



Christian Unity

27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship

November 4–8, 2007

*Endeavouring to keep the unity
of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Ephesians 4:3

Cover Photos*

Clockwise from top left:

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|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Central | 8. Stoney Creek |
| 2. Centerview | 9. Asheville Highway |
| 3. Cherokee | 10. Elizabethton |
| 4. Valley | 11. East Bristol |
| 5. Greeneville | 12. Banner Elk |
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| 7. Roan Mountain | 14. Erwin |

* If your building is not pictured, we did not have a photo available.

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UNITY
God's Singleness of Purpose
Sunday AM, November 4, 2007
27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
George Ellis

“Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Daniel 2:35

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever. Daniel 2:44

A mature study of the word of God will reveal what the apostle Paul acknowledged in Eph 3. From the beginning it has been the single purpose of God to redeem mankind through the giving of his Son as a sacrifice for man's sin. This redemption brought about the reuniting of man with his God. This unity of those that were created in His image has always been foremost in the scheme of redemption. The ultimate “tearing down” of every thing that separated men from true fellowship was accomplished when the blood of Christ began to circulate in the hearts of fallen man. Men were no longer Jews and Gentiles, no longer male or female, no longer bond or free, no longer black or white, no longer rich or poor, but one in Christ Jesus. It was part of God's mercy to allow us to see the trouble that division and discord would cause in patriarchal families, in physical nations, and finally in the church of our Lord. It is the purpose of this lectureship to allow us to see that division of any kind in the Lord's church is as cancer, and is sinful and is contrary to the very purpose for which our Lord gave his life.

I. Unity in the beginning.

Creation

- A. Genesis 2:20... unity in the home
- B. I Corinthians 11:8... order in the home
- C. Matthew 19: 4-6... no more twain, but one flesh...what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

II. Unity in patriarchy.

Abraham

- A. Genesis 17: 15-18...oh that Ishmael might live before thee!
- B. Genesis 21:14...sent away.
- C. Galatians 3:16...Now to Abraham and his seed (singular)

III. Unity in bondage and deliverance.

Moses

- A. Exodus 12:49...one law
- B. Acts 7:35...God sent deliverer
- C. Numbers 16...Korah's rebellion
- D. Deuteronomy 18:15...a prophet like unto Christ

IV. Unity in the kingdom of Israel.

God as king...unity rejected... I Sam 12:12

- A. Deuteronomy 6:3-7...The Lord our God is one Lord.
- B. I Samuel 18:5-12...spirit of disunity
- C. II Samuel 3...civil war, house of Saul and house of David.
- D. II Samuel 5...kingdom united under David.
- E. II Samuel 7...one nation, under God. II Samuel 8:15

V. Unity in prophecy.

Isaiah

- A. Isaiah 2...all nation into one house
- B. Jeremiah 2:13...one cistern of water.

VI. Unity in the gospels.

- A. John 13:35...by this shall men know.
- B. Matthew 12:25.

VII. Unity in the church.

- A. Ephesians 2:2...together!
- B. Ephesians 3:6...fellow heirs!
- C. Ephesians 4...forbearing one another, keep the unity.
- D. I Corinthians 10...division in the early church.

VIII. Unity possible.

- A. John 17:21...that they all may be one
- B. II Cor 13:11... be of one mind.
- C. Romans 16:17...mark them that cause divisions.

IX. Unity in fellowship.

- A. Matt 28: 19-20...go ye
- B. II Corinthians 5:17...ministry of reconciliation.

X. Unity, what must I do?

- A. members...Eph 4:1-3, Heb 13:17...Don't fellowship error.
- B. teachers...teach Unity in the body of Christ.
- C. preachers...do your job! Preach and practice congregational autonomy.
- D. deacons...support the church with enthusiasm!
- E. elders...take heed! The Holy Spirit has entrusted to you the responsibility of "shepherding the flock", not allowing it to be torn asunder by false teachers and those that would draw away disciples after themselves. Acts 20:28

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Unity in the Beginning

Sunday AM, November 4, 2007

27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship

Roby Ellis

Scripture Reading: Matthew 19:3–6

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? ⁴ And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Introduction

- A. We live in a world that celebrates division.
 - 1. Divorce has become so accepted in this country that people are actually throwing parties to celebrate the event!
 - 2. Religious division (particularly in the United States) is boasted as a trophy of a free and tolerant civilized society.
 - 3. Do any ever wonder if God celebrates such division so enthusiastically?
- B. Diversity is a blessing, but division is a curse.
 - 1. In the Lord's body there are people of all ages, colors, occupations, incomes, education levels, interests, and abilities.
 - i. Without such variety, it would be difficult indeed for the body to function properly (1 Cor. 12:12ff).
 - ii. Despite our physical differences, we are united in doctrine (1 Cor. 1:10), because we share one mind—the mind of our Lord Jesus Christ (Php. 2:5).
 - 2. When the Lord established the home and the church, He established them in such a way that unity could abound and perpetuate itself.

3. Division has never occurred under God's supervision; it has consistently been the result of man's error and usurpation of God's divine authority.
- C. Concerning man's perversion of marriage, Jesus says, "From the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). Let's take a look at how God originally set up various institutions to see how He intended them to be "from the beginning."

Discussion

- I. "In the beginning," there was perfect unity between God and man.
 - A. God put man in charge of His beautiful creation (Gen. 2).
 1. He charged him to keep and dress the Garden (v 15).
 2. He allowed him to eat the fruits thereof freely (v 17).
 3. He allowed Adam to name every creature (v 19).
 4. God made a suitable helper for Adam (vv 20–24) and gave him authority over her (Eph. 5:24) in that (1) Adam was formed first (1 Tim. 2:12–13) and (2) Eve was formed for Adam, not vice versa (1 Cor. 11:8–9).
 5. God gave Adam dominion over all of the animals He had created (Gen. 1:28).
 - B. God created man "in his own image" (Gen. 1:27).
 1. Unlike all of the other creatures God had made, man was endowed with a living soul (Gen. 2:7) that would live forever (Ecc. 12:7).
 2. Man was not primarily a physical being, but a spiritual one (cf. John 4:24).
 - C. God walked and talked with man (Gen. 3:8–9).
 1. From all indication in the text, this was not an uncommon occurrence.
 2. The Scriptures speak of one other patriarch who "walked with God," namely Enoch, whom God "took" (Gen. 5:24) or "translated" (Heb. 11:5).
 - D. In these first two chapters of Genesis, we find perfect harmony between God and man which is abruptly interrupted in the third chapter through man's violation of God's law (Gen. 3:6, cf. 2:17). John calls this "sin" (1 John 3:4).
- II. In the beginning of the home, there was unity between man and wife.
 - A. Adam and Eve became "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).
 1. Jesus uses this Scripture to point out the fallacy in the Pharisees' reasoning concerning marriage and divorce (Matt. 19:3–6).

2. Eve was of the same flesh as Adam, both physically and legally.
 3. Notice that while God could have formed woman from the same dust that He had used to form the man, He chose to take her from the man, giving us lessons on unity and authority in the home still today.
- B. There was no shame in this union (Gen. 2:25), and there was no division.
1. There was certainly no suspicion of infidelity in this marriage!
 2. There was no precedent for divorce and no judge who would grant one.
- C. There are many reasons marriages fail today, none of which pre-existed sin.
1. Infidelity is the only grounds legitimized by the Lord (Matt. 19:9).
 2. Financial struggle is a primary or secondary cause for many divorces, but in the beginning God provided the first couple with all they would ever need, and He still provides us with every need today (Matt. 6:25–32).
 3. Another large contributor to divorce is called “family strain” by pollsters.
 - i. When a man leaves his father and mother to “cleave unto his wife,” problems can arise when that separation isn’t respected by everyone.
 - ii. If we all would love one another as we should and respect God’s blueprint for the home, there would be no such thing as “in-law problems.”
 4. Emotional and physical abuse are common causes for divorce as well.
 5. Addictions to alcohol, gambling, and even work factor in also.
 6. None of these problems that plague marriages today would have ever existed if man did not give in to temptation!
- D. Every domestic crisis can be traced back to sin.
1. Abraham’s struggle regarding Sarah and Hagar owes to his own sin.
 2. Did God intend the rivalry that existed between Leah and Rachel, the two sisters who competed constantly for the affection of their mutual husband Jacob? Who was at fault for this perversion of God’s plan for that home?
 3. When David wept at the report of Absalom’s death, the blame belonged primarily to Absalom, although David was not entirely free of guilt.
 4. When Jesus’ brethren refused to believe He was the Messiah (John 7:3–5), the fault was clearly theirs, not our Lord’s.

- E. Division has never been divinely intended in the home; its development is without exception a symptom of sin (cf. Isa. 59:1–2).

III. In the beginning of the Israelite nation, there was unity between brethren.

A. They were a people as diverse as the land on which they lived.

1. Their inheritance was a long, slender tract of land that covers approximately 1500 square miles of real estate on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean.
2. In the north, mount Hermon peaks to a height of 9230 feet, while the Dead Sea in the south lies 1378 feet below sea level at the lowest point on Earth.
3. The Jordan River flows through freshwater Galilee and then winds southward, falling some 700 feet over a distance of only 65 miles.
4. While the deserts of southern Judea receive only about 8 inches of rainfall per year, the mountains in the north receive as much as 60 inches.

Note: Compare these to Elizabethton's average annual rainfall of 44 inches.

5. In the Promised Land there were rolling grasslands, beautiful beaches, snow-capped mountains, cascading rivers, forested wilderness, and barren deserts.
6. Such diversity in landscape led some to be fishers (Matt. 4:18), others to be shepherds (1 Sam. 16:11), and still others to be farmers (1 Kgs. 19:19).

B. Despite the diversity in the people, there was one thing that unified them.

1. Although they were indeed "all one man's sons" (Gen. 42:11), the children of Israel (Jacob) were united with a greater bond than even that of blood.
2. God commanded the Israelites to fight their battles together (Num. 32:4–6), and indeed they often did fight together "as one man" (Jdg. 20:1).
3. As successful as their joint military campaigns were, what truly united them as brethren was their dedication as one people to JEHOVAH God.
4. When God said, "They shall be my people" (Jer. 32:38), the word He used was אִם ('*am*) in its singular form, as is reflected in the singular use of the Greek word λαός (*laos*) in Paul's reference to this passage (2 Cor. 6:16).

C. God wanted them to remain united, but their sin would not allow this.

1. Knowing that time and separation could cause disconnection between the tribes, God ordered them to assemble three times a year in Jerusalem to worship together (Ex. 23:17).
2. When the northern tribes divorced themselves from the house of David, Jeroboam set up new venues for more localized worship, recognizing the effect that continued centralized worship would have (1 Kgs. 12:26–30).
3. When the remnant of the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, this centralized worship was reinstated, and it is said that “all the people gathered themselves together as one man” (Neh. 8:1, cf. Ezra 3:1).

D. We see again that division was not God’s doing, but man’s.

1. They were the sins of Solomon (1 Kgs. 11:11), of Rehoboam (12:13–15), of Jeroboam (12:30), and of the people (12:16) that caused division and almost brought on civil war (12:21–24).
2. This division would later creep into religious circles during the post-exilic era, resulting in the numerous sects that existed during Jesus’ time on earth.
3. When Jesus came, He did not associate Himself with any of these groups, but condemned false teachings of the Pharisees, Saducees, and Herodians alike, showing that none of these had a divine right to exist (Matt. 15:13–14).

E. As her name suggests, Jerusalem could have been a place of great peace and unity, but Jesus would weep as He declared to her, “Your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38)!

IV. In the beginning of the church, there was unity in doctrine and in love.

A. The original church was “of one accord.”

1. Those who were being added to the church through baptism (Acts 2:41) “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship” (v 42).
2. Luke records that “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common” (Acts 4:32).
3. The record goes on to show that the brethren would not allow any need to go unnoticed, but even sold their own possessions to help one another (4:33–37).

4. The disciples assembled in Solomon's porch "with one accord" (5:12).
 5. These disciples endured persecution together (Acts 8:1) and prayed for one another in times of distress (12:5).
 6. The first church was united in mind, spirit, and doctrine. What happened?
- B. The church began to experience problems with division.
1. The Galatian churches were being influenced by a gospel very different from the one through which they were brought to Christ (Gal. 1:6–9).
 2. As he had condemned the departure of the Galatian churches, Paul also strongly condemned the division in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 1:10–13), which materialized all manner of new problems.
 - i. They were not growing spiritually (3:1–3).
 - ii. They were tolerating all manner of fornication (5:1–2).
 - iii. They were filing lawsuits against one another (6:1–8).
 - iv. They were dividing rich from poor in their perverted worship (11:17–22).
 - v. They were divided on their teaching of the resurrection (15:12).
 3. Of all the division that we find in the church from the day it was instituted by Christ (Matt. 16:18) on Pentecost to this present day, it should now be obvious that God intended none of it—it is entirely man's evil doing!
- C. There is not one good thing about religious division; it is in its very essence a perversion of God's perfect plan, whose advocates will have some difficult questions to answer when they stand before the great Judge on the last day.

Conclusion and Invitation

- A. God created everything in a state of perfect order, just as He wanted it.
- B. Unity prevailed in the home, in Israel, and in the church until man allowed Satan to forsake God's way in search of his own.
- C. God has shown His love for unity (Ps. 133:1) and His hatred of division among brethren (Prv. 6:19), and yet men celebrate it as if it were pleasing to Him.
- D. We need to recognize division for what it really is and make every effort to restore the home and the church to what God intended these glorious institutions to be from the beginning.

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UNITY UNDONE

Sunday 6:30 PM, November 4, 2007
27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
Eddy Craft

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In this lesson we want to see that just as the home can fall prey to the devices of Satan, so can the church.
- B. This lesson will show how God's pattern has been forsaken repeatedly in the establishment of man-made churches, many of which are now proud to wear the names of their founders.
- C. God's disapproval of this arrangement was preached by Paul and others to the early churches.
- D. Until men decide to give up their own ways in exchange for God's, their preaching will continue to fall on deaf ears.
- E. We have a great example in the Old Testament of unity undone and how to fix it. While we do not live under the Old Testament we must learn from it; "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (1 Cor 10:6). With this in mind, I would like for us to use 2 Kings 21-23 as a text to show how apostasy and restoration works. This principle would be true of the home, an individual, or church.
- F. We will give consideration to three points in this lesson:
 - 1. Something has failed.
 - 2. Something can be fixed.
 - 3. Something remains firm.
- I. SOMETHING FAILED:
 - A. When unity has failed something is wrong. This is seen in the Old Testament.
 - B. In 2 Kings 21 something was terribly wrong. This is seen relative to:
 - 1. Manasseh (verses 1-11).

2. Amon (verses 18-24). When we look at the lives of these children of God, something had gone wrong, terribly wrong!
- C. We have the same problem of apostasy when we come to the New Testament. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thess 2:1-3). The same warnings were given in other places as well (1 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:1-4). Something had failed.
- D. When we see the rise of denominationalism in our world today, all practicing different doctrines, wearing different names, yet all claiming to believe in the same God, and all claiming to be right, something has gone wrong. Instead of having unity we have unity undone.

II. SOMETHING CAN BE FIXED:

- A. This is done by getting rid of that which is wrong, and start doing that which is right.
- B. Manasseh's repentance is a good example of this. 2 Chronicles 33:11-17.
- C. Moses taught the same thing; "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God. **26 Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house,** lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing" (Deut 7:25-26).
- D. There are examples of this happening in the New Testament.
1. This was the command of Acts 2:38 to those that had just a few days before crucified the Son of God.
 2. Simon the sorcerer is another good example of one who stopped doing wrong and started doing right (Acts 8:9-24).
- E. The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32).

- F. Jesus made it clear that if a person wanted to be saved he must repent. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).
- G. Too many times a person wants to become a Christian but does not want to give up the wrong. He may want to stay in an adulterous relationship when the Bible teaches that he must come out of it. He may want to keep his drug habit, or alcohol, etc.
- H. The only way that we will ever be able to restore unity is to go back to the Bible and follow its teaching. In Ephesians 4:1-6 we see unity restored. It is explicitly clear that the apostles were against unity undone. Listen to the words of the inspired apostle Paul; "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you;** but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor 1:10). With many this command would be impossible to keep. Yet was this not the prayer of our Lord? Listen to His words; "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 **That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us;** that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21). We could go on and on with verse after verse that teach the importance of unity.
- I. The people of the restoration movement saw that something was wrong with the religious world. They also saw that it could be fixed, so they said let us go back to the Bible. Let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. Let us call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. This had been the plea of the apostle Peter many years before. "**If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;** if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11). So the plea did not actually begin in the restoration movement but with inspiration.

III. SOMETHING REMAINS FIRM:

- A. Hilkiah found the book “And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, and Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it” (2 Kings 22:8).
- B. Look at the one thing that remains firm, the Word of God!
- C. Notice the following passages: 2 Kings 22:8, 11, 13, 16; 23:3, 21, 24. The Word of God was the one thing that remained firm no matter what else may have gone wrong.
- D. The Bible is indestructible. It will remain the same no matter what else changes. The Bible has no reason to change. It has God as its source. The seed is the Word of God Luke 8:11 and that seed is incorruptible; “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (I Peter 1:22-25). Jesus made it perfectly clear that His Word would never pass away; “35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35).
- E. The Word of God and it alone can take care of the unity undone problem. The way and only way that the religious world can have unity is to go back to the Word of God and follow it.

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Unity in Bondage and Deliverance
(Unity with God)

27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship

Monday 7:00 p.m. November 5, 2007

Dan C. Bailey

Introduction

There is strength in unity. There is wisdom in unity, and there is God's approval in unity when it is in harmony with His will. In this lesson we are going to study the subject of unity as it pertained to Israel during the reign of Asa, King of Judah. Let us open our hearts, and let us reason together, lest we be divided and fall short of God's will for us today. Open your Bible to II Chronicles 14:1 and read with me from the Holy Scriptures.

1 So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.

2 And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God:

3 For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves:

4 And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.

5 Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him.

I. We must be united with God.

A. II Chronicles 14:2 -- "And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God."

B. There is no true unity unless the people of God are willing to do that which is "good and right in the eyes of the Lord God."

C. Psalm 33:4; Psalm 119:128; Psalm 119:104-105

D. To be right with God, we must respect and follow His Word. Psalm 119:15.

E. Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5-6

II. We must have no other God but the one true God.

A. **II Chronicles 14:3 - "For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves."**

B. Exodus 20:3

C. Matthew 6:24

III. We must seek the Lord God and do His commandments.

A. **II Chronicles 14:4 -- "And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment."**

B. I John 2:3

C. I John 5:3

D. Revelation 22:14

E. Psalm 119:155

IV. God can and does bless those who are united under His name.

A. **II Chronicles 14:7 -- "Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us; because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered."**

B. James 1:16-17

C. I Peter 4:11

V. Those that are united with God can pray unto God and be heard!

A. **II Chronicles 14:11 "And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee."**

B. I Peter 3:12

C. Proverbs 15:29

D. Psalm 55:22

- VI. God will not forsake those who refuse to forsake Him.**
- A. **II Chronicles 15:1-2 -- "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you."**
 - B. Hebrews 13:5-6
 - C. I John 1:7
 - D. John 8:31-32
- VII. God rewards those who are united in His name**
- A. **II Chronicles 15:7 -- "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded."**
 - B. Hebrews 11:1-6
 - C. Galatians 6:7-9
 - D. I Corinthians 15:58
- VIII. God wants and expects our whole heart.**
- A. **II Chronicles 15:12 "And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul."**
 - B. Psalm 119:2
 - C. Psalm 119:10
 - D. Matthew 22:37
 - E. Proverbs 3:5-10
 - F. God doesn't want the scraps!
- IX. Unity with God demands that there be no compromise with the Devil, sin, or unrighteousness.**
- A. **II Chronicles 15:16-17 "And also concerning Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron. But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days."**
 - B. A perfect heart is an heart wholly dedicated to God and His glory.

C. Let us strive mightily to be united with God and each other.

Conclusion

- A. There is nothing more important in the universe than to be united with God, or to be right in God's sight.
- B. Later in life, Asa failed to rely upon God as he should have. (II Chronicles 16:7-10).
- C. He also refused to seek God when his feet were greatly diseased. (II Chronicles 16:11-12).
- D. Isn't it so much better just to be united with the Great God of heaven?
- E. Trust in Him today!!!

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Division in Israel

I Kings 12

Monday 8:00 PM, November 5, 2007
27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
David R. Pharr

1. Someone loaned me a book about what might have been the state of affairs if the South had won the Civil War. It would, of course, have meant the dividing of the states and might have resulted in a much weakened continent. What then might have been the response to threats such as those posed by Germany in the two world wars, as well as by Japan? Most would agree that it is better in spite of all our national problems to have “one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all” (Lincoln). When Israel divided between north and south, when those “states” (tribes) were no longer united, their weakness was apparent. We are considering the division of the ancient states (tribes) of Israel to learn some lessons for the church.
2. It has been said that there are two ways of writing history. You can either leave God out, or trace all to him. The key to all of this history about division in Israel is in a single line in I Kings 12:15—“it was a thing brought about of Jehovah” (ASV). Everyone involved acted out of his own free will, but the outcome was according to the purposes of God.
 - I. Here is a brief outline of the story:
 - A. Twelve sons of Jacob; twelve tribes, with Joseph’s progeny in two half tribes (Ephraim and Manassa).
 - B. They demanded a king and the Lord gave them Saul. He was a king after their heart (I Samuel 12:13).
 - C. David was at first king of Judah for seven and one half years, but was able to unite all the tribes under his benevolent rule for thirty-three years, total reign of forty years. He was a king after God’s heart (I Samuel 13:14).
 - D. Solomon began in wisdom and goodness, but apostatized in foolish ungodliness. His successes at first were glorious (see I Kings 10:1-9), his extravagance became a burden to the nation and the other tribes came to resent him.
 - E. When Rehoboam succeeded to the throne, a meeting was held at Shechem

to establish his regency over the tribes. Resentment had been growing and one Jeroboam was there to voice their complaints. Read I Kings 12:1-5. Rehoboam sought advice and on the third day gave his answer. Read verses 6-15. Verse 16 then gives their declaration of succession.

- F. Jeroboam became king over the northern tribes and the division was never healed. Every king of the northern tribes was ungodly and after 250 years they were conquered and ceased to be a nation forever.
- II. That is the overview, but there are certain details which illustrate the causes and consequences of division.
- A. In the long range view several factors contributed.
 - 1. There were ancestral and cultural differences, starting with the resentment of his brothers toward Joseph. Race and culture sometimes make it hard for people to get along. See Galatians 3:26-28 and James 2:1ff for what should be our attitude.
 - 2. The people had insisted on their notion about government, though their trust should have been in God. (Today, we say “In God we trust,” but still fear there is no hope for the nation unless we elect a Democrat or Republican, as our preference may be.) The Lord had warned them (I Samuel 8; cf. Hosea 13:11).
 - 3. Solomon’s sin had consequences for the people (I Kings 11:11). People argue, “I am only hurting myself.” (Cf. Hosea 8:7.)
 - B. In the immediate situation, we find that Jeroboam was man who was motivated by selfish ambition.
 - 1. He was a man with natural talent for leadership and Solomon had given him an important position (I Kings 11:26-28).
 - 2. The prophet Ahijah gave him God’s promise that ten tribes would be put under his rule, with the provision that he would “walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments” (I Kings 11:38).
 - 3. Somehow this was known to Solomon and Jeroboam had to escape to Egypt.

4. He stayed in Egypt until Solomon was dead and then came back to assume a role as spokesman for the disgruntled people. We can know his motives because of his idolatrous actions once he took his throne (I Kings 12:25ff).
 5. Jeroboam was to Israel what Diotrephes was in the church (III John 9f). This is the opposite of a godly ambition to be a servant (Philippians 2:3-5).
- C. At the same time we see in Rehoboam the folly of relying on political advice (I Kings 12:6ff).
1. It is often suggested that he should have listened to the old counselors. But read through the text: Is there any mention of seeking Heaven's guidance. This was purely politics. The folly of the young advisors may be more evident, but the old men were only thinking of the best way to keep control.
 2. Are politics ever a cause of division in the church? In congregations there have been many a "Diotrephes." Over the brotherhood politics are sometimes evident in cliques, schools, papers, etc.
- D. One of the most important and practical lesson from the text is to see the destructive power of a few rash and harsh words to gender strife and division (I Kings 12:13-14).
1. "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James 3:5).
 2. Sins of the tongue have a wide variety—all of which can cause hurt and division. See Titus 1:10
 - a. Lying (Rev. 21:8).
 - b. Backbiting (Psalm 15:1, 3).
 - c. Slander ("revilers" I Corinthians 6:10; cf. Psalm 50:20).
Gossip. (Leviticus 19:16; Proverbs 26:20).
 - d. Murmuring (I Corinthians 10:10).
 3. In the text division was brought to a head by Rehoboam's hateful speech.
 - a. Song: "Angry words."

- b. "A dozen rash words brought about 400 years of strife, weakness, and final destruction. And neither the foolish speaker nor any man present in that crowd dreamed of the unnumbered evils to flow from that hour" (MacClaren, *loc cit.*, p. 220).
- c. "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger"(Proverbs 15:1). "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Proverbs 29:20).

Conclusion:

In every division sin is involved. Sometimes sound and faithful brethren may find it necessary to separate themselves (I Corinthians 11:19), but woe to those whose actions make it necessary (Luke 17:1-2). Our purpose must be to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

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UNITY OF THE PROPHECIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCERNING THE KINGDOM/CHURCH OF CHRIST

Tuesday 7:00 PM, November 6, 2007
27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
Charles A. Huff

INTRODUCTION:

1. That God planned to establish a kingdom on this earth is admitted by all who believe the Bible.
2. However, the time of the establishment and the nature of the kingdom are both subjects of great controversy.
3. These questions can only be answered satisfactorily by the Word of God.

"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this Word it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20) nkjv.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private Interpretation for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"
(2 Peter 1:20-21).

I. THE KINGDOM WAS PLANNED FROM ETERNITY: (1 Peter 1:17-20).

- A. God the Father foreordained that His Son would have a people whom He would cleanse by His Blood, to be His church/kingdom. (Ephesians 1:3-12, 22-23).
- B. To the church of Christ at Rome, Paul wrote the following:
"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made know to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—" (Romans 16:25-26).
- C. In His preview of the Judgment, Jesus reminds us:
"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation

of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

1. The Kingdom of Christ (His church) was prepared in the mind of God from the foundation of the world.

II. THE KINGDOM WAS PROMISED TO GREAT MEN OF OLD: (Galatians 3:16).

- A. God promised Abraham that his "seed" would bless all the earth. (Genesis 12:3).
 1. "...All families of the earth..." includes the Gentile nations. (Galatians 3:26-29).
- B. God promised Jacob that a ruler would come through his son Judah. (Genesis 49:10).
- C. Moses was promised that God would raise up a Prophet like himself. (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22-23).
- D. God also promised David that He would raise up his seed to sit on his throne. (2Samuel 7:12-16; Luke 1:32-33; Acts 2:29-36).

III. THE KINGDOM WAS PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: (Isaiah 32:1,2).

- A. Isaiah foretold the building of the Lord's House. (Isaiah 2:2-3).
 1. This would happen in the "last days". (Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2).
 2. The Lord's House would be built. (1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:4-6).
 3. All nations would flow to it. (Matthew 28:18-19; Luke 24:46-47).
 4. God's word would go forth from Jerusalem. (Acts 1:4, 8; 8:4).
- B. Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the coming kingdom. (Daniel 2:31-45).
 1. Nebuchadnezzar saw a great statue in his dream.
 2. Head of gold; Chest and arms of silver; Belly and thighs of brass; Legs and iron, feet of iron and clay mixed.
 3. A stone cut out of the mountain "without hands" smote this metallic image on the feet and broke it in pieces. Then the stone grew into a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

- C. God, through Daniel, gave the meaning of this dream.
 1. Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon) was the head of gold (612-538 B.C.).
 2. Medo-Persia was the chest and arms of silver (538-331 B.C.).
 3. Greece (Macedonian Empire) was the belly and thighs of brass (331-63 B.C.).
 4. Rome was the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay (63 B.C. to A.D. 476).
 5. In the days of the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire) God would set up His Kingdom and it would never be destroyed. (Daniel 2:44).
- D. A parallel prophecy is found in Daniel 7:1-14.

IV. THE KINGDOM WAS IN PREPARATION DURING THE PERSONAL MINISTRIES OF JOHN AND JESUS: (Luke 16:16).

- A. John came as a forerunner of Jesus. (Malachi 4:5,6; Luke 1:16,17).
 1. John preached: "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matt. 3:1,2).
 2. "At hand" means "within reach" or "very near".
- B. Jesus also prepared for the coming of His kingdom.
 1. He too preached that the kingdom was a hand. (Matthew 4:17).
 2. He sent His apostles out to preach: "*The kingdom is at hand*" (Matthew 10:7).
 3. He promised to build His church and to give Peter the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:16-19).
 - a. Jesus promised, "*I will build My church*" (vs. 18).
 - b. He also said to Peter, "*I will give you the keys of the kingdom*" (vs. 19).
 - c. He uses the words "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably.
 - d. When the church began/ the kingdom began at the same time.
- C. Jesus told His disciples some of them would not die until they saw the kingdom come with power. (Mark 9:1).
 1. He told His apostles when the kingdom would "come with Power" (Acts 1:6-8; 2:1-4).

2. Jesus told Pilate His Kingdom was not of this world. (John 18:36)
 - a. Yet without an army or any carnal weapons His Kingdom brought down the mighty Roman Empire.

V. THE KINGDOM CAME IN PERFECTION ON PENTECOST: (Acts 2:32-33).

A. The time was right: It was in “the last days” (Joel 2:26; Isa. 2:2; Acts 2:1-17).

1. It was also during the days of the Roman rulers (Dan. 2:44; Luke 2:1; 3:1).
2. It was in the lifetime of some of Jesus’ disciples (Mark 9:1).

B. The place was right—It was at Jerusalem.

1. The Apostles waited in Jerusalem for power from on high. (Acts 1:6-8; 2:1-4).
2. The word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem. (Isa. 2:3; Luke 24:46-49).

C. Peter used the keys of the Kingdom, (Matt. 16:18,19)

1. Keys are used to unlock, to open, to allow entrance.
2. Peter preached to the Jews on Pentecost and Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 2:36-41; 10:44-48; 11:18).
3. When Peter used the keys of the Kingdom people were added to the church. (Acts 2:47).

CONCLUSION:

1. All the planning, promises, prophecies, preaching and perfection of the kingdom of Christ are in complete unity in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.
2. Jesus told Nicodemus: *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5).
 - 1) In complete unity with Jesus teaching Peter told the multitude on Pentecost how to be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom. (Acts 2:36-41).
 - 2) That same gospel message is to be preached to every creature. (Mark 16:15-16).

3. Before the day of Pentecost A.D. 33 the kingdom was spoken of as being in the future.

1) Since that notable day the kingdom is always spoken of as being in the present.

(Cf. Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28; 2 Thess. 1:4-5; Rev. 1:9)

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Unity In The Gospels

Tuesday 8:00 PM, November 6, 2007

27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship

Bill Haywood

Introduction:

- A. Is the unity of the gospels an important discussion?
- B. If the gospel accounts are not unified documents they are just fables and fairy tales, hence Jesus is not authoritative. We can take what we like and disregard what we do not like. However, if the gospels are reliable, harmonious, unified documents then Jesus is authoritative and if we are wise will accept all that He teaches as authoritative.
- C. While it is true that the gospel accounts do not contradict one another it is more than mere duplication from account to account. Among the four accounts there are admittedly differences, but not contradictions.
- D. The organic unity of the gospels gives us a complete and fully dimensional view of Jesus.
- E. The gospel accounts (for that matter the entire Bible) are not laid out like a specifications manual. We have detailed information available but it is contained within the natural flow of the life of Christ.
- F. The enemies of inspiration deny that there is any real organic unity within the gospel accounts. They argue that the gospels cannot be harmonized.
 - i. One thrust has been to emphasize that the four gospels were not designed to be histories but gospels. (Grundry & Thomas, Harmony of the Gospels, Essays Related To Harmonistic Studies p.265). **It is granted that they have an evangelistic agenda but to accomplish that agenda they must be credible and they are credible.**
 - ii. Another attempt to discredit the harmonizing approach to the gospels has come from some who doubt that such a historical person as Jesus ever existed. (Grundry & Thomas, Harmony of the Gospels, Essays Related To Harmonistic Studies p.265). **This**

group is small. It is hard for even the most harden opponent to deny the historical existence of Jesus; there is just too much evidence.

iii. Others attempt to demonstrate the fruitlessness of harmonies by placing strong emphasis on alleged loose handling of traditions by the earliest Christian churches. Supposedly, the church took fragmentary reports about the person Jesus and elaborated upon them so as to attribute to Jesus sayings and actions that would meet their own needs. The process held to be necessary in separating the facts from the elaborations is called Form Criticism (Grundry & Thomas, Harmony of the Gospels, Essays Related To Harmonistic Studies p.266). **This is merely an invention of their minds. There is no evidence for such.**

iv. A more recent theory, Redaction Criticism, has also proposed obstacles to accepting the gospels at face value. This discipline takes special note of the gospel writers and their distinctive theological purposes. The writers purportedly took the traditions handed down to them and molded them so as to reflect the church's and their own understanding of the kerygma (proclamation; the preached Word; gospel). In so doing, Redaction Criticism claims they beclouded the historical Jesus and His teachings even more than the generation before them has done. (Grundry & Thomas, Harmony of the Gospels, Essays Related To Harmonistic Studies p.266). **Once again there is no evidence to support such assertions.**

G. Another attempt to discredit the veracity of the gospel accounts is to say that there are numerous contradictions. Although it is not the purpose of this lesson to examine and refute all of the alleged discrepancies, it is worth noting a couple of these alleged contradictions.

i. "For example, the Gospel of Matthew names "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" as women who visited the tomb early on the

first day of the week (Matthew 28:1). Mark cites Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome as the callers (Mark 16:1). Luke mentions Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and “the other women” (Luke 24:10). Yet John talks only about Mary Magdalene visiting the tomb early on Sunday (John 20:1). Do these different lists contradict one another? No, not in any way. They are supplementary, adding names to make the list more complete. But they are not contradictory. If John had said “**only** Mary Magdalene visited the tomb,” or if Matthew stated, “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were the **only** women to visit the tomb,” then there would be a contradiction. As it stands, no contradiction occurs” (Butt Kyle, Addition Does Not a Contradiction Make, www.apologeticspress.org/articles/507).

- ii. Another instance would be the “Sermon on the mount” recorded in Matthew (Matthew 5.1) and the sermon on the plain recorded in Luke (Luke 6.17). The material is very similar, hence the critics assert the claim that at least one of the gospel writers got it wrong. However, to make such an assertion one must assume that we are considering the same sermon at the same place at the same time, and there is no basis that demands such.
- iii. For additional study on this Wayne Jackson has an article entitled Does The Bible Contain Contradictions? It can be accessed at www.christiancourier.com. Also Apologetics Press has section on their web site devoted to alleged contradictions.

- H. It is the unity in the midst of the critic’s charges that make the gospels even more amazing.
- I. The unity of the gospels validates every assertion made about Jesus by the inspired penmen.
- J. The unity of the gospels provides us with a complete, fully dimensional perspective of Jesus.

I. The Gospel Of Matthew Provides Us With A Fully Dimensional View Of Jesus As The Prophesied Messiah.

- A. The gospel of Matthew is beneficial to all who read and study it. However, it is written from a distinctly Jewish perspective.
- B. The genealogy of Jesus declares that Jesus is the Messiah (Matthew 1:1—17).
 - i. He is the Messiah from the line of David (Matthew 1:1).
 - ii. He is the Messiah for everyone (Matthew 1:3—6). Four women are mentioned. One of the women is known for her quality of character but she is a non Jew. The other three had a less than virtuous past.
 - iii. He is the Messiah that always sets the perfect example (Matthew 1:6). Unlike the great King David Jesus has no flaws (Hebrews 7:26).
- C. The fulfilled scripture points to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah of prophecy.
 - A. According to Isaiah 7:14 He was to be born of a virgin (fulfillment is found in Matthew 1:18ff, Luke 1:34).
 - B. According to Micah 5:2 He was to be born in Bethlehem (fulfillment is found in Matthew 2:1).
 - C. According to Hosea 11:1 Jesus would be called out of Egypt (fulfillment is found in Matthew 2:15).
 - D. According to Isaiah 40:3 there would be one who would “prepare the way of the LORD” (fulfillment is found in Matthew 3:3, John the Baptist).
 - E. Although Matthew’s gospel is unique, it is in harmony with the other gospel accounts.

II. The Gospel Of Mark Provides Us With A Fully Dimensional View Of Jesus Through Series Candid Snapshots.

- A. Mark’s gospel is one of robust faith. There is a bluntness to Mark that serves his purpose well.
- B. Matthew deals with a considerable amount of Jewish interest and Luke of “human” interest that Mark omits. Yet Mark’s rendering of an account found in Matthew and or Luke is often more detailed.
- C. Mark deals with some key questions and answers these questions.

- i. Mark 1:27 – “Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”
- ii. There is an implied question in Mark 2:12 – “Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”
- iii. Mark 4:41 – “And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”
- iv. Mark 8:27—30 – “Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, ‘Who do men say that I am?’ ²⁸So they answered, ‘John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.’ ²⁹He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered and said to Him, ‘You are the Christ.’ ³⁰Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.”

D. Mark also deals with key doctrinal concepts that are necessary for faithful Christians in every age.

- i. Using Mark we can mark them that teach that there is just one in the Godhead (Mark 1:10—11).
- ii. Using Mark we can mark them that teach that Mary the mother of Jesus was a perpetual virgin (Mark 6:3).
- iii. Using Mark we can mark them that teach error on marriage, divorce and remarriage (Mark 6:17—18).
- iv. Using Mark we can mark them that teach that the kingdom has not yet been established (Mark 9:1)
- v. Using Mark we can mark them that teach we can know when the Lord will return (Mark 13:32).
- vi. Using Mark we can mark them that teach that baptism has nothing to do with salvation (Mark 16:16).

E. Although Mark’s gospel is unique, it is in harmony with the other gospel accounts.

III. The Gospel Of Luke Provides Us With A Fully Dimensional View Of Jesus As The Historical Man.

- A. All four gospel accounts contain historical markers that tie the events in the life of Christ to other historical events. However, it is interesting that it seems that Luke goes out of his way to set the gospel account in an historical setting.
- B. “E.F. Harrison wrote: ‘Some religions, both ancient and modern, require no historical basis, for they depend upon ideas rather than events. Christianity is not one of these’ (1968, p. 11 *A Short Life of Christ*). The religion of Jesus Christ stands or falls upon the events of history. Did Jesus of Nazareth ever live?” (Jackson Wayne, [The Historicity Of Jesus](http://apologeticspress.org/articles/87), apologeticspress.org/articles/87).
- C. Consider Luke 2.
 - i. In this section of the gospel account we are told the name of the Roman emperor at the time of Jesus’ birth and the census that that emperor (Augustus) decreed.
 - ii. Luke goes on to date it even more specifically. He tells us “This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.” Many critics have alleged that Quirinius was not governor during at the time of Christ birth. However, *“the word “governor” (hegemoneuo) is a generic term and archaeological evidence has shown that in some sense Quirinius was twice a ruler in Syria, the first of which can be reconciled with Luke 2:2”* (Jackson Wayne, [Luke’s Accuracy – Some “Unfinished Business”](http://www.christiancourier.com) February 25, 2004 www.christiancourier.com)
 - iii. Dave Miller commenting on the historian Luke says, “Luke referred to several minute historical details in Luke 2:1-3 that were once challenged as inaccurate. Luke claimed that Caesar Augustus issued a decree requiring a Roman census (Luke 2:1). Papyrus documents have confirmed that the Romans took a census between 9 and 6 B.C. Luke claimed that Quirinius was governor of Syria at the time (Luke 2:2). Records showed that Quirinius had been governor after this time. But an inscription found at Rome in 1828 and Sir William Ramsay’s discovery of a monument in Asia Minor shortly before World War I, both confirm that Quirinius held two governorships, one of

which could have been during the time Luke said he was governor. Luke also claimed that the citizens were required to return to their hometowns for the census (Luke 2:3). Archaeological discovery has confirmed this bit of history as well. (Miller Dave, The Quran Unveiled, p.275)

D. Consider Luke 3:1—2

- i. “¹Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ²while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.”
 - ii. “It will be noted that Luke cited no less than six notable persons in high office with the Roman Empire and also with the Jews, nailing down the historical context of this record with the most dogmatic certainty” (Coffman Burton, Commentary on Luke, Theophilus electronic edition).
- E. Fairy tales begin “*Once upon a time in a far, far away land there was a handsome prince...*” Now when did that occur? Where did it happen? Who was involved? A fairy tale is not interested in those kinds of details. The Bible is a different matter and the gospel of Luke is certainly different.
- F. If Luke’s historical data was incorrect, not only would we be able to refute the information, the original first century readers would have rejected the material as well.
- G. In the book Luke The Physician, Sir William Ramsay said that, “Luke’s history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness” (Wharton Edward, The Case For Historic Christianity, p.32).
- H. Ramsey wrote, “Luke is a historian of first rank: not merely his statements of fact are trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense. . .this historian should be placed along with the very greatest historians.” (Wharton Edward, The Case For Historic Christianity, p.32)
- I. Although Luke’s gospel is unique, it is in harmony with the other gospel accounts.

IV. The Gospel Of John Provides Us With A Fully Dimensional View Of Jesus As The God Man.

- A. Matthew begins with a genealogy of Jesus. Mark begins with the ministry of John the baptizer. Luke begins with the announcement of the birth of John the baptizer followed by the announcement of the birth of Jesus. John begins by reaching back into eternity.
- B. John 1:1 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
- C. John 20:30—31 – John's purpose in writing his gospel is clearly stated.
- D. John's two-fold purpose is clearly stated:
 - i. To create faith in Jesus.
 - ii. That we might have life in His name.
- E. John records seven signs (miracles) that Jesus preformed during His earthly ministry.
 - i. John 2:1-11 – Jesus changed the water into wine and demonstrated that He is the Master of quality.
 - ii. John 4:46-54 – Jesus healed the nobleman's son and proved Himself the Master over distance.
 - iii. John 5:1-9 – Jesus healed the impotent man who had been afflicted for 38 years and confirmed His power over time.
 - iv. John 6:1-14 – Jesus fed 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes and manifested his power over material things.
 - v. John 6:16-21 – Jesus walked on the water and established His power over natural law.
 - vi. John 9:1-12 – Jesus healed the man born blind and showed His power over misfortune.
 - vii. John 11:1-46 – Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and verified Himself the Master over death.
- F. These seven signs point to the deity of Jesus.
- G. Eight Times in this Gospel, Jesus Says “*I am*.”
 - i. “*I am* the living bread” John 6:51
 - ii. “*I am* the light of the world” John 8:12

- iii. "Before Abraham was, *I am* John 8:58
- iv. "*I am* the door of the sheep" John 10:7
- v. "*I am* the good shepherd" John 10:14
- vi. "*I am* the resurrection and the life" John 11:25
- vii. "*I am* the way, the truth, and the life" John 14:6
- viii. "*I am* the true vine" John 15:1

H. These "I am" statements point to the deity of Jesus.

I. John 14:8—9 – "Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.' ⁹Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

J. John 1:18 – "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

K. Although John's gospel is unique, it is in harmony with the other gospel accounts.

Conclusion:

- A. The unity of all the gospel accounts demand a verdict.
- B. If the gospel accounts are just fables and fairy tales, Jesus is not authoritative and the Bible is a useless book. However, if the gospel are reliable, harmonious, unified documents then Jesus is authoritative.
- C. Jesus that taught with authority still teaches with authority (Matthew 7:28—29).
- D. There are fundamentally only two sources of authority – heaven or men (Matthew 21:23—25).
- E. Jesus still asks, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

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Unity in the Church

Wednesday 7:00 PM, November 7, 2007
27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
Jeff Johnson

Introduction:

1. To build anything we must have a solid foundation.
2. The foundation for building a Great church is “Christ Like” Unity.
3. Webster defines unity as: a thing undivided against itself, but separate from every other thing.
4. It is also defined as: the state or quality of being one.
5. However “unity” is not necessarily a “union.”
6. The denominational concept of unity is: you believe it your way, we will believe it our way; we will all join hands and walk into heaven together. The only problem is the Bible does not teach this doctrine.
7. Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:21).
8. We must ask ourselves as a congregation, (1). Where does “Christ Like” unity begin? (2). How do we keep “Christ Like” unity? And (3). What is the result of “Christ Like” unity?

Discussion:

I. Where does this unity begin?

- A. Unity begins with individuals (Acts 2:47).
- B. It comes through the knowledge of God’s word (Psalm 119:105).
- C. Consider the Sadducees in Matthew 22:22-29. They had no knowledge of the scriptures.
- D. Seven verses in the New Testament which record Jesus saying, “Have ye not read?” (Matthew 12:3-5, 19:4, 22:31, Mark 12:10, 12:26, Luke 6:3).
- E. In areas of “Doctrine” we must be united, in areas of “Opinion” we must be Understanding.
 1. I Corinthians 1:10 – Paul said to speak the same things.
 2. We all need to study the great love chapter (I Corinthians 13).
 3. Romans 14 instructs us on how to deal with matters of opinion.

F. Christ Like unity must start with each one of us!

I. How do we “keep” this unity?

- A. We must walk worthy of our vocation (Ephesians 4:1-3).
- B. We must be patient (II Peter 3:9).
- C. We must be willing to put up with one another (Colossians 3:13).
- D. We must be ready and willing to forgive (Matthew 5:22-23).

III. What is the result of this unity?

- A. The church will grow!
- B. The Lord’s work will get done!

Conclusion:

1. If Christians are to pursue unity seriously, they must acknowledge these critical needs:
 - a. The need for an accurate definition of unity.
 - b. The need for a scriptural concept of unity.
 - c. The need for a scriptural view of what it means to be unified.
2. If most congregations compared their present concept of congregational unity with Scripture’s concept, they would see basic, significant differences.

Jeff Johnson/710 Rock Creek Rd./Erwin. Tennessee 37650

Unity in the Home

Wednesday 8:00 PM, November 7, 2007
27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
Shane Hoover

- I. The best preventative of divorce is unity in the home!**
- A. Unity takes work:
1. Let's spend time together.
 - a. work
 - b. recreation
 2. Let's talk about money.
 - a. how we make it
 - b. how we spend it
 3. Let's talk about the kids.
 - a. training
 - b. discipline
 4. Let's talk when we're happy and mad.
 - a. Eph 4:26f Be angry, and sin not. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath
Neither give place to the devil.
- II. The Home is the building block of:**
- A. Individual character
1. moral values,
 2. spirituality. (Sunday school isn't enough!!)
- B. Future homes in years to come.
1. Basing their values on how they were raised
 2. Local congregations of the Lord's Church.
 - a. strong homes
 - b. strong congregations
- D. Our nation.
- E. God created the home, and united homes follow his design.
1. Jesus said, "Haven't you read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female? And said, For this cause shall a man leave

father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife (*unity!*) And they two shall be one flesh (*unity!*) Wherefore they are no more two (*unity!*) but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together (*unity!*) let not man put asunder (Matthew 19:4-6).

III. Obedience to the word of God will create unity in the home.

A. The husband is to:

1. rule over his wife, as head of his family (Gen. 3:16; Eph 5:23).
2. love his wife, as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25).
3. nourish and cherish his wife (Eph 5:29).
4. honor his wife as the weaker vessel (I Pet 3:7).
5. provide for his household (I Tim 5:8).

B. The wife is to:

1. be subject to her husband in everything (Eph 5:24)
2. reverence her husband (Eph 5:33).
3. love her husband & children, be sober minded, chaste, be a keeper of the home, be kind & obedient to her husband (Titus 2:4-5).

C. The parents are to:

1. train up a child in the way he should go (Prov. 22:6).
2. bring them up in the nurture & admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).
3. discipline, (includes spanking) to save them from Hell (Prov.23:13-14).
4. teach their children about God at all occasions (Deut. 6:6-7).

D. The children are to:

1. obey and honor their father and mother (Eph. 6:1-2).

IV. God's plan for the home includes other, broader passages.

A. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Luke 6:31 paraphrased).

1. Be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving (Eph 4:32).
2. Bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2).
3. Love in deed and in truth (I Jn 3:18).
4. Have a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forgiving,

and above all love (Col 3:12-14).

B. Practice the love of I Corinthians, chapter 13.

1. Love is longsuffering, and is kind.
2. Love doesn't envy.
3. It doesn't parade itself around, and is not puffed up.
4. Love doesn't behave rudely, and doesn't seek it's own.
5. It isn't easily provoked, nor thinks evil.
6. Love doesn't rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.
7. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

V. What is "UNITY"?

A. **Unity = "accord"** "Accord" means to function with one mind and one heart.

1. Husband and wife should have singleness of heart, and be like-minded.
2. They should have a common goal, to serve God.

B. **Unity = "harmony"**

1. 4-part harmony blends together.
2. Should a Christian harmonize with the world? .or sing a different tune?
James 4:4 **Friendship** with the world is enmity with God. Whosoever will be **afriend** of the world is the enemy of God.
 - a. Marriage calls for the deepest **friendship** of any human relationship.
 - b. Should a Christian marry a person who is **of the world**? (read James 4:4 again).
3. A Christian should marry someone who will help create unity in the home.
 - a. I Pet 3:7 teaches husbands to dwell with their wives according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being **heirs together** of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.
 - b. In a united home, they are heirs together.
4. In a united home, their prayers are not hindered.
5. Some choose to be **unequally yoked** with a non-Christian, rather than being heirs together of the grace of life, with a fellow Christian.

C. **Unity = "agreement"** II Cor. 6:15f What part has he that believes with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.

1. When the husband and wife don't agree on religion, the subject becomes taboo.
2. Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?
 - a. A couple needs to see eye to eye on things, before they are married.

VI. Things to talk about before marriage:

- A. Will our home honor God or ignore Him?
- B. Will our home be governed and ruled by Him?
- C. Will we be willing to say what Joshua said?...
 1. "As for me and my house, we **will** serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).
 2. Will God say about us, what He said about Abraham?
 - a. "**I know him**, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they will keep the way of the Lord" (Genesis 18:19).
- D. Will our home be a place where our child is taught to follow God?
- E. Will our family reunite in Heaven, without a single one missing?
- F. Will we agree on religious matters?

VII. Unity is when two function as one.

A. Draft animals are "yoked" so they can function as one.

1. I Sam. 11:7, Saul took a "yoke" of oxen.
2. Deut. 22:10, God said not to plow with an ox & donkey yoked together.

B. An illustration of marriage - **the yoke**

1. Two become one, in an inseparable bond.
2. The yoke is put there by the master. Only He can join or disjoin.
3. Mat. 19 Jesus said, "They two shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
4. Marriage is the closest yoke / union that one human being can have with another.

VIII. We are to love God more than any other.

A. Mat. 10:34f Jesus said, "I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

1. The point: If you must choose between _____ and God, ..pick God.

B. Before marriage shouldn't the couple agree on the most important thing in life?

1. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).
2. If they can't agree on **life's most important issue**, is there hope for unity?
3. Disagreements on this should be resolved before continuing marriage plans.
4. If the couple will calmly, honestly and lovingly talk about these matters, using the Bible as their rule, **they can agree**.
5. Whether or not they **do** agree will be a **true test** of their love and compatibility.

Shane Hoover/127 Maple Drive/Greeneville, Tennessee 37743

UNITY IS STILL POSSIBLE

Thursday 7:00 PM, November 8, 2007
27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
Jeff Trotter

We live in a world that is divided in about every way humanly possible. In such a world of conflict and disagreement, how can religious unity be even remotely possible? The answer lies in a joint willingness for all people to comply with God's revealed will for mankind through the scriptures (2 Timothy 2:16-17, 1 Corinthians 14:37). Will that occur universally? Not likely (Matthew 7:13-14). However, it can and will occur personally, and then each person of like mind will find not only communion with God, but with each other.

It is imperative that you and I seek to be the answer to the prayer of Jesus in John 17.

(John 17:20-23) "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; {21} "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. {22} "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: {23} "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

1. Unity is possible

If that is not true on some level, then I fail to find ultimate meaning in the prayer of our Lord. It is important that we believe this, or no progress will be made generally in the religious world, in our congregations of the church, and in our own individual families. We tend to not try very hard at something we feel is outside of our ability to influence.

Our brethren in Jerusalem began with the attitude that is necessary for success.

(Acts 2:44-47) Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, {45} and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. {46} So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, {47} praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

There was a “togetherness” that surpassed geography and impacted them socially and spiritually. The key to this change in life and thought process was due to being added to the church by God himself (Acts 2:47), and in an adherence to and a continuance in the apostle’s teaching (Acts 2:42). Without the latter, there would be no former. Jesus in John 17 was not talking about a wishful sentimentality, but a total submission of heart and will that resulted in a unity of substance.

2) Differences are probable

This point would be unnecessary if everyone would just see things my way on every issue and point of opinion.

The key to this is to recognize “what matters” and “what doesn’t”.

A better question is, “Does it matter to God?”

Sadly, it is in this area that some of our brethren have united with denominationalism in a stated desire to fulfill the John 17 prayer of Jesus.

We cannot manufacture on earth unity that does not exist in heaven.

Remember that Jesus said that unity needed to reflect that which he enjoyed with his Father (John 17:21).

While the application of that on every level may challenge our understanding, it certainly means a unity of general thought, purpose, and activity. Paul sought to correct a problem in the church at Corinth.

(1 Cor 1:10-13) Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among

you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. {11} For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. {12} Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." {13} Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

It mattered to the Holy Spirit through the apostle that brethren were lining up divisively behind their favorite teacher or influence.

Paul wasn't saying that they had to give up differences of opinion in areas of subjectivity, but when it came to Christ and his will, there was to be uniformity.

We will have our disagreements, even within the church. However, as it has been said in the past, we should strive even in that not to be disagreeable. I think that everybody ought to root for the University of Tennessee Volunteers, but I will not bind that on you, nor have a falling out if you poorly choose another option.

Always try to keep Paul's words to the Ephesians in mind.

(Eph 4:1-3) I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, {2} with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, {3} endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

3) Solutions are heavenly

We really can't fully consider the prayer of Jesus in John 17 without a full and total appreciation and application of what he said prior to the discussion for oneness.

(John 17:17) "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

If we strive to be “sanctified” or set apart by the truth of God’s revealed will, we will possess both unity with heaven and each other at the same time.

(1 Pet 4:11) If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

If we allow God’s will to surpass ours, we will not only have truth and unity with God, but we will be able to recognize when to reign in our pride and stubbornness on some non-essential issue.

You don’t have to like the color of the carpet in the church building, but you do have to love whoever it was within the body that made that decision. You may not like the song selection this past Sunday, but you do have to love the song leader who is serving God in that capacity. We all have likes and dislikes. You may not like how this lesson was put together, nor the way it was delivered, but if it is true to the word of God, you must love its contents, and me as your brother. Let’s be careful to apply the heavenly standard for evaluation as to what is and is not eternally important.

(Eph 4:14-16) that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, {15} but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; {16} from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Let’s demonstrate to the world around us that unity is not only possible, but is a reality in our lives and the lives of our congregations.

Jeff Trotter/14425 Gadwall Court/Charlotte, North Carolina 28273

UNITY IN THE CHURCH

What can one Christian do?

Thursday 8:00 PM November 8, 2007

27th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship

Charles White

Sadly, the Lord's directive for unity in John 17:21 and elsewhere has largely been ignored among professed followers of Jesus Christ.

Protestant denominationalism has difficulty with unity because of the very nature of sectarianism: if a person doesn't like what's being done or taught, find a place where people agree with you and join them.

Catholicism's answer to unity is a rigid enforcement of authoritative church decision in a religious hierarchy.

In the church, unfortunately, unity is frustrated often because of the domination of opinions pushed as authority and beyond the scriptures.

THERE ARE TWO SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS UNITY

Number one: put 1 Corinthians 1:10 into effect across the board and be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment", meaning our teachings of the Bible will be uniform and so will our judgments.

Number two: Identify the three vital elements of New Testament teaching and practice them. These elements are: Doctrine, Morality and Ethics.

Doctrine: the clear and simple teachings of the New Testament without addition or subtraction.

Morality: applying the teachings of the New Testament to the passions of the human body.
Ethics: applying the teachings of the New Testament to our dealings with our fellow man, both in the church and out of the church.

Working in the local church and living our individual Christian lives center around these three vital elements. Following are several practical applications for individuals to consider in our service to Christ on the local church level.

DOCTRINE

Let nothing interrupt your daily hour you have set aside for Bible study. A Christian without Bible knowledge starves the soul. Let nothing also interrupt your family Bible study time.

Carry a small Bible with you to your job or school. When your friends see you reading it, they will ask questions and the more knowledge you accumulate the more informed your answer will be.

Find someone with whom you can study the Bible. "I don't know enough" is the most common fear in this regard. You can teach them what you know and if you come across something you don't know tell them you'll find out the answer.

Error begins quietly and sneakily, but a good Bible knowledge will let you recognize error when you hear it. Listen to religious broadcasts for a good reason: Napoleon warned to know those who oppose you, so it's not sinful to listen. Just keep your money at home.

When you have a question, find the answer in the Bible, study all the Bible teaches about it and then ask someone else what they've found out. I've always told my preacher boys to study their Bibles, ask for others' thoughts and then make up their own minds according to what the Bible says.

Do not fuss and fight with scripture. Never say "I think", but always point people to the Bible. Let the Lord do your teaching and when people cannot answer the scripture, expect abuse because when a person has no answer, the last resort is to call you vile names. We represent God to the world and we must remember Genesis 18:25b, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

MORALITY

Dealing with the passions of our mortal bodies can be stressful, especially at the beginning of our Christian lives. Our minds' wishes are often contradicted by our bodies' passionate urges. Discouragement follows and often we stop our service or back it down to just an occasional visit to the services.

The morality teachings of Jesus are intended to benefit mankind by purging the unbridled practice of passionate license. Two scriptures can help us in our growth in morality.

1 Cor. 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." We "bear it" by saying "No"; by praying; by removing ourselves away from the source of temptation and by seeking help from above and from fellow Christians.

James 1:13,14: "let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." Here's a blockbuster: the devil doesn't make us do anything, but we answer the call of our own lusts. Read James 1:15, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." When we loosen our lusts and refuse to constrain them and fall, we are the ones who will have to give account. Take heed!

Watch what you read and what you entertain yourself with via the media. Proverbs 23:7a, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." If you have cable or dish premium channels coming into your home, discontinue them. You may not be able to control what is broadcast, but you surely can control what comes into your home. This sinful world is a cesspool and you don't want to take baths in it.

Your thoughts can be kept pure if you remember Matthew 15:11, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a

man." That scripture takes care of filthy jokes and bywords in our vocabularies. Funny isn't humorous, it's vulgar

ETHICS

We don't live and we don't die to ourselves; we deal with other people every day of our lives. The ethical teachings of Jesus tell us how improve our society by dealing with people in a right, just and ethical way.

The foundation of Christian ethics is Matthew 7:12, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." I don't know of many people who have arguments with themselves; we know what we want and we know how we want to be treated. So treat others in the same way: **That** gets their attention.

Christians are often asked their opinion about having a little wine in the refrigerator or a little beer on a hot Saturday afternoon. You can read all the arguments on both sides of this social drinking issue, but I'll be honest -- I seldom hear the most important point about this issue.

People in the world consider wine and beer drinking as part of their domain and usually look down their noses at Christians who drink with them.

There's another reason Christians politely refuse these kinds of offers. It's the Lord's ethical teaching on Christian influence in 1 Cor. 8:12,13, "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." A Christian may like a cool glass of beer or some good wine, but he has to consider what effect he'll have on whomsoever (especially fellow Christians) sees him indulge himself. Personally, I would prefer to deal with Mark 9:42 before the judgment day: "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."

And Christians ought to stay out of the courts with one another as taught in 1 Corinthians 6. In the New Testament day, Roman citizens could take other citizens to court for any reason and in the Jewish world, the rabbinical courts would "settle the unseizable." Read 1 Corinthians 6 carefully and you will find that as Paul discusses court appearances, his language points to inconsequentially petty issues unresolved between Christians. If a Christian is guilty of a capital crime, he must pay the penalty just like anyone else.

CONCLUSION

Please bear with me as we conclude this study with some observations about the ten commandments and Paul's statement in Romans 13:9, "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Where are the other commandments as are listed in Exodus 20:1-17? Where are the commandments against idolatry, taking God's name in vain, honoring our parents and the Sabbath day? Why did Paul just choose those listed in Romans 13:9? Here's a possible answer.

The omitted commandments found in Exodus 20 concern doctrine (idolatry, name, sabbath) and ethics (honoring parents.) The listed commandments in Romans 13:9 concern morality (adultery) and ethics (kill, steal, false witness and covet), As I thought about this, I came to the conclusion that sometimes it's easy to know what God wants (doctrine), but more difficult to put them into practice (morality and ethics).

And that's our warning. All three of these vital elements are true and must be unilaterally obeyed and Paul warns us in 1 Cor 14:37, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Charles White/4314 Dasher Road/Valdosta, GA, 31601\229-563-7290

NOTES



Biblical Viewpoints: Trials and Triumphs

Clayton Winters



**Clayton Winters in a 1983 edition of
Biblical Viewpoints**

Beginning of the Biblical Viewpoints Television Ministry

The program actually began with a single program Eddy Craft and the church in Abingdon produced and aired on WKPT. Ken Chambers and the East Bristol congregation followed that with a second program. This implanted the desire for a regular program, and, after learning time was available and the cost involved, the two congregations decided it was worth a try.

Since they had decided on a three-speaker format, Eddy and Ken approached me and asked if I would consider serving as an anchor for the program. I readily agreed, and the church in Erwin also decided to get behind the effort financially. Records indicate that this was in 1979.

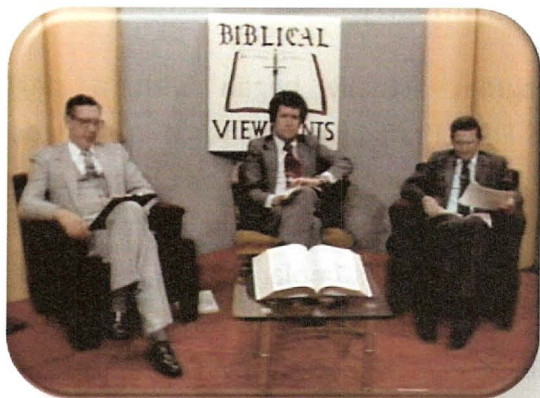
Trials of the Early Years

Previous to the launching of Biblical Viewpoints, several programs had been attempted in our area, but all soon folded due to a lack of financial support. It wasn't too long until we also felt the crunch. By this time (1980) Eddy had moved to Luray, VA, and Charles Roney from Greeneville assumed his place. In quest of financial support, Ken, Charles, and I visited numerous congregations in Kentucky and secured enough support to keep the program viable. This, however, didn't last too long, because the Kentucky brethren wanted to start airing the program from Hazard. This not only added to our production costs at WKPT, but also bled off much of the needed support from the Kentucky churches.

Until this time the elders of the East Bristol church had the oversight of the program. However, Eddy had returned to the area and started working with the C Street Church in Elizabethton. It was close to this time that both Ken and Charles moved from the area, and Eddy resumed his work with the program. By mutual agreement of the two elderships, the elders at C Street assumed the oversight and financial responsibility for the program. That relieved Eddy and me of the time-consuming responsibility of raising support for the program (the deacons at C Street took care of that), leaving us more time for producing the program. While that was a big relief for us, it placed a heavy financial burden on the C Street church, because they picked up a large

balance each month that was lacking in outside support: a burden they still willingly bear to the present day.

Progress and Triumphs of the Program



Clayton, Eddy, and Ken on the set of Biblical Viewpoints in March 1983

When we first began recording the program at WKPT, it was in a very small (and very hot) studio. With all three of us in front of the cameras, we almost felt as if we were sitting on each other's laps. However, with Charles' departure from Greeneville, the format was revised to include only two speakers. This proved to be a much more manageable arrangement. Another advantage was that WKPT moved their recording equipment into a much larger (and cooler) studio.

Bobby Flowers, the Production Manager at WKPT, suggested that we should consider setting up our own studio: an idea Eddy and I had already toyed with. We asked Bobby if he could get the cost of the equipment we would need. It floored us when he handed us a price tag of \$50,000. We saw no way we could raise that kind of money, but he had sparked in us a dream that wouldn't go away. I proceeded to set up amateur recording facilities in Erwin that would enable me to learn the principles involved in doing our own recording. Jerry and Judy Brown, along with the Mount Zion Church in London, KY, became interested in my project, and helped me considerably financially.

As time passed, important things began to happen. Bobby informed us that a new type of recording equipment, better but less expensive, was now available. He told us that we could purchase this equipment for about \$30,000. Some time after this Jerry Brown called and asked me if I could use \$8,000 to further the work that I was doing. I told him I had gone about as far as I could go without going professional, and I saw no need for that. Nevertheless, three or four days later, a \$10,000 check arrived from the church at Mount Zion with the instructions to use it as I saw fit. A short time later I mentioned this gift and my dream in our Wednesday night Bible class in Erwin. When services were dismissed, Jean Kimery, a lady recently widowed, along with her son Tim, handed me a check with the remark, "Take this, maybe it will help make your dream come true." I unfolded the check and saw that it, too, had written on it the figures \$10,000. Eddy and I discussed it and decided the time had come to move forward with our plans. Before too much time had passed, the Mount Zion Church added another \$9,000, and

the church in Erwin \$5,000. A few other small contributions were added to these figures. The Elders at C Street prepared a room for us, and the dream became a reality. God does indeed work in mysterious ways, because we had never asked for a penny for this project.

This seems like a lot of money, but the facts are that these facilities have now saved the church more than \$35,000 in producing Biblical Viewpoints, plus about \$10,000 more on the production of TV Sunday School. In addition to the savings realized in production, having our own facilities has enabled us to expand more rapidly. Tapes of the program are now aired in Jackson, MS; Hazard, KY; and Oneida, TN. It can also be viewed four times weekly on GBN, as well as around the globe through the worldwide internet.

Also there is another little-known, but very important use of the studio. Milton Mathers uses it to train students from the Tri Cities School of Preaching in radio and TV productions. Very few of our preacher training schools offer this type of hands-on training to their students.



**Clayton in a 2007 edition of
Biblical Viewpoints**

What does the future hold for us? Be sure to read Roby Ellis' timely article in which he unfolds the marvels of our present advent into the world of post-production technology.

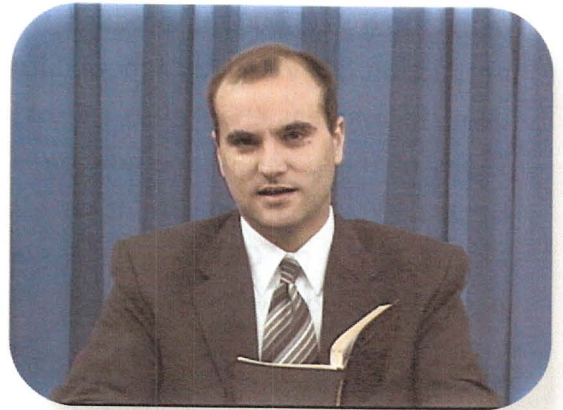
Biblical Viewpoints: Looking Ahead

Roby Ellis

Great Blessings

Working on the production staff of Biblical Viewpoints (BV) has been one of the highlights of my work here at Elizabethton. For 28 years, BV has been encouraging men and women in our area to turn back to the Bible for answers to their religious questions. During the last three decades, we have learned of a number of souls that have been added to the Lord's church, having first been introduced to the truth through this program. One example dear to us all is sister Laura McCuiston, who, along with her family, was encouraged to visit the services of the church through viewing the television program.

Years later, Laura volunteered her services as a member of the program staff, and last year, both Laura and her daughter Erin entered eternity as faithful members of the body of Christ.



**Roby Ellis in a 2007 edition of
Biblical Viewpoints**

Exciting New Technology

This year has been especially exciting because of a new piece of state-of-the-art equipment that has been added to our studio. Last year we began noticing major problems with some critical pieces of equipment, and, as these problems grew, they began to limit our production abilities. As we began to consider the cost of replacing the old equipment, we also began to discuss the possibility of replacing it with more sophisticated devices that would allow us to produce more professional video programming. After a great deal of research, in April 2007, we purchased a high performance computer, equipped with one of the most powerful video editing software packages on the market, allowing us to produce BV digitally for the first time.

Digital production gives us much more potential and flexibility than our older analog format. Until now, all of our programs have been both filmed and produced live, making any error on the part of the



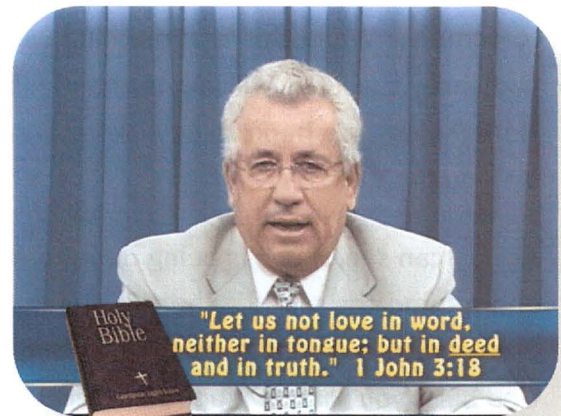
**Dell XPS System similar to the
one purchased for the studio**

speakers or the switchboard operator irreversible. In other words, the only way to fix a mistake was to start from scratch. That's a rather difficult thing to do when you have to tape four half-hour spots within a four-hour time frame! The digital format now allows us to do our switching after the filming has been finished. Furthermore, within our old framework it was very difficult to superimpose anything on the screen, but now it is very easy to put the speaker's name or a quoted Scripture directly on the screen beneath the speaker (as pictured to the right). These are just a couple of ways in which this new format is going to help us to produce a more professional program that will reflect well upon the Lord's church and the gospel we are set to proclaim and defend (Philippians 1:17).

An Unmistakable Difference

While there is certainly no shortage of religious television programming these days, there is a shortage of programs like BV. I believe that the differences between BV and denominational programming are evident even to viewers who are not members of the Lord's body. Our emphasis on searching for the Biblical viewpoint on every subject really sets BV apart from other religious programming. People are also amazed that we do not solicit funds in any way on the air, since all of our funding is provided by voluntary offerings of members of the Lord's church in congregations from the program's viewing area. It should be very apparent to our viewing audience that our only motivation behind producing this program is a genuine concern for the wellbeing and eternal destination of their souls. We rejoice in the fact that this is also true with other programs sponsored by the church in this area, programs like *TV Sunday School*, *In Search of the Lord's Way*, and *Preaching the Gospel*.

Thanks to the support of Christians in this area and beyond, we are able to take the gospel into millions of homes around the world. In addition to local venues in Kingsport; Oneida; Hazard, KY; and Jackson, MS; Biblical Viewpoints is now being aired via satellite on the Gospel Broadcasting Network (GBN) out of Chattanooga. GBN's programming is currently being aired one hour per day by major satellite providers DishNet and DirecTV. GBN can also be viewed 24 hours a day on their website (www.gbntv.org) over any high-speed connection anywhere in the world! The potential that new technology is affording us is overwhelming indeed. Imagine what the apostles would have done with tools like these available to them! It is our goal to use every blessing that God has given us to reach the masses with the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Example of digitally superimposed Scripture

Still to Come...

In the future, we recognize that there are several other needs that will need to be met. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has ordered that all programming must now be closed captioned for the hearing impaired. Currently we are exempt from this ruling, operating under a waiver issued to us last year by the FCC, but we recognize that we will soon be forced to comply. While this is something we wish to be able to do to reach this potential viewing audience, the cost will be tremendous, requiring a 35% increase in our operating budget. Nonetheless, we hope to be able to bring BV into the homes of the deaf and hearing impaired by January 2009.

As you can see, much is being done to make BV better able to reach the lost in our community and around the world. There is still much to do, but with the prayers and support of faithful brethren, this work can go forward and reach many more souls for many years to come. May God bless you for your support of this good work!



