

## Who is Ashamed?

Scott Klaft

When teaching new prospects about the manner in which one becomes a Christian, having covered the necessity of belief that drives everything that follows, it is not entirely inappropriate to direct them to Matthew 10:32, 33 to explain the necessity of making the verbal confession of faith. (It is probably more appropriate to discuss it in view of Romans 10:9, 10 as it is illustrated by Acts 8:36 – 38.) On the surface, the Matthew passage will do the job well enough, even though that is not exactly the intended point Jesus is making there. “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32, 33).

The point He is making is not so much the necessity of a verbal confession as much as He is rendering judgment on the two types of reactions to the gospel. Contextually, the Lord was describing the harsh reality that people don’t always react well. But there is an implication to the disciples doing the preaching as well. Jesus is requiring a certain depth of character from His disciples that would underlie a daily and regular demonstration of fidelity to Him. They must not allow the harshness of reactions to sway them. Whatever men might do to them, they should not be ashamed of their message, nor be intimidated into silence. This is a repeated admonition in Jesus’ teaching.

Those carrying a futurist view regarding the coming of the Lord may not realize what they are doing to passages when forcing them to fit their model of that event. They have to avoid the plain and natural meaning of passages in context in order to lift them out and force them to mean something completely unnatural. Why not just teach them in their contexts? Is it that they are ashamed of how it presents certain conflicts with their view that they cannot explain?

Take, for example, Matthew 16:24 – 28 in which Jesus was teaching His requirement of complete devotion to Him in spite of hardships (bearing a cross v. 24). There, He indicates the consequences of being unwilling to give up everything, even one’s own bodily life in order to have life in Him (v. 25). He explains that no amount of gain in the physical world could possibly be worth the value of one’s own soul (v. 26). Implying that justice and judgment occurs from a spiritual (not material) view, Jesus further explains: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matt. 16:27, 28).

Someone taking the view that Jesus’ coming with His angels in judgment is to be yet in the future has trouble with these two verses being together. Jesus’ explicit words place that judgment within the lifespan of some of those people who stood there that day. They would personally see it come to pass in their lifetime. But normally, what we hear people say is that v. 27 is referring to a future judgment of all the creation, while v. 28 is only talking about the birth of the church in Acts 2. This is incorrect for both verses, extracting them from their own immediate context.

Yes, the parallel passage in Mark has the two verses separated by a chapter heading. But before even looking at the passage, let’s remember that the chapter and verse breaks in our modern English Bibles were not placed there by inspired men. Jewish Masoretes in the 9th Century are credited for first having separated the Hebrew Scriptures into verse form; and, it wasn’t until at least the 13th Century that certain

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men have been credited to have made the chapter divisions. Even still, it was not until 1557 – 1560 that the Geneva Bible (first the New Testament and then the whole Bible) was the first English version printed with both chapter and verse divisions. This is not the form in which the scriptures were originally given. They were given without separation so that we should naturally look to the immediate contexts for our initial understanding of any passage.

The way the parallel passage in Mark was supposed to be read looks like this: “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 8:38 – 9:1).

Where Matthew did not mention a time frame for Jesus coming with His angels in the judgment, Mark’s account of Jesus’ speech places it within the time frame of “this adulterous and sinful generation,” the same generation of those who stood there that day, to whom Jesus promised they would see the kingdom come. But what of those who find themselves ashamed of Jesus’ words in this connection? Are not these passages Jesus’ words? Why would anyone handle these as if one verse were disconnected from the other? Are they ashamed of the implications?

Consider also Luke’s account of the very same speech:

“For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:26, 27).

It is easy to ask the question: If, as in Matthew and Luke, the verses belong together, why should they be seen as necessarily separate ideas in Mark? There is nothing in the language of any of the three that would lead us to believe that Jesus has suddenly shifted his thoughts from one thing to the next in mid-stream. There is nothing in the context that justifies viewing the two verses separately in time. By what hermeneutical rule do those believing in a future coming of Jesus in judgment separate that idea from the coming of the kingdom? They are clearly linked by these three accounts of Jesus’ speech.

Denominations usually buy into the Premillennial view that neither the kingdom nor the Lord has yet come. This is clearly an error. The church and the kingdom are obvious synonyms (cf. Matthew 16:18,19; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9).

The popular notion in the churches of Christ, presently, is the Amillennial view that says the kingdom came, which is the church. And that is correct, but it cannot have been Acts 2 that Jesus had in contemplation in our main texts. The kingdom would come with power in their generation, which was directly linked to Jesus coming again in judgment with His angels, and in the glory of the Father. The popular notion says that Jesus has not yet come to bring judgment, and thus they have implied a contradiction of their view with what Jesus said.

While it is true, the church had its beginning in Acts 2, that is only when the construction of that house began (cf. Ephesians 2:19 – 22), but its completion was not yet. There is not enough space to explore that idea here, but just from our main texts, we can see that by Acts 2 (and not for many years afterward), Jesus had not yet brought that judgment by which He would “reward every man according to his works” (Matt. 16:27).

The coming of Jesus in judgment and the coming of the kingdom (as a completed and finished entity) are clearly and inseparably linked and simultaneous events. Jesus used similar language to describe His coming in Matthew 24:30, 31, which is greatly accepted as a part of Jesus’ answer to the question about the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Luke 21:20 – 28), which was fulfilled in A.D. 70. Of necessity, I must

then recognize that Paul uses the same language to describe Jesus' coming in 1st Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:4 looking forward to the same fulfillment.

There is only one approach to eschatology (the study of final things) that can unashamedly assert what Jesus asserts in those three parallel-texts as well as the others cited. That is the same approach the authors of this publication take in our attempts to teach only God's truth in the way He intended it. There is no shame in holding a wrong position out of ignorance once the necessary corrections are made. But when the truth of Jesus' words is properly presented, and it is repeatedly resisted, I fear for those souls, considering what Jesus says about those who are too ashamed of His words to hold to them. [SK]

## Isaiah 2:1-4; Prophecy or Tautology?

Holger W. Neubauer

When an interpretation of scripture has the Lord speaking in a needless repetition of words, that interpretation is most assuredly false. A tautology is just that; a needless repetition of words. Prophecy on the other hand is a demonstration that the God of heaven is omniscient and that his word will always come to pass (Deuteronomy 18:22). Sadly, the traditional interpretation of Isaiah 2:1-4, which contains one of the great prophecies of the Old Testament, has the Lord guilty of a tautology and destroys the meaning of this pointed prophecy.

Notice please, Isaiah's prophecy, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains" (Isaiah 2:2). This prophecy is foretelling the Lord's church (1 Timothy 3:15). The mountains are an allusion to governments or authorities (Jeremiah 51:25). God's house would take its place in the very highest authority. But when would this house be established? Isaiah said, "in the last days." The traditional position avers that the last days is the entire Christian dispensation. This is largely because the last days are present as Peter introduces the church on Pentecost (Acts 2:16, 17). However, if the last days refer to the entire Christian dispensation then Isaiah's prophecy is nothing but a tautology, a needless repetition of words. The traditional position destroys this great prophesy. If the last days refers to the "church age," then Isaiah prophesied that the church would be established in the church age. This is tantamount to saying that the church age would be established in the church age. This is a tautology. This interpretation destroys the genius of prophecy. It would be like saying, "Ben's grandchildren will be born in the age of Ben's grandchildren." The last days are far more specific than a two-thousand-year period and counting. The last days refers to the last days of the Jewish age and a specific forty-year history.

In James 5:3 we find a direct reference to the "last days." Please listen carefully to the inspired penman, "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." James said that they "had heaped treasure together for the last days." If the "last days" refers to the entirety of the Christian age, then James told these first century rich men that their punishment was the Christian age! This absurdity is what the traditional position implies. If however, the punishment James refers to is the last days of Israel, which is exactly what James has in mind, then their punishment was right around the corner. This fits with the context because James said, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8). The phrase "draweth nigh" is the same Greek phrase translated "at hand" in Matthew 4:17. James affirms the coming of the Lord was AT HAND then! James also mentions Elijah and the three year and six months of an earlier Jewish tribulation in the same context (James 5:17). This is Jewish judgment language that reveals a type of the "time, times and half of time, 3 ½ years, 42 months or 1260 days of the Great Tribulation time that Jesus and Daniel predicted (Daniel 12:2,7,11; Matthew 24:21). The last days ended with the "last day." Daniel would be resurrected or "stand in his lot at the end of the days" (Daniel 12:13). Daniel would be resurrected at the end of the Jewish age, not the Christian age. When Martha affirmed that Lazarus would be raised at the last day (John 11:24), she was affirming what Daniel taught. Daniel 12:2 predicts the resurrection of "everlasting life" and "everlasting contempt" would come at the "time of the

end” (Daniel 12:4). Daniel identifies the “time of the end” as the “abomination which makes desolate” (Daniel 12:11). Jesus interpreted the “abomination that maketh desolate” to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15). The last days of the Jewish age would end with the last day of that same age. Just read Daniel 12 along with Matthew 24:1-34 and you will come to the inescapable conclusion that resurrection (Matthew 24:31) was to take place at the end of the Jewish age.

Moses predicted the “latter days” or last days of Israel in Deuteronomy 31:27. Moses predicted that after his death the Jewish nation would “corrupt themselves” (Deuteronomy 31:29), and become a “crooked and perverse generation” and “a very froward generation” (Deuteronomy 32:5, 20). The Bible affirms a generation is forty years (Hebrews 3:9, 10). Jesus was baptized at 30 (Luke 3:23), His ministry lasted 3 1/2 years, hence the church started in A.D. 33 (though the Julian calendar would be slightly recalculated). That 40 year “crooked and perverse generation” was already in existence when Peter preached on Pentecost. Peter proclaimed, “save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40). That fateful generation had arrived! Peter affirmed that he was in the “last days” (Acts 2:16, 17). Moses likened his people to “Sodom” during this time (Deuteronomy 32:32). John repeated the same theme when he said, “the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” (Revelation 11:8). Now just where was Jesus crucified? John was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem. The last days of Old Covenant Israel would end with Jerusalem's destruction.

It was in these same last days that Joel prophesied the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-32). The pouring out of the Spirit produced miracles that lasted for a generation. Guy Woods, in his debate with a former member of the church that turned charismatic named Ben Franklin, argued that Micah 7:15 predicted that miracles would last for 40 years. The text says, “According to the days of thy coming out of land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvelous things.” Notice the phrase, “according to the days.” Just how long did these days last? Deuteronomy 29:5 says, “And I have led you forty years in the wilderness.” Miracles would last for 40 years. In Acts 2:15-17, Peter, in perfect concert with scripture and divine history confirmed that miracles were for the last days, as he said, “For these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the LAST DAYS, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.” The traditional position affirms that miracles lasted only for the first part of the last days. This is denying plain scripture. The Bible simply teaches that miracles were for the last days; ALL OF THEM!

The miracles lasted for forty years and were completed with Jesus' return in Jerusalem. This is exactly what Paul affirmed in 1 Corinthians 1:6-8, where He said, “Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So, that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall confirm you UNTO THE END, that ye be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now either the end has arrived and Jesus has returned or spiritual gifts are still in the church. Any adroit Pentecostal preacher will wear out this text. This is the text the previously mentioned Franklin used against Woods. Franklin argued that spiritual gifts would remain until Jesus returned. Woods saw this point and argued Paul referred to Jesus' coming in Jerusalem. This is our position. One of the best debaters of the church argued our position in public debate! Woods is considered a champion and we are heretics? Oh, consistency thou art a jewel! Pentecostal preachers who argue that spiritual gifts are promised until the coming of Christ are emphatically right. But the Pentecostal preacher is wrong that spiritual gifts are still available because Jesus has returned, proven by the fact that his coming was “drawing nigh” (James 5:8; Hebrews 10:37) at the time the New Testament was being written. Pentecostals are wrong that spiritual gifts are still available and the A.D. 33 Advocates are wrong that Jesus' return is in the future. The traditional position avers that miracles died with the apostles. This position has been repeated countless thousands of times in the church. Ask the average member of the church when miracles ceased and he will affirm, “when the last apostle died.” Yet, there is not one scintilla of scripture that even hints at such a doctrine. Paul said, “but when that which is perfect is come,

that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Corinthians 13:10). The completion of scripture, the end of miracles, and the coming of the Lord were all synchronous events.

We affirm without reservation that miracles were promised for ALL of the last days. We affirm the last days were the last days of the Jewish age and lasted for forty years. We affirm Isaiah's prophecy was no tautology. We affirm that Jesus' return in Jerusalem brought an end to the miracles and the last days. We now live in an age THAT HAS NO END! Listen to Gabriel's testimony, "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33). Ephesians 3:21 says, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Do we believe tradition or scripture? Do we give into warmed over denominational presuppositions or do we bow the knee to Jesus? Let the authority of Jesus stand and let us affirm just what scripture affirms: that the LAST DAYS refers to the last generation of the Jewish age, **FOR THE CHRISTIAN AGE HAS NO END!** [HN]

## Notice the Difference

Steve Baisden

We are planning a seminar on the "time of the end." We will be having guest speakers and specific topics assigned to each speaker. An open format and a question and answer segment will be planned for each evening of the seminar. Provided everyone remains respectful and decent in Christian conduct we will allow them to ask questions and make comments. Even those in opposition to our view of "the time of the end" will be given the opportunity to make comments, ask questions, and even engage in discussion if they so desire. You see, **the truth has nothing to fear and everything to gain from honest open evaluation.**

This is MOST ASSUREDLY different from all the others. We want this to be a totally open and above board meeting for anyone seeking the truth. We do not want to misrepresent anyone and we do not want to discourage anyone. We simply want to help those who are interested anyway we can.

Recently I have spoken with many in our brotherhood who are publicly calling our names (Holger Neubauer, Scott Klaft, Steve Baisden) marking us and misrepresenting what we truly believe. I have asked them if they will allow us the opportunity to properly represent ourselves. I have asked for the opportunity to answer why I believe what I do so that those who have heard that I believe and teach a false doctrine can hear the other side of the issue. In fact, there is a biblical principle that forbids folks from making hasty decisions based from just one perspective, (Pro 18:13) "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Should we not at the very least hear the other side before making a decision to mark a brother?

**It is almost always the case that whenever people listen to one side of a story they make their decisions based upon only what they have heard.** You can be taught a thing to such a degree that you may never see the real truth. Denominations do this all the time. They are indoctrinated into a particular belief to the degree they will not even consider listening to another possibility. I am afraid that the church has fallen into this same trap. And again, there are biblical principles which forbid this, (Pro 18:17) "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him." Also, consider (Acts 19:8) "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." Simply put, God wants us to consider every possibility before jumping to conclusions.

Why will not my brave brethren, when having their lectures and seminars, allow us the opportunity to answer for ourselves, especially when the topic of discussion is against the very thing where our names are being mentioned? I suggest that they cannot afford to be this open and allow an honest investigation. They MUST build their straw-men for themselves so they can then answer their own straw-men scenarios

that they falsely built for themselves. All the while what is really believed and understood is not given the opportunity of honest examination.

The men speaking in our Series of Lessons, April 17-19, will be allowed to accurately represent themselves and what they believe. Brethren, frankly, we will not be guilty of doing to others as they have done to us, we will not be guilty of doing what we have just declared as wrong. We will not falsely represent any man and we will not run around hiding from any either! If you have questions of what others may believe and practice, then please at least have the courage to ask them before wrongly accusing them! And if you find them to be at odds from what you think is faithful, then continue the conversation so that faithfulness can be established. What could be more Christian and what could we more do for the cause of unity?

So in short, if you can make our series of lessons, and you would like to voice your opinion or ask questions, we will allow you to do that. We will make the extra time needed to respectfully deal with anyone seeking the truth.

Plan to be there, April 17-19, at Lakeshore church of Christ, 19979 M- 140, South Haven MI. 269-325-4449 (see details on back page).

There is a difference... Pro 28:1 "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." [SB]