



Chalmette Church of Christ

May 18th, 2014

Truth: It Is Not Changeable and Variable

James W. Boyd

There is a rather widely held view regarding truth that is called progressive revelation. It contends that truth is not absolute and objective, but relative and subjective. What may have been true religiously and morally in the past is not necessarily true now. There is no body of eternal and unchanging truth. What may be true for people in one part of the world is not true for others. Truth varies and changes according to circumstances. So goes this position.

Those who hold to this progressive revelation philosophy consider those who hold to a definite and unchanging standard of truth as antiquated, old-fashioned, and certainly not of our time. For anyone to think that religious truth was established nearly twenty centuries ago and is still the standard today, is to them, unthinkable.

An example of this progressive revelation concept in religion is an event in New York when one Sunday the clergyman, finding attendance rather sparse in winter months due to weather and sparse in summer months due to vacations, changed the Lord's Day worship to Wednesday because nearly everybody was then in town and might attend. There are much worse examples in this era of "do your own thing as you think or feel." There being no right or wrong anymore, whatever anyone prefers becomes their personal standard and God is to accept it whatever it is, especially if it is done honestly and sincerely.

THE ENDURING WORD

As we consider modern man's progressive revelation idea, aside from those who claim God is still speaking to them with special messages that others never hear, there are pertinent Scriptures that should be read. Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." First Peter 1:24,25, "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, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Second Timothy 3:16,17 affirms the infallibility, inerrancy, inspiration, authority and all sufficiency of the Scriptures and allows for nothing, more or less. Multiplied passages can be added and though much can be said of each one, it is certain that their theme contradicts the progressive revelation concept.

We shall be judged by the word of Christ (John 12:48). The apostles were guided into all the truth (John 16:13). The faith has been "once" delivered (Jude 3) and Peter said "all things" pertaining to life and godliness has been given (2 Peter 1:3). There is no compatibility between Biblical teaching and progressive revelation presently advocated by some.

UNIVERSAL

God has two kinds of law: natural or physical and spiritual or moral. We can learn much about God's moral laws by studying His physical and natural laws. Let me explain. God's physical laws are universal, applying the same to all people, for all time, wherever they are on earth. The law of gravity is just as real today as in the days of Pharaoh. It applies in America and Africa, whether day or night. The same is true regarding the laws of mathematics, chemistry, etc. The point is sufficiently made: God's laws, rightly understood, have not changed. Therefore, we are not too surprised to find a universal, all encompassing standard in His spiritual and moral laws.

NARROW

Even though many dislike it, the fact remains that truth is narrow. Many religionists have tried to expand it and have labeled all who are willing to accept God's standards as they exist, as bigoted, narrow, less than educated, and something desirable.

The way to heaven remains strait and narrow (Matt. 7:13,14) regardless of the attitudes of people concerning it. People do not and can not change God's laws.

People generally do not really object to the narrowness of correctness. They wish they could do as they please and think that if they "will it so," it is so. Suppose you wish, however, to dial a telephone number. Are you at liberty to dial whatever you feel is correct, in whatever order you might prefer? On a long distance call, we have to dial eleven consecutive numbers, being precise with each one, in proper order, to reach the desired place. Nobody really complains, but all understand. We know truth is narrow. This is but a trivial example.

DISPENSATIONS

Before we are too hasty, we must admit there has been a change in God's way of dealing with man. Depending upon the dispensation involved, the principle may remain constant, but the specific ordinances have changed. Under the patriarchs, some things were done, commanded and allowed that were forbidden the Israelites under the law of Moses. There is even more change for those of us who live this side of the cross and who are subject to Christ. But these changes are of God, designed of God, revealed by God. What we are considering in this study is whether there have been changes in truth since the will of Christ became operative with the establishment of His kingdom on Pentecost after His ascension (Acts 2). Let us consider a few matters. The points can be extended to almost infinity.

Has the Lord changed His will regarding profanity since the will of Christ began? Under the Mosaic Law, profanity of God's name was prohibited (Exodus 20:7). In the New Covenant, this same teaching is included (Matt. 5:34-37). We are not to speak profanely, not because of the authority of the Law of Moses, but because of the authority of Christ. Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth...."

While modern man is hardly known for keeping his word, lying is in vogue if thought expedient, and cursing and profanity commonplace. Where is there any Biblical evidence God has changed His mind about these things?

Under the Ten Commandments, lying was forbidden (Exodus 20:16). Those under Christ are also taught, "Therefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor..." (Eph. 4:25). Liars shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8). Modern man offers all kinds of explanations for his deceptions and lies, but is that divine evidence that the truth on the matter has changed? The practice does not determine the standard. The standard should govern the practice. Here is where many go astray in their thinking.

STILL NO CHANGE

"Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:5) is another Old Testament command and is also found in the law of Christ (Eph. 4:28). People tend to think shoplifting is not stealing, but only a disease. Taking what belongs to another without permission remains stealing. To excuse oneself with rationalizations that you have not been treated fairly, that others are richer than you, that it will never really be missed, does not diminish the sin of stealing. The embezzler may intend to "pay it back someday," but he is stealing. Cheating is stealing. God's laws have not changed just because more and more people have seared their consciences regarding right and wrong.

This same thing is true regarding fornication, adultery, and all manner of sexual perversity. Fornication is a broad term that includes lesbianism, bestiality, and homosexuality, as well as sexual intercourse between males and females who are not married to each other. The claim that these sexual drives are natural, and some quite unnatural, is no excuse for defying God's law. God knows of these drives, and God has regulated them and provided for their satisfaction in the framework of honorable marriage. Nobody will ever find progressive revelation in God's word that allows for this "new morality" binge upon which so many have embarked. To attempt to excuse it is an attempt to justify sin.

In no area has this progressive revelation attitude been more evident than in the attitudes and doctrines concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage. Matthew 19:9 and 5:32 still allow only one cause for divorce; and, that is fornication. God's law does not smile upon divorce, but contends marriage is for life. Some seem to think they can divorce for just any cause provided they do not remarry. This is wrong, wrong, wrong. Furthermore, God's will does not allow the fornicator the right of remarriage. Regardless of the many causes for divorce the state may permit, or even the permissive legality that does not even call for a cause, God's law is unalterable and the will of Christ remains the same as always.

SOURCE OF TRUTH

There really ought not be a difficulty for any of us to fathom the point this lesson makes. To learn the truth, consult God's Word. Whatever is not harmonious thereto is wrong before God. What is true now has been true since the Holy Spirit had Scripture to be written. It is the same truth under which future generations, if they exist, must also live and give answer before God. Man is not left to chart his course without God.

Some say, "I am keeping the spirit of the law if not the letter." How can one even learn the spirit of a law without the letter of it? Who has the right to dismiss the letter and declare the spirit to contradict the letter?

Obedience is what is expected, not explanations for why you think you can disobey acceptably. To contend one is obeying the spirit but not the letter is to admit disobedience. Obedience requires doing the right thing with the right motive in the right way. When Uzzah reached out and touched the ark, he could have claimed a good spirit. But he was struck dead (2 Sam. 6:6-7). When the Pharisees prayed, they claimed the right action but the spirit was impure (Matt. 23:14). It takes both to be right before God. When Paul was talking about the letter and spirit, he was talking about the old Mosaic Law in contrast to the new law of Christ. He was not giving an "out" for failing to obey what the Lord commanded under the guise of obedience in spirit.

GOD'S RULE

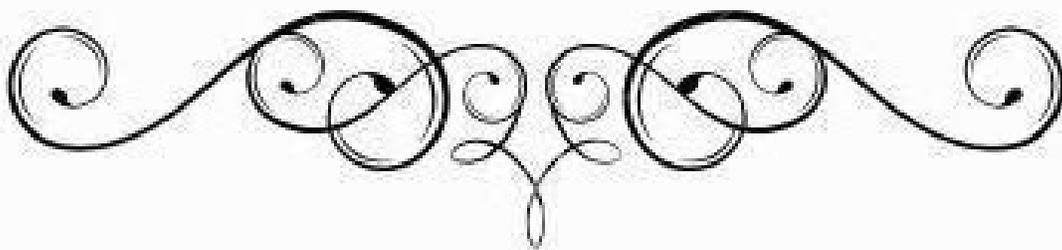
What would you think of players in a game who changed the rules to accommodate themselves as the game progressed? Could the game be played at all? Only when all participants subscribe to the same standard can there be any order or reason to what is done. The same principle stands in matters religious. It is not what we want, what we like, what are most doing, how pleasing is it to us, nor anything of this kind. All that matters is, "What does God teach in His Word?"

God's laws are neither out-of-date nor irrelevant to our day. They have not changed since delivered through inspired men of the New Covenant. Christ is the authority and total authority, now and until He returns and the end of all things. This attitude of progressive, subjective, alternative, varying, changing revelation is of the devil and we must recognize it as Satan's deception to destroy the souls of unwary people.

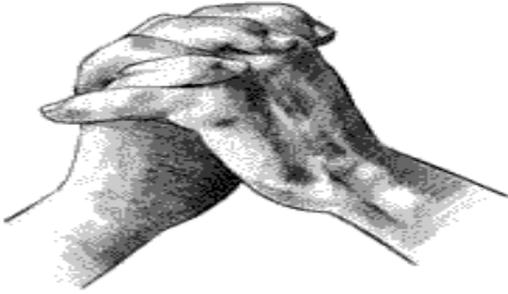
(from Seek the Old Paths, March 2014)

News and Notes

- Our Third **Sunday Singing and Fellowship Meal** will be this evening. Bring a dish and a friend!
- Congratulations to **Logan Hand** who will be graduating High School on May 22nd! The graduation will take place at Von Braun Center Arena at 1:30 p.m.
- **Vacation Bible School** will be June 16-19. There will be a group of 30 people coming from Bybee Branch Church of Christ in McMinnville, TN. ****We are still in need of volunteers for housing. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board.**
- **Mark and Tina** will be leaving for a mission trip to Budapest, Hungary this Wednesday evening and will return on June 3rd. Please keep them in your prayers as they travel this week.
- **Sympathy** is extended at this time for Mike & Linda Swanner and family. Linda's father passed away last week and his wake was held Friday night. We love you and may God bless you during this time.
- Please keep Betty Grisham, Alice Riley, and Margo Rodney in your prayers at this time as they are in poor health.



Prayer List



Alice Riley & family
Sherry Towle
Margo Rodney
Judy Hennessee
Betty Grisham
Ella Gillard
Krisztian Montague
Linda Swanner
Jackie Gamble
Gloria Smiles
Joel James
David Ebeling
Ryker Amaya
Raymond Sanchez
Gary Huettmann
Malcolm & Marlene Vazquez

*All of our brethren scattered across
the United States & our troops in
Iraq



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Services of The Church
Sunday

Bible Classes 9:00 am
AM Worship 10:00 am
PM Worship 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 pm

Elders

Mark Lance 504-250-8492

J. V. Russell 504-277-0251

Charles Whitley 504-277-4717

Evangelist

Mark Lance 504- 250-8492

gospelpr@cox.net

Deacons

Scott Russell 504-232-4120

Wayne Schulz 504-392-3999

Butch Snyder 504-682-0051

Mike Swanner 504-271-2465

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