

# THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

## HOW LOST ARE THE LOST?

For many people, the idea that all men are lost who are not true Christians is most difficult to believe. They usually reason that it would be unjust for God to condemn to hell those who have not heard the gospel. This attitude is a basic reason for the complacent attitude towards mission work seen among our brethren. For if the lost can be saved without the gospel, because of God's mercy, what is the need for missionaries to go to distant difficult fields?

To adequately deal with this question, we must first ask:

### **Why Are People Lost?**

We must realize that men are lost because of their personal sin and not just because we have not taken the gospel to them. The Gentiles of Paul's day were lost because of their ungodliness and unrighteousness and for their dishonor of God by idolatry, for which there was no excuse (Romans 1:18-21). Even without a written law from God, they violated his moral law. They sinned without the law (i.e., a written code like Moses' law) and their own conscience condemned them for it (Romans 2:11-15). In every human heart there is a sense of "ought and ought not." Every society has a set of moral precepts that to some degree resemble God's written moral code. When even the primitive pagan violates these rules he sins against his conscience and God holds him accountable for it. The men of Sodom broke this law, being guilty of grievous sin, even though they had no written statutes (Genesis 18:20). So did the cruel men of Nineveh (Jonah 1:2). When man knows to do good and does it not, he sins (James 4:17). This is true of the sophisticated Westerner with his Christian heritage or the pagan Oriental with only his moral conscience. Having established that all men are lost because of their sin, we now proceed to show that to be saved they absolutely must meet certain conditions laid down by God.

### **Faith is Essential to Salvation**

Men will be lost who do not believe in God and His Son, Jesus. "Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto him; for he that cometh unto God must believe that he is..." (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus declared, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Paul writes that Christ will render vengeance to them that know not God and to them that obey not the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Surely this applies to men in Africa or China as well as the United States of America. Jesus told Nicodemus, "He that believeth not is judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). Thus we see that faith in Christ is essential to salvation. Heathen, without the gospel, do not believe. Therefore, they cannot be saved unless we take the gospel to them and they accept it.

Again, we note that salvation is only in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10; Acts 4:11-12). We also read that belief and baptism are prerequisites to getting into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). The pagan, without the gospel, cannot do this, hence he must be lost.

### **An Illogical Idea**

The idea that men can be saved without hearing the gospel is illogical and contrary to the Scripture. Jesus said, "Go...and preach the gospel to the whole creation, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:15-16). But you cannot save a

**WHAT DOES IT TRULY MEAN  
TO BE A CHRISTIAN?  
TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. The Brethren Were \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

II. The Brethren Were \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

III. The Brethren Were \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

**THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. The \_\_\_\_\_ at the Transfiguration

Notes:

II. The \_\_\_\_\_ at the Transfiguration

Notes:

III. The \_\_\_\_\_ at the Transfiguration

Notes:

saved man. You can only save a lost person. So Jesus declares that the entire race of accountable men are lost until they hear the gospel and obey it.

**Is the Gospel a Blessing or a Curse?**

If lost men could be saved in their ignorance, we do them a grave disservice by taking the gospel to them and exposing them to the danger of damnation. Yet this is exactly what Christ said to do in his great commission.

Those who hold that the ignorant pagan can be saved if he does not hear the gospel must answer this question: Are men worse off or better off with the gospel?

**Why Did Christ Die?**

If men can be saved without the gospel because they never heard it, then Christ died for naught. This is the case since the whole world was in the same state of ignorance before Jesus came. If God can and will save men without the knowledge of Christ today, He could and would have saved man even before Christ came and died. In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me..." (Matthew 26:39). But it was not possible. He had to die, for apart from the shedding of his blood there would be no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22). The blood of animals could not suffice (Hebrews 10:4). The salvation of fallen man demands the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:7).

All men are lost because they are sinners before God. They can only be saved by hearing the precious gospel of Jesus, believing and obeying it. Faith comes from hearing God's word and from no other source (Romans 10:17)

**Our Charge**

Because all responsible men and women are lost, doomed to hell because of their sins, and because Christ died to secure the salvation of all men, we Christians are charged to make the saving gospel message available to every creature (Mark 16:15-16). Christ made no other plan. If we fail, their souls are hopelessly lost. If we fail, Christ died in vain, as far as they are concerned.

We who are privileged to enjoy salvation are debtors to all who are yet in sin (Romans 1:14). If we do not do our best to reach them, their blood will be required of our hands (Ezekiel 33:8). According to Luke 12:43-48 it will be better for those lost heathen who never heard the gospel in the judgment, than for the disobedient Christian who knew God's will about seeking the lost and refused to do it. We will be beaten with many stripes, they with few.

*via "Christianity Then and Now"*

**DUMBER THAN A DRUNK MONKEY—2**

In the English Bible, the word “wine” is used to translate principally one Hebrew word and one Greek word (though a very few others are found). These are *yayin* (Hebrew – Old Testament) and *oinos* (Greek – New Testament). It is important to know that these words are both generic terms that can have reference to the freshly squeezed juice of grapes or to the fermented, thus alcoholic (Rushmore, Beverage Alcohol, pg. 23). Therefore, you find passages in scripture such as 1 Timothy 5:23 where Paul told Timothy to “drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” Or you can turn to John 2, which is a favorite among those seeking to justify the consumption of alcohol, and find Jesus miraculously turning water into “wine.” Do these examples mean that Paul encouraged Timothy to partake of alcohol or that Jesus provided some one hundred and fifty gallons of alcohol for wedding guests? No, because such would have been a blatant violation of God’s law (Habakkuk 2:15 – “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth they bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness.”). It is obvious that on those occasions the generic term is being used to refer merely to the freshly squeezed juice of grapes. But how can we know the difference? Context. On every occasion in the Bible where the term “wine” is used, even though it is a generic term, the context in which it is used can easily signify if it is referring to that which is alcoholic or that which is not. Because alcoholic wine has been and is condemned by God in both the Old Testament law as well as the New Testament law, if the term “wine” is used in a negative and condemned fashion, it must refer to that which is alcoholic. But if it refers to the term “wine” in a positive, non-condemned sense, it must refer to that which is pure. By paying attention to the context, the usage is quite apparent and becomes a matter of common sense.

Does the Bible blatantly condemn the consumption of alcohol? Yes, in any form and in any amount. Thus whether one is drinking “socially” and “with moderation,” or with the intention of “getting plastered” they do so in direct violation of God’s law and risk the consequences of which we shall now turn attention.

**The Bible’s consequences of alcohol consumption.** Anyone who maintains they can consume any amount of alcohol and not have to face the accountability of any consequences do so either in ignorance or stubbornness. The consequences associated with the use of alcohol are well documented medically, socially, and spiritually. While the medical consequences of alcohol consumption are assumed to be well known, most pass those consequences off as only linked to drunkenness, binge drinking, or alcoholism rather than simply “social drinking” in small, meager amounts. However, even small amounts of alcohol in any form can pose devastating medical effects as cited by Mark Davey:

By drinking alcohol you place your health at risk. You risk damaging your brain which may result in: memory loss, confusion, disorganization, decreased work performance, poor coordination, impaired ability to learn new things, hallucinations, fits, permanent brain damage, aggression, suspicion or paranoia, impulsiveness. You risk damaging your heart which may lead to: high blood pressure, irregular pulse, damaged heart muscle. You risk damaging your liver resulting in: impaired liver function, severe swelling and pain, inflamed liver (hepatitis), largely irreversible cirrhosis (scarring), liver cancer. You risk damaging your stomach which may result in the stomach lining becoming inflamed, bleeding and ulcers. You risk damaging your intestines which may lead to inflammation, bleeding and ulcers. You risk damaging your pancreas causing painful inflammation and bleeding. You risk damaging your muscles resulting in weakness and loss of muscle tissue. Your risk damaging your nervous system leading to a loss of sensation in your hands and feet caused by damaged nerves (tingling) (“Alcohol,” *The Drug Data Series*).

Does it appear that the medical consequences of alcohol consumption are limited to large amounts? The evidence dictates that in the treatment of our bodies, the temples of God (1 Corinthians 6:12-20), that the drinking of alcohol in any amount, even a little at a time, can be devastating to our internal functions.

*to be continued*  
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