



their zeal and indignation regarding that which is wrong! Why don't people feel shame for sin? Sometimes because of ignorance. Hosea 4:6 speaks of those

“destroyed for lack of knowledge.” Or, perhaps simply out of rebellion. There is little hope for the rebellious, but simply to hope and pray that perhaps one day before it is too late that part of them that they have hardened and silenced may live within them again and they will (like the prodigal son) come home!

“...To any People.” That which is wrong (as defined by God's law) is wrong “to any people” whether they realize it or not. Some of our good brethren have wrestled with this regarding the divorce and remarriage question in suggesting that the alien sin-

ner is not amenable to the Law of Christ.

In Matthew 19:1-9 Jesus spells out rather clearly what the Lord expects under the Law of Christ regarding marriage: 1. It is to be life lasting!

“What God has joined together let not man separate” (vs. 6), and 2. If you put away your mate “for sexual immorality” and remarry it is not adultery! (Under any other circumstances, not only is it wrong to put them away, but if you remarry, as Romans 7:1-6 puts it you are **“called an [adulterer or] adulteress”**). Some brethren question whether God would ask a person (who may have divorced unscripturally years ago) to end a relationship recognized by the world as a sound marriage, but by Scripture as adultery if the marriage was before obedience to the gospel? The argument is that the Law of Christ is directed toward those already in a covenant relationship with the Lord not the alien sinner.

This is not a new issue. 1600 years ago a teacher named Ambrose wrote a letter to a church in which he commented on the qualifications for one who is a bishop. Though Ambrose had embraced many false doctrines notice his argument on this issue: “...there are many who argue that ‘husband of one wife’ is said of marriage after baptism, on the ground that the fault which would constitute an impediment has been washed away in baptism. It is of course true that all faults and sins are washed away, so that a man who has defiled his body with many women, none of them bound to him in lawful matrimony, is forgiven everything. But where there has been a second marriage, it is not dissolved. Sin is washed away in baptism, law is not. For though there is no sin in marriage, there is law in it, and therefore what is lawful is not remitted as sin, but retained as law” (Letter 63, para. 63, Taken from *Early Latin Theology*, S. L. Greenslade, p. 274,275).

The Bible teaches us marriage is honorable among all (Heb. 13:4), Jesus' message was for the world (see John 18:19-21), and all are **“under law toward Christ”** (1 Cor. 9:19-22).



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OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

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2012

Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Jason Garcia



“Sin is a Reproach to Any People”

By Kyle Pope

Proverbs 14:34 gives a powerful warning to all nations, people, and even churches. The text reads **“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people”** (NKJV). Let's think about the implications of these words:

“Righteousness...” The word “righteous” is not a word used often in our everyday language. Several years ago kids adopted a slang use of the word to describe something that was especially appealing. They would speak of “righteous tennis shoes” or a “righteous surf-board.” The real meaning of the word speaks to one's behavior and standing before God and man.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines the word as “meeting the standards of what is right and just” (p. 607). One reason that we don't use the word much anymore is because our world has rejected the notion that there is absolute right and wrong. This philosophy is expressed dramatically in the document drafted in 1973 known as the *Humanist Manifesto II*. This work states, “We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life” (Point Three, taken from the *NFD Journal*, October 1986, p. 18).

In contrast to this the Bible teaches us not only that there is absolute right and wrong but that Scripture is the standard by which to determine both. Psalm 33:4 teaches, **“For the word of the Lord is right, and all His work is done in truth.”** It is interesting that the definition of the word righteous refers to “standards” of what is just and right. With no standard there really is no right and wrong!

“...Exalts...” The dictionary defines the word “exalt” “1. To raise in position, status, etc.; elevate. 2. To glorify; praise. 3. To fill with pride,



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delight, etc.; elate” (*American Heritage Dictionary*, p. 249). Our text says “righteousness exalts a nation”. The world doesn’t believe this. The world claims that sin exalts. In our day we have seen countless “celebrities” rise to prominence (not by talent, virtue or admirable qualities) but by their ability to shock people! I heard on the radio about a company that makes a special kind of skateboard. They have run ads in magazines that portray a figure clearly intended to represent Christ using profanity declaring “I told you I would come back!” The creators of the ad said they weren’t trying to make any statement they simply wanted to “get attention.”

Sometimes Christians think that sin exalts. We look at the world and want what they have. We think it is more fun to pursue the world’s lusts. What we fail to see is the long term effects of righteousness, versus the long term effects of unrighteousness. We choose a moment of fun and sacrifice an eternity of peace, joy and delight. Righteousness exalts for eternity (see Rom. 2:5-11).

“...A Nation...” The word translated “nation” here is the Hebrew word *goy*. The word refers to a group of people. It is used primarily of Gentiles though it is also used of Israelites and even figuratively of locusts (Joel 1:6). The text most likely refers to a political principality (i.e. the nation of Israel, Judah, Babylon, etc.). In claiming that “righteousness exalts a nation” the text grants what our world denies, that a political principality has the responsibility to judge right and wrong.

Our country faces a paradox. We have drawn the conclusion that freedom of religion means the suppression of religion’s influence upon public policy and law. This leaves government with no standard by which to measure right and wrong.

The founders of this country held that government only derives its moral authority from Divine law. John Locke (sometimes called the Philosopher of the American Revolution) wrote in his work *Of Civil Government*: “I will not dispute now whether Princes [i.e. kings, queens, etc.] are exempt from the laws of their country; but this I am sure, they owe subjection to the laws of God and nature. No body, no

power, can exempt them from the obligations of that eternal law” (Ch. XVI, paragraph 195). William Blackstone, the famous jurist and writer of the law commentaries upon which American law was largely based for the first century of its history wrote: “Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws; that is to say, no human laws should be suffered to contradict these.” (Taken from *The Christian History of the Constitution*, Verna M. Hall, p. 143, 1966).

The Bible teaches that civil authorities derive their power from God (John 19:10-11). They are entrusted with the duty of punishing evil and praising good (Rom. 13:1-4). They can only do this when they know right from wrong and respect the standard of God’s word.

“...But Sin...” The word for sin in this verse is the Hebrew word *chata* meaning, “Miss, miss the way, sin, incur guilt, ...” (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. I, p. 277). One form of the word is used in Judges 20:16 of those who could sling stones and “not miss.” To sin is to fail to meet up to a divine standard. It is to miss the way God has intended one to go in life, relationships, worship, thought, or speech.

Sin is a most serious thing because of what it brings about in one’s life. The consequences of sin are: spiritual death (Gen. 2:15-17), separation from God (Isa. 59:1,2), and ultimately eternal punishment (Rev. 21:7-8).

Sin is not determined by intuition (Jer. 10:23), or tradition (Gal. 1:11- 16b), but only by revelation (2 Tim. 3:14-17). It is conquered only by obedience to the gospel. One obeys the gospel by faith and confession of Jesus (Rom. 10:6-11), repentance of sins and baptism into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-39), and by faithfulness to the Lord (Rev. 2:10).

“...Is a Reproach...”

The word translated “reproach” in this text is a rather unusual word. It is the Hebrew word *hesed*. Most frequently the word has a positive meaning. The King James version renders it 149 times “mercy”. Only twice is it used in a negative sense: **“Reproach”** (Prov. 14:34) and **“wicked thing”** (Lev. 20:17). The footnote in the *New King James Version* claims alternates could be “shame” or “disgrace.”

It seems that the thought here is one of two possibilities: 1. Sin makes people such that they need mercy, and pity, or 2. Sin is a cause for zeal and indignation. Wilson takes this latter view defining *hesed* “*Zeal towards any one, kindness, &c.; it is also used in a bad sense, zeal against any one, envy, &c., hence odium, reproach, disgrace.*” (*Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*, p. 350). Both points are brought out clearly in Scripture.

Our text says “sin is a reproach to any people”. Sadly what we find today is that in general much of the world has lost a sense of shame altogether and many Christians have lost