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WE MUST ALL APPEAR

Barry O'Dell

Paul wrote, "For we must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that *every one* may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). John recorded, "For God so loved *the world*, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). Paul wrote to Titus, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all men*" (Titus 2:11).

It seems that mankind today often focuses on different groups of humans. In the United States of America this mindset is rampant among many. We have European-Americans, African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Asian-Americans, etc., etc. DNA tests are available today that can supposedly trace your ancestry "1,000+ years into history" or, if you buy into the propaganda of evolution, to "discover how much Neanderthal DNA you inherited!" The student of the Bible knows that this mindset of segregating humans into sub-groups is nothing new. For example, the Pharisees wanted to cling to their physical relation to Abraham. God's prophet told them, "And think not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham to our father:' for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. 3:9). John the Baptizer's message to those Jews was that their lineage did not matter in God's eyes, but their repentance did because judgment was coming (Matt. 3:7-12). The apostles of Jesus themselves even struggled with this issue when they saw Jesus speaking with a Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:27). There were issues in the early church between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 15; Rom. 9-11) and, sadly, there are still problems that can arise today.

There are several verses in God's word that can help us understand that, in God's eyes, all men are equal and accountable to Him. Moses wrote, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Gen. 1:27). Peter told Cornelius and his household, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in *every nation* he that feareth

Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10:34-35). Paul said that God, "...hath made of *one blood all nations of men* for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). In rebuking Christians for showing favoritism James wrote, "But if ye have respect to persons, *ye commit sin*, and are convinced of the law as transgressors" (Jas. 2:9). The phrase "*ye commit sin*" is a present tense, active voice verb. James told his readers, and tells us today, that if we favor one group of people above another "*ye are living in sin!*"

What is the solution to these problems? How can Christians avoid and denounce favoritism and racism? Simply put – we must look at this world and everything in it from God's perspective. When people fail to keep God in their knowledge, terrible things happen. Paul wrote, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient (fitting)" (Rom. 1:28). However, when an individual knows the God of the Bible and His will that is revealed therein, there is no room in his heart for such evil, hateful attitudes. Paul told the Galatians, "...God accepteth no man's person..." (Gal. 2:6) and the Romans, "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11).

All men have an eternal soul that will be somewhere forever. Jesus spoke of the resurrection of both those who have done good and those who have done evil (Jn. 5:28-29). As noted in the opening paragraph, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10). The gospel does not apply to only a few people or ethnicities, it applies to all men. God has commanded all mankind to repent (Acts 17:30) because He is going to judge all mankind by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31). Jesus did not die on the cross to offer salvation to just a segment of the world, but to all the world. His mission on earth the first time was not, "...to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn. 3:17). His mission when He appears on the last day will be to judge humanity and the faithful will "meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 The. 4:13-18).

*"...we must look at this world
and everything in it from
God's perspective"*

REVERENCE IN AN IRREVERENT WORLD

Larry Powers

Are the people of the world displaying irreverence toward God? Have there always been some that displayed irreverence toward God and His Word? How is it possible to display reverence in an irreverent world? Have there always been some that displayed reverence toward God and His world? These are a few questions that need to be answered to help God's people continue to display reverence in an irreverent world.

Are people of the world today exhibiting irreverence toward God? Many of the laws of the land are exposing just how irreverent people are today. When the law of the land **does not allow** the Bible to be read in public schools irreverence is being established. When the law of the land **allows** abortion, "same sex-marriage," divorce for **any** reason, gambling, etc. irreverence is expressed.

The Bible describes that many people have always shown irreverence toward God. Before the flood man was wicked and his thinking was evil continually (Gen. 6:5). The men of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah showed their irreverence toward God by practicing sodomy, which today is called homosexuality (Gen. 19; Jude 7). The Jewish leaders showed their irreverence toward God by crucifying the Son of God. Many people of the first century showed irreverence toward God because they did not love the truth (2 The. 2:10-12).

How is it possible today to display reverence toward God in an irreverent world? To help answer this question one must know the meaning of the word "reverence." The dictionary defines "reverence" as "respect mixed with love and awe ... a sign of respect ... to respect and honor a person or thing." But the important definition comes from the Bible. The word "reverence" is found thirteen times in the Bible (seven times in the Old Testament and six times in the New Testament). The word "reverence" is found for the first time in the book of Leviticus. "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and **reverence** my sanctuary: I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:30). This word means "to fear, to venerate, religiously to reverence ... to bow down the head or body in token of reverence" (Wilson's Old Testament Studies). The first time this word "reverence" is found in the New Testament is in the book of Matthew. "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son" (Matt. 21:37). This word means "to turn about ... to reverence" (Thayer). This word is translated "reverence" four times (Matt. 21:37; Mk. 12:6; Lk. 20:13; Heb. 12:9). This word is also translated "regard" (Lk. 18:2, 4), "be ashamed" (2 The. 3:14; Titus

2:8), and "shame" (1 Cor. 4:14). Therefore this word must be understood in its context. There is another word translated "reverence" in the New Testament. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with **reverence** and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). This word means "modesty, an innate moral repugnance to a dishonorable act ... the grief which a man conceives from his own imperfections considered with relation to the world taking notice of them; grief upon the sense of disesteem" (Zodhiates). This word is translated "reverence" one time (Heb. 12:28) and "shamefacedness" one time (1 Tim. 2:9). Therefore, people today can and must display their reverence toward God by the life they live.

There have always been some that revealed reverence toward God. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6:8), thus Noah revealed his reverence toward God by doing all that God commanded him (Gen. 6:22). Abraham revealed his reverence toward God by following God's commands, leaving his homeland and following God to a new land, a land of promise (Gen. 12:1-3). Lot was called a just man and a righteous man (2 Pet. 2:7-8). Lot revealed reverence by the way he lived, even while surrounded by filthy conversation and unlawful deeds.

What kind of life displays reverence toward God in an irreverent world? The Christian life displays reverence toward God because to become a Christian requires submission to God. One submits to God by being obedient to the Gospel of Christ. One who submits to God has been baptized for the remission of his sins and thus goes forth displaying to others that he is walking a new course, "walking in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4). The Hebrew writer, Paul, lets Christians know that there is a kingdom that cannot be moved (Heb. 12:28). This Kingdom is the Church for which Jesus died; which Jesus promised to build (Matt. 16:18-19); which was presented on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the church of Christ. Therefore to display reverence requires that a Christian walk in accordance with the Word of God. Children of God are to walk in the footsteps of the Savior (Eph. 5:1). Children of God are to walk in love (Eph. 5:2). Children of God are to walk in the light (Eph. 5:8-10). This walk of the Christian, the child of God, is to signify the whole sphere of the activities of the Christian life. A Christian's life should thus exhibit the pure, beautiful, noble, and good thus revealing reverence in an irreverent world.

*Larry preaches for the Sharon church of Christ
in Sharon, TN*

***"...reverence requires
that a Christian walk in
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HE IS NOT ASHAMED TO CALL THEM BRETHREN*Steve Vice*

In Genesis 11, because of man's pride, God confused mankind's language which gave birth to different nations. Recorded in Genesis 12, God set in motion His plan to reunite man in one kingdom through His promise to Abraham. There is an old song, written by John M McCaleb, that says, "Of one the Lord has made the race, Thro' one has come the fall; Where sin has gone must go His grace: The Gospel is for all." These words reflect Jesus' purpose in coming to this earth (Lk. 19:10).

Isaiah 2:2-3 contains four very specific points of prophecy concerning the Lord's house, the church. (1) It would be established in Jerusalem. (2) God would teach His ways. (3) People would walk in His paths—His law. And, (4) people from every nation would flow into this house. The fourth point is the purpose of this article.

In Isaiah's prophecy, the word "house" indicates family and is also a reference to the Lord's church (1 Tim. 3:15). Notice carefully Isaiah's words: "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob..." (Isa. 2:3). There is but one house. People who hear the gospel, repent, confess, and are baptized according to the Scriptures, are added to that one house by the Lord (Acts 2:47). Jesus ordered the gospel to be preached to all nations so that obedient believers from those nations could be united in one, the same way in which He and His Father are one (Matt. 28:19; Jn. 17:20-23).

God designed the church so that people of all nations could be reconciled to Him in one body (Eph. 2:16). Notice how Paul describes the people in the body, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). Christians are no longer divided by nationality or borders. They are united in the same citizenship with the all those who have been sanctified, and they are all united in that one household of God. It makes no difference in what country a person was born because when a person is "born again" he or she becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of God (Phil. 3:20). In this kingdom there are no national borders.

Fellow-citizen is defined as, "a native of the same town" (Strong's Dictionary). Note carefully Galatians 3:26-29:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor

Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

There are no "American Christians" and "French Christians." All Christians are just Christians, nothing more, nothing less. Paul never said, "You Corinthian Christians..." The church at Corinth had many struggles, but Paul always spoke to them and of them with respect. He recognized them as "saints." He lovingly called them "brethren." He honored them by referring to them as "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2, 10). The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to say, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). Eve is the mother of all living (Gen. 3:20). All human beings are the descendants of Noah and his wife (Gen. 7:23). All human beings are blood relatives and cousins.

There is but one Savior, one King, and one High Priest. All Christians are washed in only one blood and are adopted into only one family. Jesus taught his disciples that they were all brethren (Matt. 23:8). After Jesus' resurrection, he met Mary and some ladies on the road and said to them, "Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me" (Mat. 28:10). "[M]y brethren?" These imperfect men who had forsaken Him, who had cursed and denied Him, and who were hiding in fear behind closed doors, Jesus called them "my brethren!"

The writer of Hebrews penned, "For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2:11). The writer gives three points concerning a soul's value: (1) Each soul is worthy of the sanctifying and precious blood of Jesus Christ, (2) those who are sanctified are now one with each other, and (3) Jesus has no shame in calling them "brethren." Teaching all nations is as much a part of the Lord's church as is feeding the hungry and caring for orphans (Matt. 28:19; Gal. 6:9-10; Jas. 1:27). It is who we are. It is what we do.

God has given only one Savior, who died on the cross to bring into power only one gospel which, when obeyed, produces only Christians, who are added by the Lord to only one church. There is only one heaven wherein all the saved will rejoice with one heart, and sing praises with one voice to the glory of the one God for all eternity.

Steve preaches for the Forest Park church of Christ in Lake City, GA

"...when a person is 'born again' he or she becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of God."

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Biblical Worship
-Colossians 3:17-

1. Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-24)
2. Prayer (Acts 12:5; Phil. 4:6-7)
3. Vocal music only (Eph. 5:19; Heb. 13:15)
4. Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7-8)
5. Preaching (Acts 2:42; 20:7)

The Churches of Christ

1. Bible only (Rom. 1:16; 2 Pet. 1:3)
2. Name (Rom. 16:16)
3. Began in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-4)
4. Established by Jesus (Matt. 16:18)
5. Purchased with blood (Acts 20:28)
6. Established in 1st century (Acts 2:47)
7. Body of Christ and Christ alone is the Head and Savior (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23)
8. Added to the church today just as in the 1st century (Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13)

Salvation

1. Belief and baptism (Mk. 16:16)
2. Repentance and baptism (Acts 2:37-38)
3. Belief, confession, and baptism (Acts 8:37-38)
4. Hear, belief, baptism (Acts 18:8)
5. Faith and baptism (Gal. 3:26-27)

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