is nothing more important than an opening statement.¹ If this be true, then King Solomon's wisdom was no

¹ <http://www.justsell.com/opening-statements/> (accessed March 9, 2014).

stranger to the art of selling, as his opening line is not only captivating, but it leaves one wanting; that is, wanting to hear why; namely, why does he say all is vanity? To find the answer to this question, one must first bear in mind the life of Solomon, while acknowledging that he is not speaking hypothetically, but out of the treasury of his own human heart and experience.

King Solomon inherited the kingdom of Israel, the nation of GOD, from his late father David: a man who was not only beloved by the people, but who was said to have been a man after GOD's own heart. Furthermore, at the time of Solomon's coronation, he became leader of the most powerful nation of the then known world.² Needless to say, the young Solomon, who according to Josephus began his reign at fourteen years old, had rather large shoes to fill.³ Recognizing his inadequacy, the Scriptures record that when GOD offered to grant him any request, the youthful king requested "an understanding heart...to discern between good and evil." The LORD GOD was so pleased with Solomon's selfless request that He granted to him not only a wise and discerning heart, but also riches and honor. As GOD promised, Solomon soon became unequaled in wisdom, riches, and fame. As King Solomon lived out his life, these very blessings of GOD became the tools that fueled his endless search for meaning: with his wisdom he tirelessly critiqued and pondered the ways of the world, while also implementing his wisdom to accomplish every work that entered his mind; with his wealth he spared himself no luxury, but rather he ate freely from the world's imperial warehouse of materialism and pleasure; and, with his renowned fame his royal court knew no lack of honor, for earthly kings and queens paid their respects to him and showered him with the treasures of the world; not to mention that his own personal harem was equipped with over seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Needless to say, in the course of his life, King Solomon nearly sucked dry the world's pool of pride. Nothing Solomon's heart coveted was outside of his means; nothing his eyes desired was outside of his grasp; nor was nothing withheld from him that would have diminished his pride. All of this is said to establish a simple, yet important fact: whereas some may daydream of experiencing human life to its fullest, yet lack the means and wit to do so, King Solomon did not; for if ever a man knew the grandeur of the world – that is, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – it was the great King Solomon.

Experience talks; battle wounds give credence to one's war stories. In the case of Solomon, he had both the experience, and the scars of life to prove him as not only qualified, but as the best candidate to speak on the matter of human

² Halley, H. H. (2007). *Halley's Bible Handbook with the New International Version: Deluxe Edition* (220-21). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

³ Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). *The Works of Josephus: Complete and unabridged* (Antiquities VIII, vii 8). Peabody: Hendrickson. (*It should be noted that Josephus is disputed by many on this conclusion).

meaning (that is, from a strictly human perspective). In other words, if ever someone could say “been-there, done-that”, it was the great Hebrew King Solomon; for no pleasure of life was kept back from him. And, having no tickling of the flesh withheld from him, near the end of his life, according to Jewish tradition, he settles down to write his final known book: the Book of Ecclesiastes; in which, he unveils to all who anxiously await to hear, and perhaps live vicariously through, his life experiences that led him to his final and conclusive thesis statement.⁴ With anticipation so high, one can almost hear the clamoring amidst the drum roll, as the opening words are being announced: “*Vanity of Vanities*”, says the Preacher, “*Vanity of Vanities! All is vanity.*” Perplexing: of all the buckets Solomon could have reeled up from the reservoir of his well of wisdom, he chose, “*Vanity of Vanities!* This is it: the concluding thought of human experience is that all human pursuit of worldly pleasure is utterly, shamefully, and meaninglessly empty. However, the author will later reveal that his thesis is not a solo, but a duet; meaning, this opening statement is merely the rice without the beans. Nevertheless, we will first analyze the part, apart from the whole.

Throughout the twelve chapters of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon uses the Hebrew word *hebel*, which in English is translated primarily as *vanity* or *futility*, thirty-eight times (NASB).⁵ In fact, the term is even deployed as the trustworthy gatekeeper to the beginning and ending of the book’s literary body (Eccl 1:2; 12:8); acting as an inclusio.⁶ Then, the remaining appearances of *hebel* are strategically stationed before and after key supportive arguments (e.g. Eccl 2:1 and 2:11). Therefore, the term’s overwhelming usage coupled with such key literary placement(s) clearly establishes vanity as the major theme of his final book; and, all subthemes should thereby be understood in light of this overarching premise.

As can be expected, throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon labels numerous human activities as utter vanity (e.g. pursuit of wisdom or wealth; the pleasure of work or success). Yet, most, if not all, can be categorized into two general concepts of meaninglessness: human achievement, and human pleasure. These will be looked at more closely.

The Futility of Human Achievement

The pursuit of achievement seems to be woven into the very fiber of mankind’s soul. To find a man idly wandering through life without ever once

⁴ Geisler, N. L. (1977). *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament* (214). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁵ Wilkins, W. D. (2000). *The Strongest: NASB Exhaustive Concordance* (1998 ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁶ Biblical Studies Press. (2006). *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Eccl 1:2). Biblical Studies Press.

setting a goal is the exception and not the norm. If there be any doubt to this statement, simply ponder for a moment the vast quantities of money spent on books, education, research, and building projects. Rick Warren's book on the *Purpose Driven Life* has by itself sold over thirty million copies to date. People thirst for a sense of purpose and achievement in life; and, as a result, are endlessly working to accomplish something...anything! The renowned automobile maker, Henry Ford once said, "There is joy in work. There is no happiness except in the realization that we have accomplished something."⁷ King Solomon was no stranger to this innate desire to achieve and work towards a purpose. In fact, in Ecclesiastes, he recalls numerous goals, projects, and works that he in fact set out to accomplish and then achieved. For example, Solomon set his mind to exploring wisdom and he obtained it in measure above all others (Eccl 1:13, 16-17); he built houses, planted vineyards, made gardens and parks and ponds of water (Eccl 2:4-6); and, he ventured to understand the nature of politics (Eccl 4:13-16). Similarly, mankind today still pursues these very achievements: a large portion of Americans set out to seek higher education; countless families are continually improving on or building new homes, and creating with their hands anything they imagine worthy or interesting; and, a whole field of study exists in schools of higher learning for understanding the nature of politics. Interestingly, the fact that mankind is still pursuing the same tasks and achievements as their predecessors serves to prove a major point made by King Solomon; that is, human venture is utterly meaningless and leaves one lacking fulfillment: *that which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done; for there is nothing new under the sun* (Eccl 1:9). Some may reason, "certainly mankind has stumbled upon newness throughout the ages," yet, this simply is not true: mankind merely *discovers* that which is, and that which always has been. In the words of Warren Wiersbe, "Man cannot 'create' anything new because man is the creature, not the Creator."⁸

Aside from the vanity of human achievement in light of nothing new, King Solomon also concludes that human accomplishment and work is futility in light of a common enemy: death (Eccl 2:16 cf. Heb 9:27). At one point, Solomon lamented his accumulation of superior wisdom when realizing that he nonetheless shares the same fate with the fool of fools; for even the greatest mathematician is not needed to understand that ten out of ten people will die. All share the same fate: the righteous along with the wicked; the diligent along with the lazy; the rich along with the poor (cf. Eccl 9:2). As a poet would say, "Most men eddy about, Here and there—eat and drink, Chatter and love and hate, Gather and squander, are raised Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust, Striving blindly, achieving Nothing; and

⁷ Henry Ford. BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2014.

<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/h/henryford122323.html>, (accessed March 9, 2014).

⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Wisdom and Poetry* (484). Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

then they die.”⁹ Considering that all men are bound to die, what then is the ultimate meaning in tirelessly pouring your few passing years into achievement? Will your achievement keep you, or even follow you to the grave? Certainly, death has a way of humbling even the most prideful of men.

The sagacious king discovered another point of vanity to all human achievement and effort: the works of mankind – no matter how small or great – cannot endure. This realization is the final blow; for perhaps man – in recognizing the certainty of their death – would embrace the idea that they could live on through their works. Yet, no solace may be found in this thought: the work of mankind is temporal, even at best (cf. Eccl 3:14). Severus, the late Emperor of Rome, cried out in his dying moment, “I have been everything; and everything is nothing!”¹⁰ Therefore, the vainness of human achievement is demonstrated threefold: no work is new; the achiever will die; and, the work will not matter or last.

The Futility of Human Pleasure

The hedonist will likely advocate that the aim of life is to experience human pleasure. “Let’s eat, drink, and be merry; for tomorrow we die!” the Epicurean would say. In keeping with these thoughts, King Solomon too sought to explore the claims that meaning could be found in human pleasure. For he said to himself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself.” (Eccl 2:1). In his test, the king indulged in the choice pleasures of both world and flesh: he satisfied his body with laughter, wine, and sexual delights shared with his numerous concubines; he satisfied his eyes with the collection of great wealth in the form of servants, flocks and herds, silver and gold and untold of treasures; and, he satisfied his ears with the sweet melodies of the world’s greatest singers. In fact, in his very words, he did not withhold any pleasure from his heart: all that his eyes desired, he did not keep back (Eccl 2:10). Yet, in contrary to the conclusions of the hedonist or Epicurean, King Solomon rejected the notion that satisfaction was found in pleasure.

How many a man has fallen slave to satisfying their flesh since Solomon’s day. To date, American culture is steaming with an insatiable lust for pleasure. For instance, sex in our culture is rampant: condoms are handed out to our children in school; youth acquire birth control from the local pharmacies; promiscuous mothers are likened to cougars; and the very concept of sex is the greatest method of marketing! Sex is not the only mode of pleasure being sought; for the heart of man covets all which he does not have and desires to seek pleasure in countless ways: fashion, merchandise, food, alcohol, or even drugs; anything to

⁹ Matthew Arnold’s poem “Rugby Chapel”, qtd. in: Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Wisdom and Poetry* (477). Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

¹⁰ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

give “the fix”. It has been noted that it now costs more to amuse a child than it once did to educate his father.¹¹ Sensuality and covetousness oozes from the heart of man like green pus from a freshly squeezed wound. Yet, one will soon discover of pleasure, as the great King Solomon noted, “What does it accomplish?” It too was vanities of vanities, even as striving after the wind; for no lasting satisfaction can be found in the pursuit of pleasure. The eye is never satisfied with seeing; the ear is never satisfied with hearing; the body is never satisfied with sensuality; the stomach and palate of man is never appeased. Instead, once human pleasure is sought, an endless cycle commences: covetousness breeds covetousness, and pleasure begs greater pleasure. Thus, the last state of the man is worse still; for the pursuit of human pleasure never knows true satisfaction, because it itself is a bottomless pit.

In addition to the unsatisfactory nature of human pleasure, there is yet another reason King Solomon advanced to attest to the futility of its pursuit. The idea was birthed at the rethinking of an unwanted event; that is, death. Namely, the king bewailed the thought that upon dying, he would leave the fruit of his labors to another. And, honestly speaking, there was no way he could guarantee that the inheritor would not prove to be a fool (Eccl 2:18-20). If he were a fool, then the fruit of his labor would be squandered; or, worse yet, lost to others. If this were to occur, then, the great pains taken to collect the earthly pleasures would be nullified. Unfortunately, in Solomon’s case, his fears were realized; for his foolish son Rehoboam quickly lost the vast majority of his kingdom to Jeroboam, and he then later lost a greater portion of Solomon’s wealth to the Egyptian Pharaoh (1 Kings 12; 14:25-28). Thus is the fate of all who die: not only can you not take your pleasures with you beyond the grave, but you cannot know how soon they will be squandered or lost by the inheritors.

There is a story that relates that the Persians, when they obtained a victory, selected the noblest slave and made him king for three days; clothed him with royal robes and ministered to him all the pleasures he could choose; but at the end of all he was to die as a sacrifice to mirth and folly.¹² In light of all the pleasures of Persia, would you be so quick to weigh your life? For in such a way are the pleasures of the world short-lived. Therefore, as in this case and every case, the vanity of human pleasure is at minimum threefold: human pleasure cannot bring true satisfaction; earthly pleasures cannot exist for you beyond death; and you cannot guarantee the outcome of your accumulated treasures after you die. For these reasons and more, the pursuit of human pleasure is utter vanity.

¹¹ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

¹² Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

Conclusion – *The Point of Pointlessness*

The whole of human life can be likened to a bowl of freshly, sliced lemons: at glance they appear appealing and inviting, but they taste unbearably bitter. Such is Solomon’s case study on human life: mankind is but a dwindling candle, experiencing the vanity of life until the wick and flame expires! But, is the sum of his wisdom nothing more than existential nihilism, or has King Solomon masterfully stripped our minds of inward pride to prepare us to meet human vanity’s dancing partner? The sage’s concluding words in Ecclesiastes suggests the latter. As it is written, “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.” (Eccl 12:13-14). Therefore, as Norman Geisler notes, “The fundamental teaching of the book is twofold: negatively, no true happiness is found in what this world has to offer and, positively, true satisfaction is found only in God.”¹³ And there you have it: the soloist has been joined by his partner, and the final culmination is now known: vanity is the result of human life when lived apart from GOD, while true achievement and pleasure is realized in the fear of the One who gave man life. “Solomon, was no pessimist, cynic, or skeptic...He was a believer who sought to destroy people’s confidence in their own efforts, their own abilities, their own righteousness and to direct them to faith in God as the only possible basis for meaning, value, and significance to life ‘under the sun.’”¹⁴ Ecclesiastes’ declaration that all is vanity simply prepares the human heart to humbly recognize its need for a Savior, who, unlike us, has the creative power to make all things new. This Savior is Christ the Lord, who makes all human achievement and pleasure lasting when found in Him (Jn 10:10; 1 Cor 15:58).

¹³ Geisler, N. L. (1977). *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament* (215). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

¹⁴ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *Vol. 1: The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (977). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Bibliography

Biblical Studies Press. *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*. Biblical Studies Press, 2006.

<http://www.brainyquote.com/> (accessed March 9, 2014).

Geisler, N. L. *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1977.

Halley, H. H. *Halley's Bible Handbook with the New International Version: Deluxe Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.

Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. *The Works of Josephus: Complete and unabridged*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987.

<http://www.justsell.com/opening-statements/> (accessed March 9, 2014).

Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

The Holy Bible: New American Standard Bible (1995 ed.). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2009.

Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. *Vol. 1: The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985.

Wiersbe, W. W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Wisdom and Poetry (Job – Song of Solomon)*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2004.

Wilkins, W. D. *The Strongest: NASB Exhaustive Concordance (1998 ed.)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

God's Image

Claudy Jean Baptiste

In Genesis 1:26 to 27 God says, " Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish...So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him"(NIV). The questions that I will try to answer in this article are twofold: What is the image of God? and is there any difference between image and likeness? If there is any difference, we should expect to see how both words are being used in the Old Testament (Hebrew) and the New Testament (Greek). Moreover, after answering these questions, I will be focusing on the word Image. We are going to see after sin, what happened to this image and when Jesus dealt with sin on the cross, what also occurred to the image of God in man.

We are created in God's image, after His likeness

Dr. Stevenson, professor of South Florida Bible Seminary, in his *Survey of The Old Testament* shows different point of view of what people have said about man created in the image and likeness of God. He says, "Some have suggested that it is in the area of free will. Others have tried to see in this statement a tri-unity within man-that he is body, soul and spirit (as a reflection of the Trinitarian God). Still another view postulates that God has a body." Stevenson argues that "none of these views is supported by the context of Genesis." In this particular chapter Dr. Stevenson believes it is in the area of rulership that man created in the image and likeness of God. Even though I agree with Dr. Stevenson in this regard, I believe there is a difference between image and likeness. So let's see what the verse says, "Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish... And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him...(Gen 1:26-27). Like Dr John Stevenson says the context suggests it's in the area of rulership, but I believe there is something that God has placed upon man which caused the whole universe or the creation to abide under his rulership (we will get into that deeper). To have a better understanding of what I'm saying, we need to understand two Hebrew words that being used in Genesis 1:26--*seleml* (image) and *d^emut* (likeness).

***D^emut* (likeness) Versus *Seleml* (image)**

In the NIV Exhaustive Concordance by Edward Goodrick and John Kohlenberger III, the Hebrew word is used in Genesis 1:26 for likeness is *d^emut*. This word also means looked like, figure, appearance, form etc... that same Hebrew word is used several different passages in the Old Testament such as Ezekiel 1:28, it says, "Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around Him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord (NIV)". In this particular verse the word "likeness" here is

like a form or a figure (remember the Hebrew word for likeness means figure, form...). In verse 27 Ezekiel says, "I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him" in this verse Ezekiel saw the likeness and the glory of God. Therefore, when the Bible says that man created in the likeness of God, it refers to the spirit of man--in the spirit we look like God (God is Spirit John 4:24) because man is spirit in a body. Genesis 2:7 says, "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being." The Hebrew word for breath is *n^esamah*; It also means spirit, life etc... So when the Bible says that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, that means God put spirit into man, and man became a living being. Kenneth Copeland in his book titled *the blessing of the Lord* he says, "The Hebrew commentaries put it this way: 'He became a living, speaking spirit like God'" Brother Copeland goes on to say,

When God created man, He actually copied Himself.. As human beings, we can repeat those words (talking about Gen 1:26 I add it) in just a few seconds, but it may well have taken God all day to say them because He poured Himself completely into them. He filled them with the totality of His life, His Spirit and His faith. He injected into them what we might call His divine DNA, and with those words God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul..." As a living, speaking spirit like God, man had the same power to speak that God Himself had. He was full of God's own faith and had the authority to speak creative, compassionate words and exercise dominion with them. Born of God's WORD and created in His exact likeness, man was Love just like God is Love. Man was Light just like God is Light. Man was full of Compassion just like God is full of Compassion. Man was Life just as God is Life. The only difference between man and God was this: Unlike God who is eternally sovereign and independent, man was dependent on God.

Man is spirit in a body. in 1 Corinthians 2:11 Apostle Paul asks this question, "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? The Greek word used in this verse for spirit is *pneuma*; it also means breath. In other word, the translated word for *pneuma* in Hebrew is *n^esamah* because they pretty much mean the same thing. As previously noted, we are spirits who live in a body. I believe the purpose of that body is for us to live on earth which is a material world. God needed a people on earth to give Him praise and worship, so without that physical body on us, we would not be able to live on this earth. Otherwise we would be just like angels who are spirits without earthly bodies. Even the angels couldn't understand how come God has created man in His Likeness, every angel on hand must have been thinking the questions posed in Psalm 8:3-5, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower

than the angels..." The Hebrew word that is used for angels here is *‘lohiym* which literally translated means God; it is also the same word that is used for God in Genesis 1:1. In contrast, in his article, Richard Gan says:

The words "image" and "likeness" are clearly different in meanings... "image" in Hebrew is "tselem" which means: a shadow, representation of substance, shade, resemblance, phantom, illusion. On the other hand, "likeness" in Hebrew is "demooth". It means: shape, resemblance, similitude, similarity of features between spiritual and moral, or spiritual and physical... It is an indisputable fact that God first created man in His own image and some time later made him after His own likeness. The creation and the making of man were done in two stages... man was first created a spirit being in the spirit realm. He was created both male and female in the spirit form. The image of God is, therefore, that spiritual side of God... Adam was first created a living spirit in that image of God in the spiritual sphere. He was a MAN and a son of God. Being a spirit and having no definite shape, he was yet to be made in the likeness of God. When was the likeness manifested? Genesis 2:1-3 should be a continuation of chapter one... this shows that before man was formed of the dust of the ground, he was already existing somewhere in the realm of the spirit. It is known how long after the creation of the heavens and the earth that man was put on the earth..."

In contrast to what Richard says, I believe the image of God to be the glory of God upon man. When God says, "let us make man in our image... (Gen 1:26)" the word image here represents the glory of God. The author of Hebrews quotes this verse, "you made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor (Heb 2:7)." The glory here is the image of God in man. When God created man, He crowned him with glory (which is the image of God) and that glory brings honor and honor brings rulership . In Exodus 33 Moses asked to see God's glory. Now let's see what God said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." now read that again to see what I see! Moses asked God to show him His glory and God says "you cannot see my face..." that means God's glory is the face of God. In other word; it is the image of God. when you see the glory of God, you also see God's face and you see His image as well. It's like the Trinity--you cannot separate them from Each Other.

Clothed with Glory

Unlike Moses the glory of God was all over man from top to bottom. Man was clothed with the glory of God that is why they could not see if they were naked. In

Genesis 3 the Bible says when the woman saw the fruit was good, she gave some to Adam and verse 7 says, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked..." In 2 Corinthians 4:8-18 and 2 Cor 5:1-9, the Apostle makes a comparison between the earthly body which we are in now and the heavenly body which is the glorious body. In chapter 4 the 16th and 17th verses he says:

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." now let's look at chapter 5; verse 1 says, "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. ²Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, ³because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked...

In verse 17 of chapter 4 Apostle Paul is talking about "eternal glory" and in verse 1 of chapter 5 he uses the word "now" which shows us that there is a connection between what has been said in chapter 4 and what's going to be said in chapter 5. In verse 3 when he says, "When we are clothed, we will not be found naked..." he is referring to what had happened in Genesis 3. What Paul is telling us is that the heavenly house is a house of glory--the house of glory that we were in before and when we are in that body, we will not be found naked anymore.

After Sin Men lost the Image of God

Since man was created in the image (which is God's glory) and likeness of God, God gave him the authority to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. And what would actually cause all the creatures to subject to man as their god (small case letter) is the glory that man was crowned with which is the image of God. So when the devil realized how much God has put in man, he got jealous and envious of it and made man sin. For the devil knew that sinning was the only thing that could make man lose that image. So when men sinned, they lost the image of God that was why they could see themselves naked.

Jesus is God's image

After sin, the plan of God is to bring His image back to men. The Bible says in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and is God, the Word became flesh and dwell among us. now see what the rest of John 1:14, "We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father..." Jesus came with the glory which is the image of God. He walks with that glory; He ministers unto people with that glory and He did not do anything without that glory because He was clothed with it just like Adam before the fall was clothed

with it. As a result, people testified; they said, we have seen His glory, He is the One; He came from the Father. Colossians 1:15 says that Jesus is the image of the invisible God. The author goes further to say that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being.

Second Adam

As the second Adam, Jesus had to live a life that the first Adam did not live. He had to overcome the sin that Adam could not do. Just like the first Adam was tempted, Jesus as the second Adam was tempted also but He did not sin. Jesus the second Adam came with the same authority that God gave the first Adam to subdue the world and bring all things into reconciliation with God. Colossians 1:16-20 says: *For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things, hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven...* Just like the first Adam, God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Jesus.

We got the image of God back

Jesus has brought back the image of God. In 2 Corinthians 4 Apostle Paul says, " ⁴the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." verse 6 says, "for God... made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." In Christ Jesus we have the image of God back. But unfortunately lots of people don't want to take it back. That's why Paul says the god of this world has blinded the unbelievers' minds that they don't get back the provision that God has provided for us in Christ Jesus. Furthermore, Paul Says in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" that's the King James Version. The NLT puts it this way, "So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord--who is the Spirit--makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image". This verse really shows us that Image of God or Image of Christ (there is no difference) is His glory. The day we accepted Jesus Christ, in our spirits, we are fully cloth with the image of God which is His glory our heavenly bodies, but we will not really see it unless this earthly body is taken down (that is, when we die) (2 Cor 5).

To conclude, we see that there is a big difference between the image and likeness of God -- the image of God represents God's glory, splendor, majesty, grandeur... and the likeness of God in the spiritual way refers to that which corresponds to the spirit of man. After they sinned, men lost that image, but the plan of God is for us to get back that image which is His glory. Jesus brought us back the image of God when He died on the cross. The only thing to do to have the image of God back (in our spirits) is to accept Christ as our personal Savior. Isn't that what the Gospel is?

Bibliography

John Stevenson, *A Survey of The Old Testament* (Redeemer Publishing, 2009) 36.

Kenneth Copeland, *The Blessing of The Lord* (Kenneth Copeland Publications, 2011) 46,47.

www.propheticrevelation.net/godimage.htm

A Holistic Approach to Pastoral Care

Gayla Reid

Pastoral Care historically is the ministering of care, support, and counseling provided by pastors or clergy (other religious leaders) to their congregants. Today when we consider Pastoral Care we view it in regards to the many avenues of support needed by congregants or believers. The complexity of societal problems today extracts immensely from pastors and demands that today's pastor be equipped as they are called to support people in their pain, loss and anxiety, triumphs, weaknesses, bereavement, address the many issues related to poverty, and to empower and equip them on their spiritual journey. Thomas C. Oden in his Book *Classical Pastoral Care, Volume 1: Becoming a Minister* defines Pastoral Care as the branch of Christian theology that deals with care of persons by pastors. Oden further explains that it is pastoral because it pertains to the offices, tasks, and duties of the pastor. It is care because it has charge of, and is deliberately attentive to the spiritual growth and destiny of persons. Pastoral care is analogous to a physician's care of the body, and therefore oftentimes referred to as the care of the soul (p. x-1-xii, 1987). As the physician care of the body has many branches or discipline for example the dentist administers dental care, the doctor's discipline maybe heart surgery, or bone specialist etcetera; even so pastoral care (the pastor's care of the soul) has many disciplines. Pastoral Care is inherently connected to and dependent on the historical and systematic theories, social ethics, homiletics, liturgies, Christian education, and pastoral counseling. These are all valued branches of pastoral care each discipline bring to bear integral interjections to the completeness of pastoral care. Consequently, Pastoral Care should endeavor to unify these disciplines as a means to care for the whole man; after all man is body, spirit, and soul.

Now there are some disciplines that are synonymous with pastoring such as preaching, teaching, administering spiritual guidance and counseling. Of these we would like to take a closer look at counseling as many pastors do not see the need for formal training with regards to counseling. But inevitable every pastor counsels in one way or another, whether from the pulpit, in chambers to couples whose marriage is in trouble, during time of bereavement, pre-marriage counseling, or simple speaking to a congregant on basic issues of life, the pastor counsels on some level. Consequently this is one vehicle that pastors should endeavor to sharpen or to enhance. Once we have a holistic understanding of pastoral care and counseling, we will conclude that we cannot continue to restrict our pastoral attention to preaching, encouraging the poor, to giving random advice and to praying. Although preaching and teaching, scripture reading, and prayer are very important to ministering to the soul of the man; they become ineffective when not supported by a true look into the plight of the different problems and psychological processes operating below the threshold of one's consciousness; hence the proposal of a holistic approach. A holistic approach has the propensity to lead to greater empowerment and should be a key concept in pastoral care. This paper proposes a holistic approach in pastoral care and some implications of some of the praxis of counseling with the view to show the importance of pastoral care

and counseling as a discipline cohesive with the holistic approach. In the past pastoral support was provided with a narrow comprehension of the intricacy of pastoral care and counseling rendering it inadequate to address or minister to the poor and needy and to the spiritual and emotional needs of people. Switzer author of *Pastoral Care Emergencies* supports this premise indicating that efforts to give pastoral support to poor people were made difficult by a very limited understanding of pastoral care and counseling, citing that any personal crisis from the perspective of the sufferer also causes crisis for the pastor (1989). From our deliberation we can see that the for a Pastor to be effective there are certain skills that is necessary such as crisis management, counseling, teaching, encouraging, empowering, and motivating. Many pastors feel inadequate and are thrown in a state of desperation because of the lack of knowledge and their inability to give meaningful assistance and counsel to congregants in need. The holistic approach has the ability to enable the pastor and his team to address a wider spectrum of needs (physical, emotional, spiritual, physiological, critical illness or life's traumas, and etcetera) and other problems thus alleviating this inadequacy. Again the hypothesis of this paper is to present a holistic approach to pastoral care showing that the inclusion of counseling (Pastoral care and counseling) supports the theory of a holistic approach. We will also address the following in light of a holistic approach:

- (1) The case for the need for a holistic approach to pastoral care and counseling
- (2) The Pastor as defined by the Scriptures
- (3) The Misconception of Pastor Care and Christian Charity & Inclusion
- (4) Pastoral Care Roles and Presence
- (5) Ministering to the whole man through the vehicle of counseling

The Need for a Holistic Approach

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines holistic as relating to or concerned with the wholes or with the complete systems rather than with the individual parts or the analysis of, treatment of, or dissection into parts; citing in the examples holistic medicine which attempts to treat both the mind and the body and holistic ecology which views humans and the environment as a single system (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/holistic>). The theory of inclusion and the sum of the whole emerges as significant components to a holistic approach. Therefore we can conclude that the holistic approach in pastoral care is one of inclusion where the different branches of theology, pastoral care and counseling come to bear significantly on the administering of pastoral caregiving. One where the administering of care is done with the view of the whole man and is hope focused. By hope focused we mean it is goal oriented, focused on the solution, and focused on purpose and most important managed with the Scriptures or the Bible as the final authority. Pastors are spiritual care givers and they operate through the vehicle of relationship as they come alongside the individual to intentionally guide them to God's destiny for their lives. Pastoral care is focused

on emotional support and spiritual care. All individuals' believers and unbelievers (saved and unsaved) are on a path of becoming and this is a process. Recognition of this process of becoming is central to the understanding of the process of change in light of the difficult and demanding times we encounter on this journey of becoming or change. We encounter critical illness, traumas, and stress all of which affects our ability to cope and make decisions; it is during these times when the help of others are essential and it is here that the pastors' role emerges invaluable. Again the holistic approach allows the pastor and his team to address the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of these individuals while simultaneously addressing the spiritual needs and consequently the whole man is ministered unto. This holistic approach to pastoral care and counseling is not original to this paper but is supported by many theologians and the medical field.

Stella Maris Hospice, Towson, MD in addressing the spiritually dying indicated that attention to the spiritual dimension of a person is essential in a holistic approach to hospice care. Stella Maris Hospice, Towson, MD stated that chaplains were the primary professionals concerned with the transcendent nature of life and the integrative role that spirituality plays in care for the dying explaining that understanding spirituality in a person's living and dying requires an understanding of religion and theology. The chaplain does not so much fulfill a role as represent a perspective based on concern and solicitude for the whole person, the whole family unit, the whole staff (Health Prog. 1991 Sep;72(7):48-52, 54). So even in death it is important to minister to the whole man and medical professionals have supported the theory of a holistic approach.

Clinebell, H. in his Book Basic types of pastoral care and counseling identifies the model of adoption of a holistic approach. Clinebell further explains that this is an inclusive approach as he probed the different aspects of our lives as forming part of the pastoral process. Gender, stages of life, body and mind, the workings of the left and right brain, and relationships all form a part of the holistic approach (1984). The pastor's responsibility is leading a counselee (the individual being counseled) to healing is growth in all areas. This speaks to an all-inclusive approach where mind and body are invigorated and strengthened and the counselee is empowered to reach his or her fullest potential. The pastor seeks to uncover and develop opportunities, which will enable and facilitate the strong points in the counselee to be enhanced as a catalyst to empowerment and growth. Moreover, the pastor will work with the weak area to allow the counselee to become better able to manage these areas and ultimately illuminate vulnerable. Likewise, the pastor endeavors to show the individual how to use these stumbling blocks as building blocks.

The Pastor as define by the Bible

The word "Pastor" is derived from the Latin noun pastor which means shepherd and relates to the Latin verb pascere meaning "to lead to pasture" "set to grazing" or "cause to eat". This is synonymous with scripture as Jeremiah 3:15 Kings James Version (KJV) God declares "And I will give you pastors according

to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” Pastor here is the Hebrew word “ra’ah” which means to pasture, tend, graze, and feed. In Ephesians 4:11 (KJV) the Apostle Paul declares “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;” Pastors here is the Greek word “poimén” which translates herdsman, shepherd. Regardless of the language a Pastor is a shepherd one who cares for others inclusively as a whole. Now when we consider the metaphor of a shepherd we are able to extract a greater understanding of the role of a pastor. The shepherd not only feeds the sheep, but he directs and guides the sheep on its journey to pastures, that is, to the destination, the shepherd is responsible to protect the sheep (wellness-speaking to the physical health of the sheep; protection from danger-speaking of watching out for enemies coming to attack or kill or steal); healing the wounded and sick sheep, finding and saving the lost or trapped sheep, loving them, and more importantly the shepherd is a part of the sheep life and has earned their trust. We see this in the scripture when Jesus asks Peter lovest thou me in John 21:15-17. Three times the Lord ask “Lovest thou me?” Peter answers yes. In the first instance when Peter says yes; Jesus responds “Feed my lambs”. On the second instance when Peters say yes; Jesus responds “Feed my sheep” and on the third instance Jesus says the same “Feed my sheep”. The lamb is the baby sheep so here it suggest that the Lord was instructing Peter take care of the sheep from childhood to old age, in fact take care of the sheep for life. Pastors are like spiritual parents and we know that our father and mother are not part-time but they are with us forever, for even after death we carry them in our hearts.

Pastoral Care and Christian Charity

Oftentimes pastor care is confused with Christian charity but there is a vast difference between the two. The pastor tends to the spiritual needs of the people by means of pastoral care (keep in mind this is only one aspect of the pastor’s role). Christian charity on the other hand alleviates and addresses the material needs of the person or family or group concerned. It is distinguishable the injustice if a pastor should only provide spiritual care and ignore the physical need of the person, or family, or group. Notwithstanding, Practical Theology recognizes pastoral care and Christian charity as different disciplines and this is quite plausible. However to compartmentalize the two as totally separate entities unable to co-exist are a deterrent to the objectives on both ends. Subsequently we can see how a more inclusive and holistic approach to pastoral care and counseling is desirable. Moreover if the physical needs as well as the spiritual need of the people are satisfied we are one step closer to enabling the individual to being happy and healed thus pointing to a more complete recovery.

Pastoral Care Roles

According to Petersen B. L. in his Book Foundations of Pastoral Care the pastoral care roles fall into four categories: shepherding, counseling, collaborating, and the means of grace. Not only does the pastor have these roles to

demonstrate but the pastor must have a presence in five categories: resolving conflict, crisis, celebration, human suffering, and amid death and the dying (2007). As we contemplate the categories in which the pastor must exhibit presence the importance of counseling skills is painfully obvious. Notwithstanding for the purpose of this paper we will explore pastoral care as a shepherd, pastoral care as counseling and briefly review collaborating and means of grace with the view of demonstrate the holistic approach.

Shepherding

Petersen B. L. extracts these shepherding qualities that are necessary for the pastor as documented in John 10: (1) Knowing the sheep. He knows his sheep by name John 10:3 “he calls his sheep by name” This also speaks to intimacy (2) Leading. John 10:3-4 just as the shepherd provides direction to the flock for food and shelter, the pastor of a church gives leadership for the nurture, growth, and development of the congregation. (3) Vulnerability. John 10:14 “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine”. Know here is the Greek word “ginōskō” which literally means to become intimately acquainted or to understand, perceive or have knowledge of. (4) Serving the flock John 10:11 The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (5) Welcoming John 10:16 “...other sheep I have....them also I must bring....and they shall hear my voice.... Jesus’ invitation is to all. (6)

Cooperating

John 10:16 tells us “...and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. The pastor must recognize that the church he pastors is only a small part of the much larger universal Church of Jesus Christ. Therefore the pastor shepherds while at all times being obedient to the word of God which is the total and final authority of the believer. In analyzing these qualities we can see that the Lord intended for the shepherd of His people to take care of the whole man pointing to a holistic approach.

Oftentimes in Scriptures Jesus refers to himself as a shepherd and uses the metaphor of a shepherd to bring clarity to the role of the pastor as mentioned above. In John 10:10 He is the Good Shepherd, in Hebrews 13:20 He is the Great Shepherd, and in I Peter 5:4 He is the Chief Shepherd. Two of the great patriots of old spent a significant time of their lives as shepherd before the Lord promoted them to greatness and destiny. Moses though thought by some of the greatest minds in Egypt and exposed to extensive leadership preparation (for he was to be the next prince of Egypt) would spent the latter 40 years (prior to God’s ultimate promotion as the emancipator of Israel) in the wilderness tending the sheep of his father-in-law “Jethro” in the remote land of the Midian. Here Moses obtained practical training and developed skills in the areas of caring, nurturing, and desert survival (protecting against the eminent danger and the unforeseen danger). These

skills would later prove invaluable as the journey to the promise land was through similar surroundings which Moses had already conquered.

Then there was David the shepherd boy whom God commanded Samuel to anoint to be Saul's replacement for his disobedience. All of David's early conquest and combats were while he tended the sheep for his father Jesse. And when his first public battle and challenge was presented, the Bible declares that David rehearsed his past victories as the shepherd boy. Here David's unweaving and steadfast faith in the ultimate Shepherd the Lord is demonstrated. During his shepherding days he proved God and increased in faith and confidence in his God who sustains, provide, and protects. The Bible also tells us that David was a man after God's own heart; David was willing to lay down his life for the sheep as Christ laid down His life for the Church. We see David's disregard for his own life demonstrated in the defeat of the lion and the bear as recorded in I Samuel 17:36. Ezekiel 34:23 (KJV) states "*And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.*" Noteworthy is the fact that the word feed is the same Hebrew word for shepherd "*ra'ah*" causing the verse to read "he shall shepherd them". Again in I Chronicles 11:2 (KJV) the scriptures declares David to be the leader of the people even during Saul's reign "*And moreover in time past, even when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel.*" And again feed is the Hebrew word "*ra'ah*" meaning shepherd. David saw and knew God as his shepherd as stated in the famous 23rd Psalm which begins with the words "the Lord is my Shepherd." It is here we see the holistic Pastor through shepherding. There is no lack "I shall not want" and the body as well as the soul is provided for and attended to "He restoreth my soul". The shepherd caters to the whole man, that is, spirit, soul, and body. In retrospect the motif of Psalm 23 points to the roles of the pastor catering to the whole man. The roles as identified here are as follows verse: (1) Feeding the sheep (2) Restoring, speaking to not only the physical man but the whole man. This addresses restoring the fallen, encouraging the weak, depressed, discouraged, and down casted. This also speaks to the pastor being sensitive to the needs of the people (3) Protecting "thy rod and staff they comfort me...though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear not evil". Again, this speaks to the wellbeing of the people being pastored. (4) Healing "the anointing of the head". (5) Nurturing-address the whole man. Ultimately the shepherd nurtures the flock as observed in Isaiah 40:11 (KJV) which states, "*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*" The resounding echo is that the pastor is likened unto a shepherd and the shepherd caters to the whole man.

In addition to the above mentioned roles, the Pastor is an extraordinary person who needs to be equipped and trained to deal with the dynamics of the different personalities encountered and the many facets of lives circumstances. Subsequently pastors must be people of statue and integrity, committed, faithful and skillful, possess the ability to endure and be vulnerable. John 10:14 Jesus

says-“I know my sheep and my sheep know me.” We see here the need for the pastor to be transparent enough to enable the congregation to know his personal character. The role of leading a congregation begins with the people being able to trust their leader this can accomplish through the avenue of transparency. The ability to be transparent also speaks to the pastor courage or bravery; for it takes courage to allow people into your personal life to truly see you, to be vulnerable.

Counseling

Counseling is a role of the pastor that cannot be evaded as inevitable this is an area that every pastor will encounter. In Isaiah 9:6 the scriptures refers to Jesus as “Counselor” For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor.... The word “counselor” is the Hebrew word “ya`ats” which literally means to advise, consult, or give counsel. Proverbs 11:14 declares “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” Counselor here is the same Hebrew word “ya`ats”. Counsel is the Hebrew word “tachbulah” meaning direction, counsel, guidance, good advice. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online defines counseling as the professional guidance of the individual by use of standard psychological methods such as collecting case-history data, using various techniques of the personal interview, and testing interests and aptitudes. Additionally, Merriam-Webster explains that the counselor’s main objective is generally to orient or position the individual toward opportunities that can best guarantee fulfillment of his personal needs and aspirations (from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/counseling>). The counselor usually attempts to clarify the client’s own thinking rather than to solve his problems. This method of clarifying the individual’s thinking mechanism is not so original Romans 12:2 (KJV) states that we should not be conformed to this world but rather be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The Bible speaks to revolutionizing one process of thinking and making decision to promote change. Now for the most part professional counselors do not address the spiritual man and is more concern with the physical and psychological man. Pastoral counseling on the other hand incorporates the spirit, soul, and body of the individual. According Dictionary.com pastoral counseling is the use of psychotherapeutic techniques by trained members of the clergy to assist parishioners who seek help for personal or emotional problems.

In retrospect, pastoral counseling is a distinctive form of psychotherapy which utilizes spiritual resources as well as psychological resources and understanding to facilitate healing and growth; this again points to a holistic approach. The world of counseling is so vast that we would not be able to adequately address the discipline, nevertheless, we will explore the biblical guidelines and some of the necessary skills needed to execute this discipline effectively as documented by Petersen in his book Foundations of Pastoral Care.

Guideline #1 Equip yourself to be able to counsel or simple to help other. Noteworthy is the fact that Petersen explicitly explained that having a

doctoral degree in counseling is not necessary to be an effective counselor in the field of pastoring though not a disadvantage.

Peterson stated “*While it would be wonderful for every pastor to have a doctoral degree in counseling, there are other areas, such as theology, biblical studies, church history, preaching, and leadership that can’t be neglected in the preparation process.*” Petersen also noted, “*Most ministers will be lifelong learners, reading books and attending conferences to sharpen the pastoral counseling skills*” (p. 102, 2007). However, this does not negate the importance of acquiring the skills necessary to effectively execute the task at hand “pastoral counseling”. In addition Everett L. Worthington Jr. in *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling* noted that although all counselors are not skillful or effective, the skilled counselors do much better than the less skilled counselors in many areas namely: the establishment of good relationships, empathizing, inspiring confidence, providing structure without seeming to be authoritative, motivating the believer to work towards change, and more importantly they are able to convey the impression that they are expert, attractive (winsome personality) and trustworthy without being indifferent and untouchable (p. 29, 2005).

Guideline #2 Know your limitations. One may be skillful in discerning the needs of someone and have a great personality that is welcoming and warm. All this is good but if one is dealing with a believer with severe psychological problems or any issues which are above their capability the right thing to do is to refer this individual to someone who is skilled in the area of complaint or ailment. Therefore it is essential that the pastor know his or her competence and be willing to seek assistance for the believers who need additional guidance or whose ailment is outside their level of competency.

Guideline #3 Recognize that the counselee is made in God’s image and has value. This speaks to not being prejudice with regards to the people’s appearance or disposition. Jesus is our example and we see Him dealing with sinners from all walks of life (the prostitutes, the tax collector, lepers, and others that the Jewish population rejected). Jesus helped all who needed help and sought Him out for that help. We are all fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God (Psalm 139:14). Petersen L. stated that when confronted by a person or believer that may be personally repugnant to remind ourselves that this is a person for whom Jesus Christ died; and as pastor I am Jesus’ representative sent to help (p. 103, 2007). It is important to understand that our unspoken acceptance is a crucial first step in assisting that individual to wholeness; for if the person senses rejection in the counselor it makes it difficult for the individual to receive help or trust. Moreover this is a barrier to developing a relationship and healing and counseling takes place through the vehicle of relationship.

John Patton author of *Pastoral Counseling: A ministry of the Church* and Richard Dayringer author of *The Heart of pastoral counseling: Healing through relationships* supports the premise that relationship is necessary for counseling and healing to take place. Richard Dayringer states “*The purpose of the theology of relationship is to make persons aware of their relationship to God as Creator. Such a theory is quite relevant because no part of life is beyond its reach; it*

assumes that the activities of all people are important to God. The theory of relationship is not remote from real life. It is engaged in the day to day struggles of persons to find meaning in the multiplicity of selves, the turmoil of human relationships, and the encounter with the cosmic forces that surrounds them” (p. 26, 1989). John Patton expressed that “If any healing occurs through pastoral counseling it occurs through relationships. The distinction of pastoral care and counseling is the affirmation and inclusion of faith into the cures of lives. It is within the bounds of pastoral relationship that change is supported and takes place” (p. 30, 1983).

Guideline #4 Seek first to help the person in wholeness in Christ, and then to find a solution to the problem. One of the things that distinguish pastoral counseling from other types of counseling is the emphasis on a right relationship with God as the foundation of problem solving. For the most part people seek out pastors for assistance mainly for spiritual guidance. However, as pastors administer counseling it is important that they recognize the importance of both skills and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s leading in the life of the counselee.

Guideline #5 Remember that an individual has the right to accept or reject help. The old proverb, you can lead the horse to water but you cannot make him drink it, is painfully true when counseling. The process of healing and acceptance is different in everyone and the pastor must be sensitive to the individual need to cry or grieve or simple hurt. No one knows how these stages progress, people go through a stage of anger, loss, sorrow, pain, acceptance, and then an overwhelming desire to move on and these are just some of the stages one encounters as they go through the traumas of life. Again, pastors must allow the individual to go through their process remembering they are spiritual guides. Mark 10 speaks of a young man wanting eternal life and asking Jesus what he should do. When Jesus told him the final condition of giving up all his worldly riches the young man walked away despondently because the cost was more than he was willing to pay. Jesus allowed and afforded the young man the choice to reject the offer. Pastors should be mindful of the counselee right to reject and prayerfully seek the Lord to grant the individual the gift of acceptance and wait until the individual is ready or not.

Guideline #6 Remember that both the counselor and the counselee must work together toward a solution. Pastors must never lose sight that they are spiritual guides and must never accept the responsibility of mapping out a plan of action independently of the counselee. This exposes the pastor to the risk of the counselee blaming the pastor if the results are not satisfactory to them or they fail at implementing or accomplishing the plan of action. The process to solution must be approached prayerfully with both the pastor and counselee with the pastor giving suggestions, support, and encouraging the counselee towards change or an agreed-upon solution. I reminded of the “Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling” which had a prescribed method that was used throughout the therapy which is wonderful to incorporate in pastoral counseling:

Hope = Will Power + Way Power + Wait Power even if
to Change to Change change is not happening

The concept here is that even though an individual may have the will power to change, they may not know how to accomplish this, that is, they may not know what to do or how to act, and more importantly they may not possess the necessary skills. This is where the pastor comes alongside the individual as a guide and through the power of the Holy Spirit helps the individual providing hope. Author Everett L. Worthington Jr. states that hope involves a motivation to endure when one cannot change the circumstances. Hope involves the vision of the way through suffering: willpower and way power to endure, with the help of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Worthington L. further indicated that hope is crucial to counseling and God is the author of hope (p. 31, 1999). It is important to remind ourselves here that the pastor not only counselors in times of suffering or traumas, but also in the triumphs of our lives. They guide in a vast capacity: making career decisions or ministry decision regarding ones call, marriage, understanding our gifts and calling, understanding the cycles of the Christian walk for example when we go through a dry spell where we feel nothing and know not what is happening, and we could go on and on. Notwithstanding what is apparent is that hope is necessary to ensure encouragement and to point the counselee to overcoming.

Guideline #7 Embrace your role as a spiritual guide. Someone who guides is simple a person who directs or has influence on the course of action of someone. This individual directs, gives advice, and lead. The spiritual guide does the same only through the power of the Holy Spirit while at all times being mindful of Biblical guidelines and the call of God on the counselee's life. As the pastor guides the individual he or she allows them to form their own decisions, allows God to download insights and revelations to and in them; the pastor does not manipulate the individual into accepting their way but guides them into finding God's way. Petersen stated that the different areas of training and exposure would have already equipped the pastor for this important role. Indicating that special ministerial training, the collection of past pastoral experiences, and the knowledge the individual all assist the pastor in giving guidance. Petersen further noted that spiritual guidance is one of the responsibilities that make pastors distinctive among people helpers (p. 104, 2005). Again it is important for us to remind ourselves that guidance is not limited to those in troubles, or to individuals who have grown spiritually cold or complacent but to all who need spiritual guidance in whatever area may arise. It becomes imperative that pastors become skillful in determining and identifying the spiritual peril that lies in the world and the perils the enemy throws at the church. The pastor should be aware of the pros and cons at it relates to what the world considers good news, or health, or success. The Bible in 1 Peter 5:8 (KJV) says "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*" and Matthew 11:12 states, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Therefore it is imperative that the

pastor be prepared for not only the opportunities but the threats of this world for we know they are inevitable. Nonetheless we have the assurance of victory through the Word of God. Romans 8:37 declares that we are more than conquerors and 1 John 4:4 declares greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world.

Guideline #8 Utilize the spiritual resources of the church. As we look at the roles of a pastor, it becomes overwhelming clear that this individual maybe required to wear many hats even more so if the holistic approach is adopted. The different skill set required would point to these individual studying their own lives so when would they pastor. It important that pastors are aware that they are not alone on this journey and that along with God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) they have the spiritual resources of the church, human, material, and financial. There is a wealth of supportive material readily available to the pastor in the environment of the church community. More importantly, the Bible provides a vast and opulent resource of instructions, encouragement, and spiritual guidance. There are many groups within the church that offer assistance to the pastor such as: support re alcoholism, singleness, marriage; and even prayer and intercessory groups that intercede for specific needs. There are Christian books, tapes, videos and other helps designed to assist the counselee as well as the pastor. Notwithstanding, the church has a team of ministers each gifted in different areas and each available to and at the pastors disposal. Ephesians 4:11-12 declares *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:”*

Now amidst the eight (8) guidelines presented above there are some skills that are necessary if one is going to be effective in counseling. Regardless of the training be it formal or otherwise these skills will enhance the efficiency of the individual in counseling. These skills are as follows the ability to actively listen, to be present (being there), empathy, honesty and acceptance. The art of listening though obvious takes discipline and hard work. Assumptions, expectations we have, our prejudices, and stereotyping individuals and their circumstances affects our ability to really listen and how well we listen. Listening also entails hearing the unspoken words such as interpreting body gestures. Again being present though obvious as well requires the pastor to allow the individual (the counselee) to be confident that they have the pastors attention and that they are the most important individual during that session.

Consequently the counselee knows that the pastor’s efforts and undivided attention is geared towards ensuring their wellbeing and a solution to the issue at hand. Empathy refers to not only being sympathetic but attempting to understand what the counselee is thinking and feeling. So the counselor endeavors to view and interpret the situation from the standpoint or viewpoint of the counselee. Phrases such as I know how you feel is avoided at all cost, as it is impossible to fully know the feelings of any other individual. Moreover no two situations are exactly alike.

Being honest is very important because it is difficult to trust anyone that comes across as dishonest or not real. The believer (counselee) needs the

assurance that the pastor is a real person and therefore the genuineness of the pastor plays a significant role here. Then there is the skill of acceptance which simple means accepting the individual with their flaws and weaknesses in the same way Jesus accepted ours. Again this requires putting aside one's own prejudices and not stereotyping individuals. We see a good model of acceptance with Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus did not dwell on her fail marriages or her sins but expressed his acceptance and love for her as a human being of worth important to Him. One of the pastor's assignments is to reconcile believers and unbelievers to God and this can be enhanced by demonstrating an attitude of acceptance. Embodied in the word reconciliation is caring (bring together, mending), respecting (acceptance of the individual as they are without bias), and restoring.

Pastoral Care as Collaboration and the Means of Grace

Collaboration refers to working jointly with others or to cooperate with an agency in order to achieve something or an agreed upon goal. Pastoral care as collaboration according to Petersen mean the church takes the first step to offering its resources and energies to the community as a loving expression of concern and compassion (p. 116, 2005). Churches have a great opportunity to collaborate and even partner with community leaders to provide services to the community at large. Churches can address neighborhood concerns by providing after-school programs, athletic programs, senior and adult healthcare, food banks, feeding the neighborhood programs and so many others. Pastor counselors have a significant capacity to enhance the health and wellbeing of individuals (believers and unbelievers), families, and communities at large. Often times we see Pastors and the church teaming with health facilities to achieve changed lives and a better community. For example, addiction treatment center working with faith communities; Faith Farm programs for abused women to name a few. Pastors should endeavor to be aware of the different agencies and resources available for collaboration in their community. Noteworthy is the fact that collaboration also points to inclusion endeavoring to address the whole man.

Means of grace refers to the different forms of God encounter that the believer experiences. Petersen makes reference to the book *Pastoral Care and the Means of Grace* where author Ralph Underwood says, "*The means of grace are ways to encounter the God of transcendence, order, and freedom-ways that are explicitly set aside, designated, and tried-and-true. Such means of grace impose no limit on God-God gives God's grace in countless ways.*" These means of grace are the faith activities such as prayer, Scripture reading, praise and worship, the preaching of the word, and observance of the sacraments for examples the sacraments of communion and baptism. Noteworthy is the fact that God ministers His grace through many avenues through Christian music, Sunday school, bible school, fellowships, and even one-on-one conversation or witnessing; this document is not intended to exhaust the avenues nor have we explore those mentioned.

Ministering to the Whole Man through the Vehicle of Counseling

The Church that embodies the various disciplines inclusive of counseling is many strides ahead on the road to a holistic approach. The authority for Christians is the Bible and thus the final authority for the Pastor or anyone in the office of clergy is the Bible. Luke 10:25-37 gives us a picture or illustration of Pastoral Care through counseling. This is the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Bible explains that while the Priest and the Levi passed by all unconcerned the Good Samaritan had compassion and stopped to help the wounded man. Verse 34 says "He went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The Good Samaritan took care of his wounds signifying "healing" he helped the man to mount his beast so he did not leave him but continued the care "sustaining." And finally the verses that followings explains how he took him to the nearest place of care and paid for his complete wellness. For he instructed the innkeeper to take care of him ensuring he received whatever care was necessary all to his (the Good Shepherd) expense. This speaks to a holistic approach ensuring all needs were taken care of or the individual obtained a level of wellness where they are capable of taking care of themselves. God is concern with the whole man we read in I Thessalonians 5:23 "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Or 3 John 1:2 "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." We see here that God is interested in the whole man, as the soul prospers so the physical man.

To attain the abundant life the whole man must be addressed or attended to; liberated spirit, soul, and body. Man must be liberated from sin, given the necessary tools to enable them to continue on this journey. The Bible says in John 10:10 "*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*" This indicates that there is a force at work; the devil who does not want us to attain this abundant life, therefore the believer must be equipped beyond being saved, beyond that initial experience of accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her personal savior. We must address the whole man.

We counsel not only individuals with bad marriages, or family problems, or in the time of bereavement, crisis, trauma or triumph. But if we consider the scripture and take a look at who God calls we will see people with issues, emotional problems, dysfunction families, people who are weak with sin issues and the list goes on. Abraham lied about Sarah because he was afraid to lose his life, Moses and Jacob's family were dysfunctional, Joseph had issues with forgiveness, David was adulterous and he killed an innocent man, Elijah gave up after a mighty move of God where he defeated the Baal worshippers and he asked God to take his life, Peter denied Christ, Paul wrestled with the flesh, and again we could go on and on. These are real issues and we face them today in even greater perplexity, consequently the need for the tool of counseling to be

sharpened or enhanced. When a believer needs counseling the pastor's responsibility is to promote growth in all areas while guiding the counselee to healing (wellness). Counseling seeks to empower individuals to properly manager their problems and their weaknesses by empowering the individuals to become strong and not continue to allow their weakness to be a stumbling block. Moreover we reiterate counseling and pastoral care endeavor to use the weakness as a building block enabling growth by guiding the individual to face their problems or weakness through the power of God. This is very important because we cannot conquer what we are not willing to acknowledge or face; one will not face a problem they are not willing to confront. Furthermore pastoral counseling seek to consider the gifts and strong areas of an individual and equipped them toward greatness as these qualities are utilized to enable further growth in the body of Christ for the furtherance of the saints as well as the individual.

The Bible declares that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13) and then the Bible instructs us to study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). This speaks to equipping oneself for the profession or for the call and we see the importance of training and development. Training and career development are vital to organization and in any Kingdom that purposes to succeed. Our CEO Jesus Christ demands excellence for He is a God of excellence; everything He created was good and He does all things well. No wonder He commands us to be prepared and equipped (study to show yourself approved unto to God). Our reasonable duty is to be prepared to fulfill the call of God on our lives; and as pastor it one of great demand and sacrifice. Training simple means acquiring the essential skills required to execute the assignment of God to be the spiritual guide in the lives of the believer. Now with all the knowledge and training available today the Church has no excuse to be ill-prepared or unequipped for the devil and all the different problems of this world.

Bibliography

Clinebell, H., 1984, Basic types of pastoral care and counseling, Abingdon Press, Nashville.

Ministry. (n.d.). Retrieved March 18, 2014 from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ministry>

Counseling. (n.d.) Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. Retrieved on Mar. 29, 2014 from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/counseling>
“Holistic.” Merriam-Webster.com Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. Retrieved on March 26, 2014 from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/holistic>

The Holy Bible: Kings James Version (KJV). Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblical

Oden, Thomas C. (1987). *Classical Pastoral Care, Vol. 1: Becoming a Minister*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

Pastoral counseling. (n.d.). Dictionary.com Unabridged. Retrieved April 05, 2014, from Dictionary.com website: [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pastoral counseling](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pastoral%20counseling)

Stella Maris Hospice, Towson, MD Health Prog. 1991 Sep;72(7):48-52,54. *The spirituality of dying. Pastoral care's holistic approach is crucial in hospice*. PMID: 10112958 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE] Retrieved on April 4, 2014 from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10112958>

Switzer, D.K., 1989, Pastoral care emergencies: Ministering to people in crises, Paulist Press / Integration Books, New York.

Worthington, E. L. (1989). *Hope-Focussed Marriage Counseling: A Guide To Brief Therapy*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Understanding Your Purpose & Destiny in Life: The Blood Covenant

Tom Drabik

Did you ever wonder why...

Jesus had to die?

Jesus had to suffer before he died?

Joseph could not be Jesus' father?

Jesus had to bare the stripes upon his back?

Jesus had to die on the cross and not another way?

All of these questions have to do with covenant – the blood covenant. Did you ever wonder how...twelve men changed the entire ancient world, but today's church of literally millions of people cannot even save their neighbor? Again, the blood covenant. I believe it is because today we do not understand the Blood Covenant. We do not understand the authority in which we can walk, nor the faithfulness of God to His Covenant. The Name of Jesus and the Blood of Jesus, are both made available through the covenant that God made with us. We need a revelation of the Blood Covenant. It was God's idea and His plan. The blood covenant is not man's way to God, but God's way to man.

Many Christians are frustrated with their walk with God. Even people who are in leadership positions in the church are frustrated with their walk. They do not fully understand their relationship with God. They start out well, but then after time, they wrestle with lustful thoughts and lose relationships. They feel if Christianity is to be "loving as Jesus loved", they fall short. Some do not even love God. They do not find joy in their prayer or Bible reading. They perform these actions because they were told that they will nurture their Christian life. There are times they even envy the world because worldly people look happier. Some Christians put on a façade when they go to church. They live in the subculture of Christianity. They do not do many things such as go to the bar, drink, smoke, or even dress like the world, and as long as they keep these rules they think they are good Christians. But the Bible addresses deeper issues: thoughts, motives, and relationships. It is concerned with much more than a list of rules.

We need a revelation of the Blood Covenant. Without it, we do not know what being a Christian is all about. We do not know the actual price that Jesus paid for us, even though in these closing days, we can sense more of the presence

Tom Drabik is Financial Aid Director and Registrar as well as a professor at South Florida Bible College & Theological Seminary. He teaches in the area of Biblical Studies and Christian Ministry. He holds a Doctorate in Religious Education.

of God. It is very important that Jesus did not have an earthly father and that He had to be born of a virgin. Any medical doctor will tell you that the blood line is passed through the father. Every male since Adam has sin in his blood, so if Jesus had been born from Joseph He would have been born with sin. The reason Jesus came through a woman and had God for His Father was so He could be born sinless. That is why the virgin birth is so very important. Facts like these are mind-blowing, and many Christians do not even know them. This is basic Christianity.

Covenant is the ABC's of Christianity. In the same way that we learn the ABC's and then form words, sentences, paragraphs, tell stories, communicate thoughts and feelings, so God uses Covenant to show us His thoughts, feelings and desires. It seems that God is speaking a foreign language, but we hear Him only in broken English and only comprehend ten percent of the full meaning of what He is trying to convey. Hence, we are only walking in ten percent of what God wants us to walk in. How do we fix this? We learn the language and learn to speak Covenant.

God showed us in the garden how to deal with sin. He showed us that sin separates us from His presence. Sin caused us to hide in shame. God had to shed innocent blood to cover up the sin so he could continue to fellowship with mankind. The barrier of sin that was between us and God was washed away by Jesus' blood. Now we can have open communication with our Daddy God.

God created Eve especially for Adam to show in the natural what a marriage should be like. He wanted to show us spiritually the special relationship God wants between Himself and us: a marriage. We should depend on Him, trust in Him, be intimate with Him. In Him is everything that we lack, we cannot do it alone. In the garden God showed us the enemy and his ways of deception. The enemy wants us to get our focus off God and put the focus on ourselves, so that we are selfish, governed by the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

God spoke to the writers of the Bible in covenant language, covenant terms. Originally, the Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek. Unfortunately, our English translation does a poor job. For example, the word we translate as love in English is translated from four different types of love in the Greek and Hebrew. We love our dog, and we love our spouse. Hopefully, there is a difference (on most days). The original languages used different words to describe our one word *love*. By going to the original languages, we can get a much clearer meaning. It is the same with Covenant.

Most people in the western world think of Covenant as a contract. That is true, but covenant goes beyond that; there is a much deeper meaning. A contract will deal with our "stuff," our material things. A covenant deals with people. When we enter into a covenant, we are giving our very being, ourselves, all we are, everything we are, holding nothing back, a total surrender. When we enter into a covenant with someone, we are telling that person, "All I have is yours, good and bad. All I am is yours, at your service, to be used by you as you see fit." By the same token, all the other person has is now ours, available to us whenever

we need it, no matter what. And unlike a contract, that it can be broken, rewritten, re-negotiated, or paid off with a fine, a covenant demands the penalty is death. The only way out of a covenant is to die. To fulfill His part of the Blood Covenant God sent His son to die. That is how seriously God takes His covenant with us. How seriously do we take our covenant with God? Are we ready to die for God?

Covenant is basic Christianity. Can you imagine trying to do Calculus without knowing algebra, not understanding how to solve any of the problems? You would become frustrated. Is the person next to you solving the problem? Why? He has a good foundation. Christians must understand fundamental truths. Our theology must be better than the world's educational system, which consists of "dumbing down" knowledge. God does not want us to barely pass, just survive. He wants us to succeed and be a success. The church is trying to pass calculus without knowing the basic math. Furthermore, we should use every means at our disposal, to implement truth. How much harder would it be for our children today to succeed in school without a computer, the internet, a calculator, etc? Learning how to use truth effectively will put us head and shoulders over others that do not have it.

The difference between the twelve men of God and millions of church goers, is that they knew and understood Covenant. They turned the world upside down, while we cannot seem to keep ourselves saved. Everything that Jesus came to accomplish here on earth became clear to them. They walked in covenant daily and were able to explain to others what they had and what others needed, a covenant relationship with the Messiah, the Savior of the world. All the religious rituals pointed to Jesus. Jesus came and fulfilled everything He had to do so that we can walk in a covenant relationship with Him and the Father.

The word *covenant* in Hebrew is *berith* and means "to cut until blood flows." Another definition of covenant is a binding, unbreakable obligation between two parties, based on unconditional love sealed by blood and sacred oath, that creates a relationship in which each party is bound by specific undertakings on each other's behalf. The parties to the covenant place themselves under penalty of divine retribution should they later attempt to avoid these undertakings. It is a relationship that can only be broken by death.¹⁶

Reasons for entering into a covenant are for protection, business, or love. We think the purpose of Jesus' dying on the cross so we could go to heaven. We do get to go to heaven, but that was not His purpose or reason. He hung on the cross, died on the cross, shed His blood on the cross, so that we could have a love relationship with God. God, the Creator of the Universe, created us so that we could glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. When Adam sinned, the fellowship between God and man was broken. Jesus came and died to restore that fellowship. God wants to be our daddy, Father God, not our boss. It is not a slave-master relationship, but a father-son relationship. It is a relationship of love.

¹⁶ The Lost Secret of the New Covenant, by Malcolm Smith Harrison House Publishers
2002

That is what should motivate us to serve and to obey, because we love. We do not serve and obey because we have to, but because we love Him and want to serve Him.

The Bible tells us to love God and delight in Him, and most Christians do not. They feel they have failed. Most Christians are afraid of God. They go to church and pray because they do not want to go to hell. Do we just go through the motions on Sunday without our hearts being touched? Is there a mask over the real person underneath? We know the formula for living as a Christian, but may feel despair because we fall short in certain areas.

A wedding is an *event*. A honeymoon is an *event*. A marriage is a process, growing together and becoming one. So intimate is the marriage relationship, that the two are declared to become “one flesh” (Gen.2:24). The word *one* in this verse is the same word used to describe God in Deuteronomy 6:4, which says, “Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one!” (NKJV). The Hebrew word for *one* means “composite unity,” as opposed to “absolute unity.” In the case of God, it is three who are one; in the case of marriage, it is two who are one. Apparently, God’s desire is that the marriage relationship be extremely intimate. Such intimacy will sustain a marriage relationship even in our modern world.¹⁷

God’s desire is for us to be one just as He and Jesus are one. Covenant demands all of us, spirit, soul, and body. We need to love God with all of our strength and heart; love Him with our whole being, not just give God our minds or our intellect. God wants to be intimate with us on all levels, in every area of our lives. The real us is our heart – we worship God from our heart. The heart pumps the blood through the whole body.

God wants us to communicate with Him, be intimate with Him, have a desire for Him over a desire for ourselves. In a marriage covenant, the woman becomes bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. The woman’s life is in the man, and his life is in hers. When a man and a woman get married it is believed that the nerve in the ring finger leads to the heart, the heart being a center of a person. The heart represents the total person, the total being, the total nature and life of that person. When we love someone with all of our heart, we love with all that is within us. We are accountable to the marriage partner with whom we make covenant with and the marriage partner is accountable to us. Our life is theirs and their life is ours.

The Blood Covenant is the closest, most enduring, solemn, and sacred of all covenants. It is the exchange and the co-mingling of two lives that the two would become one. It is more than an agreement, more than a contract, it is binding.

Have we ever felt we were just going through the motions? Is this what Christianity is really about, do’s and don’ts? This is not Christianity, but religion. Christianity is a relationship with Almighty God. When we can have a relationship, we fall in love with God. That is when we want to pray, and we *want* to be in His presence. Prayer is not something we just do, but we are talking *with*

¹⁷ Covenant Marriage by Dr. Gary Chapman Broadman & Holman Publishers 2003

God. Not talking to God, but talking *with* God, having a conversation *with* God, talking *with* Him one on one.

Communication is a key to having a relationship with God. What did Jesus do more than anything else? He prayed. What did Jesus do before he did anything? He prayed, talked with God, His daddy. Jesus only did what He saw or heard his Father saying or doing.

His disciples must have noticed this. Out of everything that Jesus did, everything the disciples witnessed, they did not ask Him, how do we heal people, how do we raise the dead, how can we calm the seas, how do we walk on water, how do we command the demons to come out. They asked Him to teach them how to pray, teach them how to communicate with God.

Jesus could have prayed for anything before He left the earth. The one thing He desired and prayed for was that the church should be one, just as He and the Father are one. He did not pray for the church to have stuff, but for the church to be in a relationship with each other, a relationship with God. God is our daddy God, not our grandfather. God has no spoiled grandchildren. It is a shame that most Christians today do not open their Bibles except on Sundays and midweek services. It is so important to know that we need a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our lives change drastically from the moment we enter into a covenant. Contracts are made to be broken; covenants are not. If a covenant is broken, someone is to be put to death, and usually by a family member. God is faithful to His covenant whether we are or not. It does not depend on us. Being in Covenant with God is similar to God having an umbrella. As long as you are in relationship with Him, you are under this umbrella. The minute you get out from under the umbrella, you are no longer in fellowship with God.

Marriage in an Unmarried World

Sandra Osorio

God has a plan for each stage of life. He has to mold each person to be prepared for the next stage. At any stage God should be the priority. The unmarried has a few things to focus on before marriage. A single person should be content at that stage. A single person needs to be molded and prepared as a person in Christ. That is the time to be involved as much as possible in ministry because that time may not be available during marriage. God calls for abstinence. It avoids many issues that come along when a single person is sexually active and open for a relationship for the wrong reasons. Being single is the time to get to know other singles in a courtship way to see if God's plan includes each other and heading to a stage of commitment that God calls. Jacob is a great example of stages in a person's life. The Bible talks about his life when he was single and then when he got married.

In Ephesian 5, God paints a picture for a husband and a wife. A marriage has to fit for what works for that individual couple but God does have specific commands for each role. It is important to identify the difference between a covenant marriage and a contract marriage. The difference is the key to making a marriage work. Divorce is so common today that people are becoming desensitized to the value and importance of making a marriage work. People seek counseling as a last resort instead of trying to attack issues as they come along.

Throughout the Bible God shows us examples of what marriage should reflect as well as an unmarried person. God answered the question of "What should marriage look like and what should singleness be like?" When those commands are not followed, life tends to get complicated. God placed example couples throughout the Bible as well as single persons. Each person has a role to play in each stage of his or her life. The most important in any stage of course is to love Christ above all. Seek guidance as to what calls for the role of a single, wife, husband, mother, father, pastor and teacher.

The single person's main concern should be his or her focus on God. The Bible talks about being content.¹⁸ God has impeccable timing to put things in order. We are not to rush or get ahead of God's plans. He has to mold us before we can be ready for the next stage of life. Until that time, He gives us strength to be content with everything that we have and the moment in which we are living.

Ministry is extremely important in a believer's faith in Christ. Through ministry, a person can learn a lot about his or her self. This is the time to work as much as possible with God's people because once a person gets married the time for ministry will decrease significantly. That may not be what a single person

¹⁸ The Holy Bible: NIV, 1973, Phil 4:11

expects but it will happen because you will then have to divide your time with your spouse and family.

You may have heard the catching phrase “Abstinence is key.” Well it is the key to avoid a lot of bad decisions, heartbreaks, STD, and teen pregnancies. Parrott (1993) states,

“A study by the U.S. Center for Disease Control found that 54 percent of today’s high school students reported having had sexual intercourse in the last three months. By age twenty, 81 percent of today’s unmarried males and 67 percent of today’s unmarried females have had sexual intercourse. Most research shows that the average age for first having sex is fifteen for girls and fourteen for boys. Recent research is also finding a trend in an increase of sexual activity among teenagers under fifteen years of age. (p. 341).

These statistics are astounding because these teens do not realize they are setting themselves up for failure. They are opening themselves to not only physical battles but also spiritual battles. With these types of statistics it may contribute to the value put on marriage. In today’s society more people prefer to live together, get to know each and then see how the relationship goes. Sex was designed for marriage for deep intimacy between a husband and his wife not every man and women. Such intimacy was not designed for the sole purpose of pleasure especially with multiple partners.

Courtship is an art that should be admired during singleness. At the same time God is molding you, He is also working on your spouse. He will open the heart and place the calling to marriage in each person. In Joshua Harris’s (2000) book *Boy Meets Girl* he put it in simple terms:

“A bagel shop isn’t the most romantic spot to tell a girl you like her. But that night romance wasn’t the priority. Our time there wasn’t intended to be mushy. I didn’t propose marriage or say I was madly in love with her, and she didn’t swoon.

What I did tell her was that through our friendship I’d grown to respect her. I couldn’t know at that point if we were right for each other, but I wanted to find out. I asked her to take a step with me into courtship, a new season of friendship. The purpose of this time would be to deepen our relationship so that we could prayerfully and purposefully explore the possibility of marriage.” (p.25).

Some things are better said clear than “beating around the bush.” When we enter a relationship with our own agenda that may hurt us. I can agree that this may not always happen but the concept that everyone is on the same page is what both parties need to look for.

Jacob is a great model of an unmarried, courtship, and a husband. A married couple that had a romantic beginning but not so much after is that of

Jacob and Rachel. As a single man, Jacob was hand in hand with the Lord. He was called on a mission in whom he trusted God. He was sensitive at all times to look out for God's hints and directions during a mission. Along the way, he took a rest at a well and while he was speaking with a few men he felt God was speaking to him. In that time Jacob met Rachel and he fell in love at first sight says the Bible, "Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud."¹⁹

In today's world, people are not as committed to showing their emotion like Jacob, asking for a chance to courtship, asking for hand in marriage or even working hard to win that precious person God has put before you to call spouse. Young adults feel they have the right to a person in which will become another statistic. Many are afraid of commitment because of what they may hear about divorce or their parent's experience.

Jacob was not afraid of commitment and was determined to marry Rachel. Jacob saw beyond her physical attraction. Then Jacob said in the Bible,

"Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel." Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her."²⁰

Jacob not only put his hard work for a total of fourteen years for the women of he fell in love with but he was also given a Leah, the sister, which he did not ask for. Even though Jacob was tricked into getting the wrong women, he still did not disrespect Leah. God still had a plan. Leah would be in the ancestry line for the birth of our Savior. Jacob's actions showed courtship and love. He maintained his focus when working for the purpose of his darling. He loved Rachel unconditionally and he provided for her. He was a leader and an encourager. When Rachel was discontent because she could not have a son, he told her he still adored her. Jacob spoke to her with respect and authority when she was not content with God's plans. Jacob loved Rachel until his death meanwhile her focus in life was on trying to compete with her sister Leah, Jacob's second wife. No husband or wife is perfect. Through the love of Christ, a couple can get through any obstacle.

Many Christians refer back to specific scriptures in the Bible to remind them of what marriage should be like. I chose Ephesians 5:22-33 which states,

"Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to

¹⁹ The Holy Bible: NIV, 1973, Genesis 29:11

²⁰ The Holy Bible: NIV, 1973, Genesis 29:17-20

Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”²¹

Marriage is supposed to reflect the relationship between Christ and the church. Christ loved the church even though she did not always follow His commands. The church is supposed to follow God’s commands. The husband is the head of the household and is responsible for the wife. The wife is the supporting body in the relationship as long as it is Christ based.

I find it interesting that people do not hesitate in paying thousands of dollars for an extravagant wedding and putting so much detail into that big day that it consumes the months or years of their life. People forget to put time, effort, and thought about the days after the wedding. Pre-marital counseling is the only preventative counseling and it would prevent many “accidental” marriages. God has a future spouse lined up for everyone so not every unmarried Christian you meet is a potential candidate. Counseling helps identify the major topics that couples forget to talk about. In my pre-marital counseling session I came across an interesting book about Love and Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs (2004), which digs into why the Lord gave such commands to the husband and then to the wife. Eggerichs (2004) states,

“In the beginning, when I was struggling to find help for other marriages as well as for my own, I was not searching for any “Love and Respect Connection.” But that connection surfaced as I pondered what Ephesians 5:33 is saying. My thought process went something like this: “A husband is to obey the command to love even if his wife does not obey this command to respect, and a wife is to obey the command to respect even if the husband does not obey the command to love.”

So far, so good. Then I reasoned further: “A husband is even called to love a disrespectful wife, and a wife is called to respect an unloving husband. There is no justification for a husband to say, I will love my

²¹ The Holy Bible: NIV, 1973

wife after she respects me' nor for a wife to say, 'I will respect my husband after he loves me.'

At this point, I still hadn't seen the Love and Respect Connection. My theory surfaced as God guided me in recognizing the strong link between love and respect in a marriage. I saw why it is hard to love and respect. When a wife feels unloved, it is especially hard to respect her husband.

At that point came the illumination that made sense to me, and it has made sense to a lot of people ever since. When a husband feels disrespected, he has a natural tendency to react in ways that feel unloving to his wife. (Perhaps the command to love was given to him precisely for this reason!) When a wife feels unloved, she has a natural tendency to react in ways that feel disrespected to her husband. (Perhaps the command to respect was given to her precisely for this reason!)

The Love and Respect Connection is clearly within Scripture, but so is the constant threat that the connection can be strained or even broken. And then came what I call the "aha" moment: this thing triggers itself. Without love, reacts without respect. Without respect, he reacts with love-ad nauseam." (p.15-16).

When I read this break down of how God created us individually to work differently it opened my eyes. It painted a picture of how my husband worked and how I can understand how he showed his love. It helped me realize that when a person does not understand what is being communicated, assumptions begin to pile up. When Scripture is not lived out, life tends to a snow of problems. Relationships tend to take a turn for the worse. Scripture is what we should measure up to. Marriage is not being taken seriously enough to put forth effort. It is not as easy as signing a paper for a membership. It is a big deal. Marriage is hard work. Less people are looking to get married. There are underlying reasons marriage is brushed off.

The media has very recently come about and has increased throughout the years. The age in which people are exposed to it has decreased rapidly. The majority of people can identify a child that has a tablet or some sort of technology with access to things, music, photos, and websites that are inappropriate. The more exposure to anything of bad influence, the more likely people become desensitized. Pop culture targets young adults because at that age they search for something to follow. The most popular music talks about one-night stands, shacking up, experimenting with the same sex, exploiting your body and doing what feels good. It does not try to speak about marriage, long-term commitments, abstinence, respecting and love self and others. The church needs more stable homes, men and women of God. God gave the responsibility to the parents to rise up fearing men and women of God. When the teaching lacks at home or in a person's life, it is hard to know how to be a husband or a wife because the structure has not been apart of a person's life.

If parents and the church does not get their attention to stand firm in their belief and what God's will is, then the world will quickly get their attention. The parents have the responsibility to instruct the child in the ways of the Lord. One of the strongest sins that are influencing young adults is sex. The youth gets the sex talk in their early teens at school. They are exposed to birth control, condoms, sexually transmitted disease, abortions, and teen clinics at an early age. A better prevention is to focus on Christ and abstinence we would get better results. These issues begin a cycle of downfalls in a person's life, which can be later dealt with by God, but better if avoided.

Young adults do not put much value in how important and sacred being intimate is with one person is. It is the root of many relationship problems like teen pregnancies, single homes, broken homes, and attachment confusion. Premarital sex also becomes detrimental to the spiritual life. God knows all things and made everything perfect for a purpose. He created sex for a husband and wife. When anyone outside of that has sex there may be physical and emotional conflicts later. Humans were designed to have intimacy with God and no other god along with one spouse and no other. It takes a covenant to maintain faithful to God and a spouse. When we are not willing to take that step there are long-term effects.

An epidemic problem that is hitting families is divorce. Author of *Growing up with Divorce*, Neil Kalter (1990) states "As we began to study divorce more closely, it became clear that rather than being an isolated occurrence, divorce is a process unfolding over many years." (p.5) This event terrorizes kids and extended families. David Meyers author of *Social Psychology* (2013) states, "Each year, Canada and the United States, record one divorce for every two marriages." (p.433) That is 50% of married couples are getting divorce. Divorce is so common that people prefer to not get married all together. There are multiple reasons that people believe are justifiable to divorce. To mention a few like financial problem, for the children, or "we don't love each other anymore." Then we have the abusive relationships and infidelities, which are harmful. I will not discuss those. I will focus on the difference between how marriage is a covenant and not a contract. In simple terms, Doherty (2001) states,

"Commitment-as-long-as" has something to teach us. It stresses that commitment is a choice, not just a cultural mandate. It embraces the importance of spouses advocating for their needs and rights in the relationship. It stress that people should not sit still while being taken advantage of by their spouses. It promotes self-advocacy in marriage for both women and men. But while this kind of commitment works well for courting or cohabiting couples who are exploring whether to make permanent commitment, it lacks the staying power for the long haul of a marriage. It's a starter motor designed to be used for months or years but not decade, and for good weather condition but not for bad ones. The other kind of commitment is not tentative. I call it "commitment-no-matter-what." That is the long view of marriage in which you don't

balance the ledgers every month to see if you are getting an adequate return on your investment. You have signed citizenship papers in a new country, which is now your country, and you don't have a plan for how to expatriate if the nation's economy goes sour or the political winds blow in directions you don't like. You are here to stay." (p.21)

The youth today is used to drive thru, fast food, quick fix or toss it if it's broken and may not know the value of cooking a meal from scratch or the struggle of fixing what is broken. Commitment is long term and requires patience and hard work.

In the Oxford dictionary contract is a noun and is defined as "A written or spoken agreement, especially one concerning employment, sales, or tenancy, that is intended to be enforceable by law." ²² Covenant is also a noun and is defined as "An agreement that brings about a relationship of commitment between God and his people."²³ John Stevenson states,

"...it also implies an ongoing relationship between those parties. The earliest covenant ceremony called for cutting an animal into two pieces. The parties to the covenant would then pass between the pieces of the animals, indicating that they were bound by life and death to keep the terms of the covenant. This is vividly pictured in Genesis 15 where Abraham cuts the animals in two and then the presence of God moves between the pieces of the animals. This idea of the cutting of a covenant was so prevalent that the term "cut" came to be used by itself as the making of a covenant."

There are a few differences between a contract and a covenant. The biggest factor is Jesus Christ. Marriage covenant is made before God and each person is dying to him or herself and becoming one with Christ. Christ is person who replaced the animal sacrifice and each person is no longer an individual but cut in half and all-3 persons together are one in Christ. The Bible gives multiple terms in which the covenant is carried out like covenant is until death. Covenant is God created and enforced. On the other hand a contract is a law made by man. When it is signed or broken each person remains separate "parties." Many people can even agree that pre-nuptial contracts are necessary because it protects losing money to the "other party" or sharing money with the "other party" in case things do not work out. The words trust, loyalty, unconditional, for rich and for poor thrown out of the window. There will always be a hint of doubt in a relationship when it is signed. God loves the church unconditionally and not with a contract, terms and conditions. That is how marriage should be.

²² (Oxford Dictionaries)

²³ (Oxford Dictionaries)

Marriage in an Unmarried World

In pursuit of a counseling profession, I have a passion in restoring marriages and families. When everything fails try counseling. Counseling is important through the marriage because there is always room for improvements. Counseling should be plan A not Z. An intervention that interests me is hope-focused marriage counseling created by Everett L. Worthington (1999). He summarizes the therapy as:

“..four possible reasons for the efficacy of the hope-focused approach. These include:(1) a focus on hope, (2) a simple strategy with diverse techniques, (3) a focus on repairing damaged emotional bonds through forgiveness, and (4) reliance on systematic research on the components of the method.” (p.1)

I agree with this intervention is because it focuses on the positive and trying to move forward. God is about restoring families and trying to save marriages. He throws the past into the deep ocean and in a marriage it is important we learn to forgive and move forward. Worthington (2007) states in his book,

“Ask some variations of the “miracle question,” which is used in many solution-focused therapy approaches. Ask them, “If you woke up tomorrow and your marriage were perfect, what would be different?” (p.89)

If couples were to focus on each other, the covenant and God they would move mountains. It takes the upmost effort to maintain a marriage. A contributing factor in failing marriages is the couple has open ears to their surrounding and what it believes. The family and society say “Its ok to break up,” “You don’t deserve that and you don’t have to take that,” and “that mistake is unforgiveable.” Couples have to remember why they went into covenant and what works for them. Every marriage had a way of going about their day but each one must follow Christ commands. Focus on your covenant partner.

Although each stage of life may come with difficulties we must remember God is in control. The unmarried should focus on being content with God, ministry, abstinence, and courtship because God has a plan. When we do not follow these commands it opens doors for issues like diseases, kids out of wedlock, and hearts broken. When we feel lost always turn to Scripture of an example because the Lord has provided us with one. For the married, God has great plans and calling for each one. Do not allow the influences of the media, acquaintances, and influences lose sight of the covenant marriage. Divorce should be only for the only few expectations cases and not because “the tooth paste cap was not put back” kind of on issues. Counseling ideally should be for self-evaluations and preventative but it will help save a marriage then most certainly seek it before the “D word” finds itself in your vernacular. Through all seek God’s guidance and remember that in each stage of life God has control.

References

- Chapman, G. (1995). *The Five Love Languages*. Chicago: Northfield Publishing.
- Collins, G. R. (2007). *Christing Counseling* (3rd Edition ed.). Wheaton: Tyndale Publishers, Inc.
- Doherty, W. J. (2001). *Take Back Your Marriage: Sticking Together in A World That Pulls Us Apart*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Edin, K. N. (2013). *Fatherhood in the Inner City*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Eggerichs, E. (2004). *Love and Respect*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Integrity Publishers.
- Harris, J. (2000). *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship*. Sisters: Multnomah Publishers.
- Kalter, N. (1990). *Growing Up With Divorce*. New York: The Free Press.
- McLanahan, S. S. (1994). *Growing Up with a Single Parent*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Meyers, D. G. (2013). *Social Psychology*. New York, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Opposing Viewpoints Series. (2012). *Interracial America*. Farmington Hills: Greenhaven Press.
- Oxford Dictionaries. (n.d.). *contract*. Retrieved April 15, 2014, from Oxford Dictionaries:
http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/contract?q=contract
- Oxford Dictionaries. (n.d.). *covenant*. Retrieved April 15, 2014, from Oxford Dictionaries:
http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/covenant?q=covenant
- Parrot III, L. *Helping the Struggling Adolescent*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Regnerus, M. U. (2011). *Premartial Sex in America: How Young Americans Meet, Mate,*

and Think About Marrying. New York, NY, 10016: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Shanley, M. (2001). *Making Babies, Making Families*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Stevenson, J. (n.d.). *Prophetic Books: Major Prophets*. Retrieved April 15, 2014,

from John Stevenson Bible Study Page:
<http://www.angelfire.com/nt/theology/ot09.html>

The Holy Bible: NIV. (1973). Colorado Springs, Colorado: International Bible Society.

Whitehead, B. D. (1996). *The Divorce Culture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Worthington, E. L. (2007, June 6). *Hope-focused Couple Approach*. Retrieved April 15,

2014, from Hope Couples:
<http://www.hopecouples.com/resources/research/Why%20is%20the%20Hope%20Couples%20Approach%20Effective%20article.pdf>

Worthington, E. L. (1999). *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

Young, B. &. (2001). *Devotions for Dating Couples*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

The Message not the Messenger

John Mezzacappa, Jr.

Malachi is the last book of the twelve Minor Prophets and closes out the Old Testament canon with prophecies of the future Messiah. Not only was this a prophecy of the Messiah, but that the Messiah was to be God Himself (3:1). The prophet also foretells the coming of Elijah who would prepare the way for the Lord, Jesus Himself attributed this coming of Elijah to John the Baptist.

New Testament saints were confused about whether Elijah had come in the spirit of John the Baptist and scholars today are confused concerning the author of Malachi. What has been debated concerning the author of the book of Malachi was whether Malachi was the name of the author or was it a symbolic title representing the name of the author, the latter because the Hebrew meaning of Malachi can be translated as “my messenger.” The same word is used elsewhere within the book where it is rightly translated as messenger bearing a title and not that of a name. It has also been noted that the word Malachi is not used anywhere else in Scriptures.

Therefore, it is the intent of the author to explore various points of interest in order to come to a logical conclusion of that which has been debated for many years. By looking at both Christian and Jewish scholar views, one can argue from the meaning and role of a prophet, a survey of the book of Malachi, a word study of Malachi, and various views on the meaning of this word proved that it does not matter whether Malachi was the name of the author or was a symbolic title representing the author. What matters is Who the message was from; it is about the message not the messenger and is God who should remain the focal point of those who study and read Scriptures. More often than not, in present and ancient times, history has proven that mankind loses their God vision and is estranged in depravity of their own minds, traveling further and further from the Truths of God because pride and idolatry flow from the heart of men. There is hope and hope has a name, and one came through the wilderness preparing the way for the Savior; God the Son; Jesus the Christ.

This section will discuss the meaning and use of the word prophet and the one who is called a prophet, the writings of prophets, where these writings are located in the Jewish Bible, and the first Messianic prophecy.

נְבִיא (nābî') *spokesman, speaker, prophet.*

נְבוּאָה (nēbū'â) *prophecy.*

נְבִיאָה (nēbî'â) *prophetess.*

The prophets of the Bible were spokesmen for God who He used to communicate his mind and will to mankind. The tasks we see in Scriptures assigned to the prophet was to correct moral and religious abuses, to proclaim the great moral and religious truths that are connected to the character of God, and to proclaim the coming of the Messiah.

The Hebrew word for prophet is *nabi*, and its meaning comes from a root meaning “to bubble forth, as from a fountain.” Jesus said in John 7:38, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his hear will flow rivers of living

water.” During the time of Samuel another word, *roeh*, “seer” began to be used (1 Samuel 9:9); and another word, *hozeh*, “seer” was also used. In 1 Chronicles 29:29 all three were words are used: Samuel the seer (*ro’eh*), Nathan the prophet (*nabi*’), and Gad the seer (*hozeh*). In Joshua 13:22 Balaam is called a *kosem* “diviner,” this word is only used for that of a false prophet (Easton 1996).

The very first prophet we see in Scriptures is Abraham, “*Now therefore, restore the man’s wife, for he is a prophet...*” this was said by the king of Gerar, Abimelech (Gen 20:7). One can easily see the authority and respect given to Abraham because they feared God and knew that he was God’s spokesman. This respect and authority did not last long amongst God’s prophets for Scripture tells of prophets being cast out of cities, beaten, abused, and killed. Jesus, in His parable of the Vineyard Owner, refers to those prophets who Israel had rejected, beaten and killed; “And again He sent another, and they killed’ and many others, beating and killing some” (Mk 12:1-12; Matt 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19). Jesus goes on to say, “*Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others.*” Jesus goes on to quote Psalm 118:22, 23, “*The stone which the builder rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.*” The Jews were furious, convicted because they knew Jesus was speaking of them and the prophets they had rejected.

Schools of prophets began during the time of Samuel and became a distinct order (1 Samuel 19:18-24; 2 Kings 2:3, 15; 4:38). These schools were used to train prophets; these young men became known as “sons” or “disciples” who lived together and were brought up to exercise the office of the prophet. Some scholars believe that within these schools, or “band of prophets”, there were scribes who wrote down the works of the prophets and some have even suggested that they would even add to or alter the prophets’ writings, and as we will see later some scholars have even suggested that these scribes sometime misinterpreted the prophet’s message and added context to make their message clear.

There are also many other persons mentioned in Scripture who were called by God to prophesy: the seventy elders of Israel (Numbers 11:16-29), Asaph and Jeduthun “prophesied with a harp” (1 Chronicles 25:3). Miriam and Deborah were prophetesses (Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4), king David prophesies of the coming of the Messiah (Psalm 16:8-11).²⁴

The first Messianic prophecy can be found in Deuteronomy 18:15, “*The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear...*” These are some profound actions that God has completed which was prophesied thousands of years prior. He will send a prophet “*like me*” and “*from your brethren.*” Now compare this prophecy to that of Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, “*And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple...*” (Malachi 3:1b). We know that both these

²⁴ See Appendix A for a complete list of other prophets mentioned in Scripture.

prophecies speak of the Lord Jesus Christ, His deity, and His relationship to the Holy Trinity.

The Book of Malachi

The book of Malachi may not be the name of the prophet who wrote it; some scholars suggest Malachi is a symbolic title or designation and not the name of the prophet who prophesied to Israel. This claim is supported by the possible meaning of the word Malachi being “my messenger.” The same word is used in 2:7, and 3:1; the use of this word clearly speaks of a messenger as a title not as a name as some imply in 1:1. The name is not seen anywhere else in Scripture and this book can be viewed as the only book of the prophets with an anonymous author.

Malachi is dated 435-415 B.C. after the Jews returned from the exile during the world power of Persia. The second Temple had been completed and temple sacrifices were being done. This being said, Malachi prophesied first against the priest because of their carelessness in ritual matters; divorce and skepticism, their lack of their reverence and thoroughness; they had become lax and were not completely following the law Moses had given them. The Israelites had also fallen to idolatry, worship of other gods, and married outside their own.

Malachi is the last book of the twelve Minor Prophets and closes out the Old Testament canon with prophecies of the future Messiah. Not only was this a prophecy of the Messiah, but that the Messiah was to be God Himself (3:1). The Messiah did come to Israel, and to the Temple, as God had promised; His name was Jesus of Nazareth. Galatians 4:4-5 says, “*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*” The prophet also foretells the coming of Elijah who would prepare the way for the Lord; this fulfillment is seen in John the Baptist and also prophesied in Isaiah 40:3. When John was asked who he was he said, “*I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the LORD*”²⁵ (John 1:23). In Matthew 17:11-13 Jesus also confirms that John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecies of both Isaiah and Malachi, “*Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.¹² But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.”¹³ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.* The book of Malachi springs forth the nation of Israel into silence, a silence lasting 400 years. But there is also a message of hope, the coming Messiah would arrive and come to his Temple. The silence is interrupted by whom Malachi prophesied; John the Baptist proclaimed that all should repent and prepare for the Lord. Should not the people listen after 400 years of silence, did they not remember the words prophesied by Malachi?

²⁵ Isaiah 40:3

Progressive revelation answers these questions; no they did not; they rejected Him.

The Hebrew name “Malachi” (מְלַאכִי **Mal’ākîy**) is worthy of consideration. There are three words in the Hebrew language that share the same root (לָכַד (*l’k*)), oddly enough; this root word has no standalone meaning, it is considered an *unused root*. The three Hebrew words are:

- 1) מְלַאכִי (*mal’āk*) **messenger, representative,**
- 2) מְלַאכָה (*mēlā’kâ*) **work, business,** and
- 3) מְלַאכֻת (*mal’ākût*) **message** (only in Hag 1:13). (Bowling 1999)

When looking at the Hebrew noun form of the word Malachi, found in Malachi 1:1, we have the same unused root; מְלַאכִי. Strong’s concordance tells us that it is from the Hebrew word מְלַאכִי *mal’āk*,; which, as stated earlier has the unused root, לָכַד. According to Strong’s this word means; to *despatch* as a deputy; a *messenger*; spec. of God, i.e. an *angel* (also a prophet, priest or teacher):—ambassador, angel, king, messenger. If we were to combine the meaning of these words we have a person whose work was to bring forth a message. The Old Testament word prophet (נָבִיא) was used to describe a person who was called by God to be His spokesman/spokesperson, acting in God’s name and authority.

Various Views on Meaning of Malachi: Symbolic Title or Name

Both Christian and Jewish scholars seem equally split on whether Malachi was a person or a symbolic title (“my messenger”).

i. In their commentary, “Joel and Malachi” authors Ogden and Deutsch favor a title over a name of an individual. They say that if Malachi were a name it is used in its shorter form; the full name would be *Malachiya* which is similarly shortened as other Northwest Semitic sentence names as of Abram, Abimelech, and Zechariah. The last symbol would be a shortened form of Yahweh; Malachi’s name would thus be translated as “messenger of Yahweh.” In support of this one only need to look to Scripture where the same Hebrew word is used in 2:7 and 3:1. They also offer, “Since much of this small collection of messages is styled as the direct speech of Yahweh, the use of the title “my messenger” for the prophet who delivered these messages is not at all surprising.” (Graham S Ogden 1987)

ii. Easton’s Bible Dictionary stands on the view that Malachi was indeed an individual, a prophet, and the writer of the last book of the minor prophet’s and the last book of the Old Testament. They state, “*There is reason,*

however, to conclude that Malachi was the ordinary name of the prophet.” (Easton 1893) They support this claim by the suggestion that Malachi was a contemporary of Nehemiah and that he prophesied after Haggai and Zechariah although no allusion is made to him by Ezra. These facts are stated by other commentators, both Christian and Jew, but do not give solid support to Malachi being an individual’s name. Yes there was someone who fit the bill to what was previously stated, but in his writings he does not say, “I Malachi, a contemporary of...” The only mention of Malachi is in 1:1, “*The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.*”²⁶ Clearly this can be read as, “The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by His messenger.”

iii. Rabbi Yitzchok Stavsky is the author of “*Trei Asar: The Twelve Prophets*” in this second volume we find a commentary on the books of Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. It is said to be a new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic sources. Interestingly enough, as we review the commentary on Malachi we see that Christian are, in some interpretations, in agreement with Jewish commentators. Jewish scholars (and Rabbis), do agree that Malachi is the last of the minor prophets, was prophesied during the Second Temple, that he was a contemporary of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, and that he exhorted the people to remember the Torah of Moses (3:22). Christian scholars would agree with this as well. One Rabbi, Ibn Ezra, “*implies that in the future there will be no more prophets to chastise Israel regarding their observance of the mitzvos.*” (Stavsky 2009) He was right, following the prophesies of Malachi there were 400 silent years a time which has become known by Christians as the Intertestamental Period. As we approach the question of authorship, up to this point it easy to see that both Jewish and Christian scholars are in agreement. Looking at the introduction of Rabbi Stavsky’s book it states that, “*Malachi’s identity is shrouded in mystery.*” I believe we are in agreement at this point. As we look further we will notice a back and forth on views that Jews and Christians may or may not agree on. The introduction tells us that the Talmud (Megillah 15a) discusses this mystery and quotes various opinions: “R’ Nachman said that “*Malachi was actually Mordechai,*” R’ Yehoshua ben Korcha suggested that “*Malachi was actually Ezra.*” In an attempt to confirm this they offer the following Scripture in support of their theory; Malachi 2:11 and Ezra 10:2, they claim the similarity in each supports their claim.

²⁶ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mal 1:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<p>Malachi 2:11(NKJV)</p> <p>Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The LORD's holy <i>institution</i> which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god.</p>	<p>Ezra 10:2(NKJV)</p> <p>And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, <i>one</i> of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this.</p>
---	---

The introduction also asserts that the Sages held that there was a prophet whose real name was Malachi who prophesied at that time. The last paragraph of Rabbi Yitzchok Stavsky's introduction of Malachi states, "*But Rambam (introduction to Yad HaChazakah) writes that Malachi [and Mordechi] were both members of the Beis Din of Ezra, i.e., the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah (Men of the Great Assembly). This would seem to concur with the opinion of the Sages that Malachi, Mordechai and Ezra were separate individuals. Radak and Abarbanel also maintain that Malachi was not Ezra but an individual named Malachi who prophesied at that time.*" (Stavsky 2009, 310) From what has been presented one can easily agree that Jewish scholars are as divided as Christian scholars when it comes to the authorship of the book of Malachi.

iv. Adolphe Lods (1867-1948) was a French Protestant Bible scholar and historian; although his bibliography does not provide any degrees he earned or institutions he attended, he was the author of several books including "The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism." His bibliography also reveals that he also taught Hebrew and published an edition of the book of Enoch from Greek fragments with variants from the Ethiopian text, translations, and notes. (Judaica 2012) In his book, "The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism", he says that the book of Malachi was authored by "*another anonymous prophet of the time.*" (Lods 1961, 275) He says that *Mal'aki* is a common noun meaning "my messenger", "my angel". He also claims, regarding the use of *Mal'aki* in 3:1, that this passage in the book "*was misinterpreted by a scribe, who thought himself justified in applying this title to the author and in inscribing it at the head of his writings.*" (Lods 1961, 275) It appears that the correct interpretation of the noun *Mal'aki* is sandwich between two conjectures; one being that there are other anonymous prophets and the second being a misinterpretation by a scribe. The author's assumption concerning other anonymous prophets is only supported by his own view, and those who hold to critical scholarship, that there are several anonymous prophecies which have been added to the book of Isaiah. (Lods 1961, 9) Critical scholarship, a branch of theology also seen as "higher criticism" being very liberal and modern in their views they claim that there was more than one author for the book of Isaiah. They base this claim on three primary differences: 1) a difference in mood, 2) a difference in setting, and 3) a difference in time. These claims are easily debunked by the fact that there are in fact more similarities in the book of

Isaiah than there are differences. These liberal scholars deny not only the unity of Isaiah but also the possibility of prophecy. They are redactive in their approach and in doing so seriously profane the Word of God, to which our Savior and Lord referred to Isaiah the prophet, not prophets. The second statement concerning the misinterpretation by a scribe should also be rejected. Textual criticism has taught that the original writings of the Bible are inerrant but our texts today do have errors; errors from slight of pen and misspellings not misinterpretations.

v. The Septuagint renders the Hebrew name as “his messenger,” which lends support to the view that it was not the name of an actual person but rather a symbolic designation. Neither view has convincing arguments to designate that of a title or of a person and some scholars have suggested that in the absence of compelling arguments to the contrary, the designation Malachi should be regarded as the name of the prophet (Robertson 2004).

Mal 1:1 THE burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of his messenger.²⁷

ἄγγελος **aggēlōs**, *ang'-el-os*; from ἀγγέλλω **aggēllō** (to *bring tidings*); a *messenger*; esp. an “*angel*”; by impl. a *pastor*:—angel, messenger.²⁸

ἄγγελος^a, **ou m**: (derivative of ἀγγέλλω ‘to tell, to inform,’) a person who makes an announcement—‘messenger.’ ἀπελθόντων δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων Ἰωάννου ἤρξατο λέγειν ‘after John’s messengers had left, (Jesus) began to speak’ Lk 7:24.²⁹

Hebrews 1:1–2, clearly declares that the entire OT is a deposit of written oracles of the *nēbī'im*. The word “prophets” is extremely important in this text, for, “In the LXX *nābī'* is always translated *prophetes*; there is not a single instance of any other word” (TDNT, VI, p. 812). Once in a text wherein the ages-long work of the line of authentic prophets is summarized, the OT uses the word *mal'āk* “messenger,” “angel.” The LXX gives the proper sense by using *aggelos*, “angel” (II Chr 36:15). (Bowling 1999)

Conclusion

²⁷ Brenton, L. C. L. (1870). *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament: English Translation* (Mal 1:1). London: Samuel Bagster and Sons.

²⁸ Strong, J. (2009). *Vol. 1: A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (7). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

²⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (409–410). New York: United Bible Societies.

We have looked at the word prophet and how it is used in the Bible; that of a spokesman for God to speak to His children. We have surveyed the book of Malachi which is the last book of the Old Testament and the final, 12th book of the Minor Prophets. A word study on the Hebrew word Malachi was presented. Also, several views have been presented; these views are those of well-known scholarly men, Bible dictionaries, and various authors. Included in these views are those of Jewish Rabbis and authors; whose views can be found to be very similar to that of Christian interpretations. The last view presented is how the word Malachi was translated in the Greek Septuagint (LXX).

I have discovered two points of interests relating to the book of Malachi: 1) Only God knows who the author of the book of Malachi was, and 2) it does not matter! What matters is that it is God who gave the message to be proclaimed, it is God who inspired the writer, and it is God who is to receive the glory and honor.

It seems much has not changed concerning man over the past 2,500 years. Throughout the Testaments God has been humbling all men; kings, judges, prophets, priests, and men and woman not called to ministry. Concerning the prophets, they were ridiculed, ignored, beaten, killed, and exiled. I do believe this was not always a consequence by the one who was humbled but more so to humble those whom they affected; God's children. It is no wonder, except a God wonder, that the author of the last book of the Old Testament is a mystery. Maybe, just maybe, God was trying to get our eyes off man and on Him.

Today, the office of prophet can be seen and enacted in a way similar to that of a pastor. A pastor, through study and prayer receives a word from God and tells this word, teaching, to his congregation. This process is very similar if not exact to that of the Old Testament prophets. In recent years we have seen in the Christian church many pastors fall to moral difficulties; some from small churches, some from mega churches. What they all have in common is that they are men, they have been called by God, and they can be viewed as prophets. But, what should be viewed more than anything is that they were called to be spokesman of God and not called to be idols. Over two thousand years ago mankind ridiculed, beat, exiled and killed prophets; today we make them idols, and they become prideful and forget Who it was that inspired and called. Some say of particular pastors, "Oh he makes me laugh", or "I like the way he speaks", or "He has things together." By doing this we are beating, ridiculing, exiling, and killing them just as was done thousands of years ago.

It's time we take our eyes, our hearts, and our minds off the messenger and return them to the message; **לֹא הַמְּלַאֲךְ הַמְּלַאכּוֹת** "The Message, not the Messenger."

APPENDIX A		
Prophets Before the Monarchy		
Name	Description of Prophet	Reference
Enoch	Prophesied about God's judgment on those who speak against God	Gn 5:24; Jude 14,15
Noah	Invoked future blessing and curses on his sons and grandson	Gn 9:25-27
Abraham	Called a prophet by Abimelech	Gn 20:1, 7
Jacob	Revealed what would befall his descendants "in the last days."	Gn 49:1-28
Aaron	As spokesman for Moses, Aaron was also a spokesman for God	Ex 7:1,2
Miriam	Prophetess who led a song of praise after crossing the Red Sea	Ex 15:20,21
Balaam	Foreign prophet who blessed Israel	Num 22-24
Joshua	Prophesied against the rebuilder of Jericho	Josh 6:26; 1 Kg 16:34
Deborah	Prophetess who judged and delivered Israel	Judg 4:4,5
Samuel	Recognized as a prophet by all Israel	1 Sam 3:19-21
Prophets During the Monarchy		
Saul	Prophesied with a band of prophets	1 Sam 10:5-13
David	Spoke in his psalms of the coming Messiah	Ps 16:8-11
Nathan	Prophet to David	2 Sam 7; 12
Gad	Prophet to David	2 Sam 24:11-14

The Message, Not the Messenger

Zadok	High priest under David; he was also a seer	2 Sam 15:27
Asaph, Hemand , Jeduthun	As chief musicians and royal seers under David, they prophesied through music and wrote several Psalms	1 Chr 25:1-6, 2 Chr 35:15
Iddo	Royal seer under Solomon and Rehoboam; he kept records of their reigns	2 Chr 9:29; 12:15
Ahijah	Foretold the division of Solomon's kingdom	1 Kg 11:29-39
Shemaiah	Explained the invasion of Judah by Shishak king of Egypt	2 Chr 12:5-8
Azariah	Encouraged Asa king of Judah	2 Chr 15:1-7
Hanani	Prophesied judgment on Asa king of Judah	2 Chr 16:7-10
Jehu	Prophesied judgment on Baasha king of Israel	1 Kg 16:1, 7
Micaiah	Prophesied that Aha king of Israel would die in battle	1 Kg 22:7-28
Obed	Prophesied judgment of Pekah king of Israel	2 Chr 28:9-11
Huldah	Prophetess who prophesied judgment following the death of Josiah king of Judah	2 Kg 22:14-20
Prophets of the New Testament		
Anna	Testified that baby Jesus was the Messiah	Lk 2:36-38
Agabus	Foretold of a coming famine	Acts 11:28
Paul	Foretold of false teachers in the last days	1 Tim 4:1-3
Peter	Foretold of false teachers in the last days	2 Pet 2:1-3
John	Prophesied of the end time	Rev 1:1 (God 1997)

Bibliography

- Bowling, A. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999.
- Bullock, C. Hassell. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prohetic Books*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.
- Cockerill, Gareth Lee. *Christian Faith in the Old Testament*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2014.
- Easton, M. *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1996.
- Easton, M.G. *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893.
- Gardner, Paul D. *Encycloepedia of Bible Characters*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- Geisler, Norman L. *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1997.
- God. *The Prophecy Study Bible*. Edited by John C Hagee. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.
- Graham S Ogden, Richard R Deutsch. *Joel & Malachi A Promise of Hope A Call to Obedience*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987.
- Hagner, D.A. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Edited by Merrill C. Tenney. Vol. 3. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976.
- Hill, A.E. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*. Edited by Mark J Boda and J. Gordon McConville. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012.
- Johnson, Paul. *A History of the Jews*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987.
- Judaica, Encyclopedia. "LODS, ADOLPHHE." *Jewish Virtual Library*. April 22, 2012.
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0013_0_12677.html (accessed April 22, 2014).
- Lods, Adolphe. *The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism*. Translated by S.H. Hooke. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1961.

The Message, Not the Messenger

- Miller, Stephen M. *Who's Who and Where's Where in the Bible*. Uhrichsville: Barbour Publishing, 2004.
- Purkiser, W.T. *Exploring the Old Testament*. Kansas: Beacon Hill Press, 1995.
- Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Christ of the Prophets*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2004.
- Stavsky, Rabbi Yitzchok. *Trei Asar The Twelve Prophets*. Vol. II. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, LTD, 2009.
- Strong, J. *A Concise Dictionary of the Wordsw in the Greek and the Hebrew Bible*. Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, 2009.
- StuhlmueLLer, Carroll. *Haggi & Zechariah Rebuilding with Hope*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988.
- Zuck, Walvord and. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983.

Jesus and the Woman of Canaan

Pamela R. Smith

Then Jesus went there, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried to him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, you son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.” (Matthew 15:21–22).

The woman, who moved Christ so much that he called her a woman of great faith, was not of the house of Israel. Mark called her a Greek (Gentile), a Syrophoenician, identifying her nationality. However, Matthew called her a woman of Canaan, not because there still was a “political country called *Canaan* in New Testament times,¹” but Matthew is the descriptive storyteller providing even the casual Bible reader valuable insight just by calling her a woman of Canaan, from which Syrophoenicians descended. He calls “...her a *Canaanite*, a pejorative term used for the pagan occupants of the Promised Land in the Old Testament. This harsh tone governs the conversation that follows between Jesus and the woman.”²

In both Matthew and Mark, this passage immediately follows Jesus’ teaching on clean and unclean. While in Galilee, the scribes and Pharisees had come to Jesus asking him why the disciples did not wash their hands before eating their bread. Jesus gave them a lesson on clean and unclean. Following the lesson, the disciples told Jesus that the Pharisees were offended by what he had said and Jesus replied, “...Every plant, which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up.” Then Jesus left Galilee and traveled to the region of Tyre where he meets a Gentile woman of great faith.

This is significant because for centuries from the Jewish perspective descendants of Canaan and all other Gentiles were considered unclean. It was Canaan that God told his promised people to invade and take possession of and to destroy its inhabitants. The Israelites considered them their enemies. The very existence of this woman is reminder of the children of Israel’s disobedience and also of God’s mercy. Disobedient because Israel made leagues with some of the inhabitants of Canaan resulting in God telling them that he would not drive them out, but that the inhabitants would be pricks in their eyes, thorns in their sides, a snare and a trap to them, a whip for their backs, and their gods a constant temptation to them (Numbers 33:55; Joshua 23:13; Judges 2:3).

¹ Barclay M. Newman and Phillip C. Stine, *A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 492–493.

² Richard B. Gardner, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Matthew* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1991), 239.

Of God's mercy because here was a woman, a descendent of a race that was ordered to be destroyed but was not, nevertheless still to her day considered unclean. Yet here she was with the boldness to approach the Messiah and to ask for the deliverance of her daughter. She ignored social protocol and her nationality and walked into a prophecy that she did not even know that included her. Every time we read her story, we see God's mercy and a fulfillment of a promise (Ephesians 3:6). We see the door opening for Gentiles to approach the King of kings.

Gentiles were considered unclean, but this story about the woman of Canaan provides us a glimpse of what was coming. It hints toward the coming grafting of the Gentiles into the promise.

But some of these branches from Abraham's tree — some of the people of Israel — have been broken off. And you Gentiles, who were branches from a wild olive tree, have been grafted in. So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in the rich nourishment from the root of God's special olive tree. ~Romans 11:17 (NLT)

The Scripture says that the woman of Canaan cried to Jesus. The word "*Cried* is in the imperfect tense, indicating a constantly repeated appeal (as the disciples' reaction in verse 23 confirms)³. She kept on shouting loudly for Jesus. She then said, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me." Chouinard states that her calling Jesus the Son of David "indicates a remarkable insight into Jesus' messianic authority"⁴ and France states that "the appeal to Jesus as *Son of David* is striking in the mouth of a Gentile."⁵ This woman of Canaan could do what the Pharisees and scribes had not been able to do—see Jesus "clearly enough to proclaim his messianic title, 'Son of David.'"⁶

Jesus had gone to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon for a retreat, but the woman of Canaan had sought out and found the Messiah. She had a need and disregarded protocol and stepped outside of what was expected of her and pursued what was needed for her daughter—healing. This Gentile woman that none of the Jewish religious leaders would not even sit at a dinner table with somehow knew that Jesus had entered her region giving her the opportunity to bypass the

³ R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary Vol. 1* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 249

⁴ Larry Chouinard, *Matthew: The College Press NIV Commentary* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1997).

⁵ France, 249.

⁶ Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew Vol. 1* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000), 230.

objection and criticism of the Pharisees and scribes and to go directly to Jesus, whom she recognized as the Messiah.

She asked Jesus to have mercy on her and then she tells him about her daughter. However, Matthew 15:23 states “But he answered her not a word.” Silence from God—that thing that often defeats many today, did not deter this woman of faith who stood in the presence of the Messiah all while he ignored her, but she continued asking. She was not about give up. She persisted to the point that the disciples became annoyed and begun to repeatedly urge Jesus to send her away because she kept crying out for help.

Scholars differ in their interpretations of the request from the disciples to send her away. The Pulpit Commentary has two opinions: “Their Jewish prejudices, too, were aroused by this appeal from a Canaanite; they could not endure the idea that favor should be extended to this Gentile of an abhorred race; hence they desired Christ to dismiss her at once, give her a decided rejection.”⁷ It also states, “On the other hand, the answer of Christ to their request leads to another explanation, as if he understood them to be asking him to grant her prayer.”⁸

It appears that the disciples possibly wanted Jesus to answer her request, not out of compassion, but just to get rid of her so they could have some quietness. Then Jesus, still ignoring the woman, spoke to the disciples and said that he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This response and continual ignoring of the woman did not discourage her. Instead, it kicked her into the next gear. She did not care who saw her or who was agitated by her shouting out to Jesus. She fell to her knees before Jesus and once again cried out, “Lord help me.”

Finally, Jesus spoke to her. He told her it was not proper for him to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs. This response may have disheartened others, especially someone who had repeatedly heard he or she was not entitled to receive the blessings of God, but not this woman of Canaan. She was resilient against the silence and now being called a dog.

Although it was common practice for Jews to call Gentiles dogs, this was the Messiah! She could have easily been offended and dejected. However, she chose not to take it personally. She was on a mission and refused to be sidetracked by allowing her emotions to override her faith. She had come to Jesus to obtain healing for her daughter and was not leaving without it.

The Pulpit Commentary tells us that she seized the opportunity, and turned Christ’s own words against him. She told him that he did speak truth. “The Jews are the children, we are the dogs, and as dogs we claim our portion.”⁹ She conceded to Jesus’ statement and continued to humble herself before him, all the

⁷ Henry Donald M. Spence, ed., *The Pulpit Commentary St. Matthew* Vol. 2), London; New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909), 100

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Spence, 101

while waiting with great expectation to receive mercy and the answer to her prayer.

It seemed hopeless, but she kept pursuing. She was able to block out the silence of Jesus. She was also able to block out all the noise, be it the noise of fear, of her having no right to approach the Messiah, or the noise of the disciples telling her to be quiet or to go home or Jesus calling her a dog.

This woman of Canaan so impressed Jesus that he told her, “O woman, great is your faith: be it to you even as you will. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.” We read of only two instances where Jesus told someone that they had great faith. Each time it was to a Gentile, not an Israelite. “In both episodes the faith of a Gentile stands in stark contrast to the unbelief and blindness of Israel. Therefore, the woman’s confessional petition becomes illustrative of the response that should have characterized all Israel.”¹⁰

This woman of Canaan is an image of what faith in action looks like. She is also a reminder and warning to us:

But you must not brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. You are just a branch, not the root. “Well,” you may say, “those branches were broken off to make room for me.” Yes, but remember — those branches were broken off because they didn’t believe in Christ, and you are there because you do believe. So don’t think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. For if God did not spare the original branches, he won’t spare you either. ~Romans 11:18–21 (NLT)

¹⁰ Chouinard

Bibliography

- Chouinard, Larry. *Matthew: The College Press NIV Commentary*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 1997.
- France, R. T. *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary Vol. 1*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985.
- Gardner, Richard, B. *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1991.
- Newman, Barclay, M., and Stine, Phillip, C. *A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1992.
- Spence, Henry Donald M., ed. *The Pulpit Commentary St. Matthew Vol. 2*. London; New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909.
- Weber, Stuart K. *Matthew Vol. 1*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000.

ABSTRACTS OF RECENT SFBC&TS THESES & DISSERTATIONS

Helping Children in the Church When Their Parents Are Divorcing The Experience of the First Brazilian Baptist Church of South Florida

Rosemayri Da Cunha Damacena
Master's Thesis
2014

The Church can and should help children when their parents are going through divorce. Divorce is a sad reality that affects many families and children are deeply hurt when their parents separate. Due to the uniqueness of their families, children of immigrant parents are more susceptible to effects of divorce. The process of divorce is painful for couples and their children. Divorce may cause disappointments, frustration, depression, and a sense of failure for adults. Such feelings can make them incapable to help their children. The Church of Christ can be directly involved in the healing process of families and their children.

This paper covers the following aspects: family and Church were both established by God; divorce is devastating for couples and their children; the church and its relevance to immigrants; family, as God created, is the best environment to raise children; how the Children's Ministry at the First Brazilian Baptist Church of South Florida helps children when their parents are separating; a questionnaire answered by people who assist children at the First Brazilian Baptist Church of South Florida; how children have a special place in God's heart; stories of children that were helped at the First Brazilian Baptist Church of South Florida through the Children's Ministry and special counseling. In addition a suggestion of a program to educate parents and grandparents is offered in the final chapter.

A Synopsis of a Reading Curriculum/program for English Language Learners (Ells)

Carla G. Calistrato
Master's Thesis
2014

This paper presents a synopsis of the reading curriculum, programs, and methodologies for the English Language Learners (ELLs) students. Four school programs are mentioned: the intervention programs, the after-school programs, the summer programs, and the computer programs. Considerations are given to the reading curriculum for the Christian school. In addition, data from the National Center for Educational Statistics about students' reading performance in the school are shown.

The Writing Connection: A Transferable Model for Developing Writing Skills for College Preparation

Robin Vickers
Doctoral Dissertation
2014

This study concentrates on the request for English teachers to accept the challenge to learn new and better ways to bring the connection between the students and the instructor to a level of effective results, to change and seek for deeper advanced literacy understanding, to provide rigorous developmental models to chart progress, to seek remediation to learn new disciplines. The purpose is to describe the characteristics and challenges for basic college writers, introduce the role, challenges, and barriers of basic writer teachers, and then to examine accountability. Surprisingly, 80% of the students who enrolled at Miami Dade College, the largest college in the world, are initially placed in college prep reading and writing courses to help build skills for under-prepared students who will probably never "make it" in college unless the standards are lowered. The argument today is, "Should college prep close its doors or be revamped to accommodate students who are often perceived particularly by my colleagues as empty vessels and incompetent?" Are the present day methodologies preparing basic writers to becoming proficient writers? Does accountability lie in the student, parents, or the schools? Should the college continue its open door policy, whosoever will come and enroll. Is there really a scratch or catch up level? Are students more motivated now in college than in high school or grade school years? What's in place now to predict that students can finish strong? There is a need to explore more; I believe there is nothing impossible with God and students can catch up and be taught how to write effectively for, "We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master" (Hemmingway).