



## Handling Aright The Word Of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15)

By Randall F. Matheny

The admonition to properly handle the word of truth implies that it may be handled improperly. The proper handling of the word of God will result in the saving of souls (1 Tim. 4:16), while the mishandling of the word is likely to have the opposite effect (2 Pet. 3:18).

One of the most widespread errors regarding the Bible is the failure to properly distinguish between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, leaving many people confused as to what authority to accept as governing Christian service and worship. The New Testament of Jesus Christ is abundantly clear on this matter. The law of Moses served as a "...tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor (Gal. 3:24-25)." Paul, by inspiration, continued, "But now we have been delivered

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from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter (Rom. 7:6)." The turning point in history wherein the law of Moses was fulfilled (Mat. 5:17-18) and the New Covenant was enabled was the death of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:16-17). Until Jesus died on the cross the law

obey Him (Heb. 5:9)." Moses, himself, prophesied that his authority would be superseded (Deut. 18:15, 18-19) and Peter confirms that this was accomplished in Christ (Acts 3:19-24). Yet, the Old Covenant remains important as an instructor and advisor pointing the world to Jesus, and that from the patience and comfort revealed therein, we may have hope (Rom. 15:4).

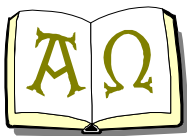
Among the many errors perpetuated by failure to accept the

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of Moses was the indisputable authority in service and worship, every "jot" and "tittle" of which was to be obeyed, until it's fulfillment in the death of Christ. Regarding the death of Jesus Colossians 2:14 affirms, "...having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." This must forever settle the issue for all who believe Jesus (Jn. 8:24), and that He is "...the author of eternal salvation to all who

exclusive, binding authority of the New Testament would be the belief in a separate, modern day priesthood within the church. This grievous error is corrected by Peter, who declares that the entire church of Christ is a "royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9)." Second, would be the equating of the Old Covenant tabernacle and/or temple to the church building, using terminology such as altar and sanctuary to refer to parts of the building, thus encouraging the further error of considering the church to be the build-

ing rather than the Christians who assemble there. Third, also without New Testament authority, which authorizes only that we sing, making melody in the heart (Eph. 5:15-21; Col. 3:16-17), is the attempt to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship by appealing to the Old Testament. It strikes one as odd that those who appeal to Old Covenant authority do so very selectively, ignoring James 2:10 and oblivious to Galatians 2:21; 3:10-11; 5:1-4, which mandate that what the Old Covenant authorized in terms of worship and service it binds as a whole, never in part, upon its adherents. Failure to accept the New Testament authority of Christ as exclusive and binding has in no small way contributed to the muddle and confusion in many religious circles of today.

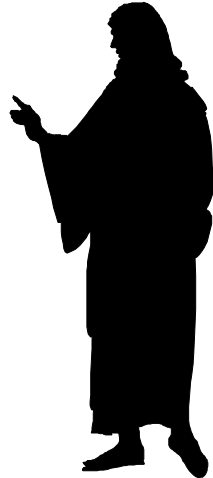


### Bloodshed Upon Bloodshed

By Randall F. Matheny

I recently exchanged correspondence with an individual with whom I disagreed over Dr. Jack Kevorkian's conviction. He argued that because Kevorkian's intentions were noble (in his opinion) that he should be above the law. He

also opined that "religion" had to be kept out of the debate regarding euthanasia. Part of the correspondence I sent in answer follows: "I read your message with interest and believe it was written out of compassion, although misguided. Given the information available regarding Kevorkian's killings, he does not counsel his victims, nor does he suggest alternative solutions. His victims come to him at their most depressed and disillusioned. Having dealt with potential suicides on several occasions I know their most fervent, though invariably unspoken, desire is for someone with enough compassion to tell them their life is important and help them find a reason for living. Society is made "society" by rule of law. No one is above it. The perceived needs of any individual do not justify one becoming a law unto himself. If putting one's self above or beyond the law is right for one person it must necessarily be right for all. I'm glad that not many people reason like Kevorkian or we would definitely be living in a state of anarchy. Finally, religious convictions, positive and negative, are a very real part of everyone's thought processes, including yours.



Your suggestion that they should not be part of the debate has made them a part, and opens the door to further rebuttals that they should be. The rational mind would consider various points of view, including those that are Bible based, before reaching a final determination and would never base a life or death decision on a purely subjective or emotional level."

Jehovah spoke to the nation of Israel saying, "*Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, For the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery, they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed. Therefore the land will mourn; and everyone who dwells there will waste away with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air; even the fish of the sea will be taken away. Now let no man contend, or rebuke another; for your people are like those who contend with the priest. Therefore you shall stumble in the day; the prophet also shall stumble with you in the night; and I will destroy your*

mother. *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children (Hos. 4:1-6).*" I am deeply convinced that a similar godless attitude prevails today and that all of the shocking events of recent history can be attributed to it. Keep religion out of the debate? That is just exactly what has been lacking, as it was in Hosea's day. Jehovah states the cause of Israel's condition: *"There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land."* Then He details the condition of the nation (notice the correlation between sins as lawlessness develops): By swearing and lying, they evidenced their disregard for truth and honesty; murder evidenced their disregard for life; stealing evidenced their lack of respect for personal property, for the Lord's work ethic and for dependence upon Him; adultery evidenced their disrespect for the institution of marriage and God's will concerning it, thus the disintegration of the family paralleled the disintegration of society. As the restraints against sin, put in place by Jehovah, fell

one by one an utter disregard and disdain for personal responsibility and accountability became prevalent and bloodshed followed bloodshed. Further study reveals that Israel was concerned about her condition, but she was deceived into complacency by a brief prosperity. Further, when she weakly endeavored to seek solutions she did so on a materialistic level which multiplied false religion and promulgated unwise, destructive foreign

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policy. The entire nation, leaders and followers, had become corrupt. Israel's end was sealed because the will of God was left out of the debate. Israel had become like the other nations and would fall as one of them. Restoration could only be realized through repentance and in the Messianic kingdom which was yet to come (compare Hos. 1:10-2:1 with 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:10; Rom. 9:26).

Jehovah's depiction of Israel accurately describes every nation which has declined and fallen due to religious error and moral decay, including mighty Rome (Rev. 13-14), and could be read as commen-

tary on our own country today. The objective, inspired and confirmed word of God does have a valid and vital role to play in the affairs of mankind.

The only consolation that remains is in the fact that God's holy nation of today, the church (1 Pet. 2:9), need not and must not reflect the condition of the world in which it exists. The church of Christ must remain separate from the world though it is in the world and the world must

be kept out of the church. The church and the precious treasure of the gospel which it holds in trust and

proclaims to every nation is the only enduring and redeeming influence that exists upon this earth (Mat. 5:13-16; 2 Cor. 4:7; Mk. 16:15-16).

This is not the time to be shamed into silence by infidels who ridicule (1 Pet. 2:11-13; 4:11-19), it is not the time to be fearful of persecution for standing for the truth and contending for the faith (2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Jn. 3:13; Rev. 21:8), and it is not the time to gut the church of its vitality and zeal by compromise with false, man-made denominations (Mat. 15:13; 2 Jn. 9-11; Col. 2:6-12). There remains but one remedy for sin whether it is committed by

children or adults, and whether it occurs in Paducah, Littleton or Washington, D.C.: the Christ and His gospel (Heb. 5:8-9). Secular laws may deter some lawlessness because of the threat of punishment, and punish those who persist in wrongdoing, but neither they nor any other influence of human contrivance have the power to actually convert a soul, or change a mind from that of a sinner to a saint. The sole power change mankind is revealed in the word of God (Psm. 19:7; Rom. 1:16: 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:22-25), but that's what people want to keep out of the debate.



**Sermon Outlines and Other Articles of Interest**

<http://www.countrypreacher.com/warren/sermons.html>

1. Sermon: "Answering the Ecumenical Movement," Randall F. Matheny  
<http://www.countrypreacher.com/sermons/ecumenic.pdf>
2. Research: "Ten Steps to Effective Planning and Leadership," Randall F. Matheny  
<http://www.countrypreacher.com/sermons/tensteps.pdf>
3. "Some Things You May Have Wanted To Know About Your Preacher, But Were Afraid To Ask," Glann Lee  
<http://www.countrypreacher.com/sermons/glee2.pdf>



**Suggested Reading**

<http://www.countrypreacher.com/reading.html>

"Piloting the Strait," by Dave Miller. \$19.95. Sain Publications, 217 E. Jefferson, Pulaski, TN 38478, (615)363-6905. This book should be in every Christian's library. Brother Millers probing, balanced, Biblical analysis of contemporary problems confronting the church provides invaluable information for use in identifying and resolving those problems. "This book has as its objective the task of identifying, describing and discussing the changes that churches of Christ are experiencing." (p. 11).

**Brotherhood Events**

<http://www.countrypreacher.com/calendar.html>

**13th Annual Greater Kanawha Valley Lectures**

August 3-6, 1999. "Hope: The Confidence of Christianity."

Washington St. Church of Christ, PO Box 177, 601 Washington St., St. Albans, WV 25177 (304)727-0761

Contact: Sonny Davis <NDavis4120@aol.com or Jim Brinkley <jmbrink@mail.msn.com>

**7th Annual "What Sayeth the Scriptures" Bible Lectureship**

August 27-29. "Hard Sayings of the New Testament." Longview Church of Christ, 1401 Eden Dr., Longview, TX 75605. (903)236-0988  
Contact: W. Hurley <whurley@texramp.net>

**Computer Products and Software**

<http://www.countrypreacher.com/sctech.html>

The Shareware Pick of the Month for May is: CuteFTP v.2.8 by GlobalSCAPE, Inc. This is an excellent, trouble free, easy to learn and use, program for uploading and downloading files to or from your Internet Web site server. \$34.95 to register. Download a free evaluation copy now.



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