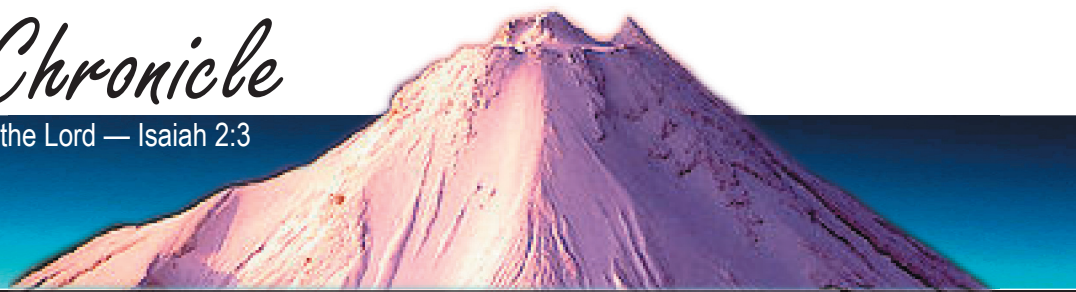


# The Summit Chronicle

Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord — Isaiah 2:3



Issue 15 Vol 2

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## Contributing Writers for this Issue's Articles

**Rex Banks • Gary Hampton  
Jerry Solomon • Eric Lyons  
Frank Chesser • Brad Harrub**

## Scripture of the Month

"Thou shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your soul and with all of your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it; You shall love your neighbour as yourself"  
— Matt 22:37-39

## Contact Us!

If you have any questions that you would like answered by any of our writers, please feel free to contact us via email on:  
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Greetings brethren,

If you're new to *The Summit Chronicle*, we would like to extend a very warm welcome to you and your loved ones as we greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus!

**Issue 15** is set to bring you—as is the tradition of *The Summit Chronicle*—powerful, faith-building articles from equally faithful and sound brethren. In continuing with our World View series is an article by Jerry Solomon. There are some excellent points of argument there and really makes you look at things from a logical perspective and how the Christian view makes so much more sense than what is currently floating around out there.

Brother Rex Banks continues with the second installment of his Matthew 24 article which we're sure will really help build your understanding of this chapter of Scripture. This is a passage that quite often is taken totally out of context and Rex does a fantastic job in breaking it down for careful study.

Gary Hampton provides us with an excellent article on the importance of keeping pure in a world dominated by sensuality. It's all around us in the advertisements, marketing and promotional material distributed by the world in it's lack of regard for God's law and His holiness. It is a timely reminder to us all so that we are aware of what God wants from His holy priesthood, His called-out, as we face the constant bombardment of immoral and sensual lifestyle of those who know not God. Something which will come to an abrupt stop on The Great Day.

If you're one of those people who like to watch the clock to make sure the sermon finishes right on time, you will be advised otherwise in Frank Chesser's article on that very thing—clock watching! Like he says, 20

minute sermons are in great demand. It's sad when you think about it that God has done so much for His people, and yet, like the Old Testament times—His people are ungrateful and always complaining and never give enough time for God. Frank rightly reminds us of the need to drink from the well of life which is hindered by an attitude of wanting to hurry things up so you can go home and spend your time on spiritually useless things. If you're one of those people who constantly watch the clock every time you're at church, you will remember this article. God deserves your full and undivided attention and a grateful heart that can't get enough of the Word of God!

Dr. Brad Harrub brings us Part 1 of his writings on *Homosexuality: Lifestyle or Perversion?* We have had Brad visit in New Plymouth twice and he didn't fail to deliver on his excellent material. His work really makes you think and see how the arguments—in this case homosexuality—don't stack up with either nature or God-given law. This is a subject that is heavily debated at the moment and this article will help ground Christians in what the Lord has spoken concerning the subject of homosexuality.

Last but not least is a great article by brother Eric Lyons from *Apologetics Press* on expelling the idea that Christianity is a borrowed-religion having roots in paganism. True Christianity, as that practised by the apostles in the New Testament, was imparted by the true Messiah Himself, Lord Jesus. Throughout history, many wanna-be messiahs arose but only ONE fulfilled over 300 prophecies concerning Him! Enjoy.

In the service of the Most High God,

**Jaracz Heather & Allan Fowell**  
*Co-founders of The Summit Chronicle*

A friend of mine recently told me of a conversation he had with a good friend we will call Joe. Joe is a doctor. He is not a Christian. This is how the conversation went: “Joe, you’re an excellent doctor. You care deeply about your patients. Why do you care so much for people since you believe we have evolved by chance? What gives us value?” Joe was stunned by the question and couldn’t answer it. His “worldview” had taken a blow.

The concept of a worldview has received increasing attention for the past several years. Many books have been written on the subject of worldviews from both Christian and non-Christian perspectives. Frequently speakers will refer to the term. On occasion even reviews of movies and music will include the phrase. All this attention prompts us to ask, “What does the term mean?” and “What difference does it make?” It is our intent to answer these questions. And it is our hope that all of us will give serious attention to our own worldview, as well as the worldviews of those around us.

### What is a Worldview?

What is a worldview? A variety of definitions have been offered by numerous authors. For example, James Sire asserts that “A worldview is a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world.”<sup>1</sup> Phillips and Brown state that “A worldview is, first of all, an explanation and interpretation of the world and second, an application of this view to life. In simpler terms, our worldview is a view of the world and a view for the world.”<sup>2</sup> Walsh and Middleton provide what we think is the most succinct and understandable explanation: “A world view provides a model of the world which guides its adherents in the world.”<sup>3</sup> With the realization that many subtleties can be added, this will be our

working definition.

### The Need for a Worldview

Worldviews act somewhat like eye glasses or contact lenses. That is, a worldview should provide the correct “prescription” for making sense of the world just as wearing the correct prescription for your eyes brings things into focus. And, in either example, an incorrect prescription can be dangerous, even life-threatening. People who are struggling with worldview questions are often despairing and even suicidal. Thus it’s important for us to give attention to the formulation of the proper worldview. Arthur Holmes states that the need for a worldview is fourfold: “the need to unify thought and life; the need to define the good life and find hope and meaning in life; the need to guide thought; the need to guide action.”<sup>4</sup> Yet another prominent need for the proper worldview is to help us deal with an increasingly diverse culture. We are faced with a smorgasbord of worldviews, all of which make claims concerning truth. We are challenged to sort through this mixture of worldviews with wisdom. These needs are experienced by all people, either consciously or unconsciously. All of us have a worldview with which we strive to meet such needs. The proper worldview helps us by orienting us to the intellectual and philosophical terrain about us.

Worldviews are so much a part of our lives that we see and hear them daily, whether we recognize them or not. For example, movies, television, music, magazines, newspapers, government, education, science, art, and all other aspects of culture are affected by worldviews. If we ignore their importance, we do so to our detriment.

### Testing Worldviews

A worldview should pass certain

tests. First, it should be rational. It should not ask us to believe contradictory things. Second, it should be supported by evidence. It should be consistent with what we observe. Third, it should give a satisfying comprehensive explanation of reality. It should be able to explain why things are the way they are. Fourth, it should provide a satisfactory basis for living. It should not leave us feeling compelled to borrow elements of another worldview in order to live in this world.

### Components Found in All Worldviews

In addition to putting worldviews to these tests, we should also see that worldviews have common components. These components are self-evident. It is important to keep these in mind as you establish your own worldview, and as you share with others. There are four of them.

First, something exists. This may sound obvious, but it really is an important foundational element of worldview building since some will try to deny it. But a denial is self-defeating because all people experience cause and effect. The universe is rational; it is predictable.

Second, all people have absolutes. Again, many will try to deny this, but to deny it is to assert it. All of us seek an infinite reference point. For some it is God; for others it is the state, or love, or power, and for some this reference point is themselves or man.

Third, two contradictory statements cannot both be right. This is a primary law of logic that is continually denied. Ideally speaking, only one worldview can correctly mirror reality. This cannot be overemphasized in light of the prominent belief that tolerance is the ultimate virtue. To say that someone is wrong is labeled intolerant or narrow-minded. A good illustration of this is



when we hear people declare that all religions are the same. It would mean that Hindus, for example, agree with Christians concerning God, Jesus, salvation, heaven, hell, and a host of other doctrines. This is nonsense.

Fourth, all people exercise faith. All of us presuppose certain things to be true without absolute proof. These are inferences or assumptions upon which a belief is based. This becomes important, for example, when we interact with those who allege that only the scientist is completely neutral. Some common assumptions are: a personal God exists; man evolved from inorganic material; man is essentially good; reality is material.

As we dialogue with people who have opposing worldviews, an understanding of these common components can help us listen more patiently, and they can guide us to make our case more wisely.

**Six Worldview Questions**

Have you ever been frustrated with finding ways to stir the thinking of a non-Christian friend? We are confident the following questions will be of help. And we are also confident they will stir your thinking about the subject of worldviews.

We will answer these questions with various non-Christian responses. Christian responses will be discussed later in this article.

First, Why is there something rather than nothing? Some may actually say something came from nothing. Others may state that something is here because of impersonal spirit or energy. And many believe matter is eternal.

Second, How do you explain human nature? Frequently people will say we are born as blank slates, neither good nor evil. Another popular response is that we are born good, but society causes us to behave otherwise.

Third, What happens to a person at death? Many will say that a person's death is just the disorganization of

matter. Increasingly people in our culture are saying that death brings reincarnation or realization of oneness.

Fourth, How do you determine what is right and wrong? Often we hear it said that ethics are relative or situational. Others assert that we have no free choice since we are entirely determined. Some simply derive "oughts" from what "is." And of course history has shown us the tragic results of a "might makes right" answer.

Fifth, How do you know that you know? Some say that the mind is the center of our source of knowledge. Things are only known deductively. Others claim that knowledge is only found in the senses. We know only what is perceived.

Sixth, What is the meaning of history? One answer is that history is determined as part of a mechanistic universe. Another answer is that history is a linear stream of events linked by cause and effect but without purpose. Yet another answer is that history is meaningless because life is absurd.<sup>5</sup>

The alert Christian will quickly recognize that the preceding answers are contrary to his beliefs. There are definite, sometimes startling differences. Worldviews are in collision. Thus we should know at least something about the worldviews that are central to the conflict. And we should certainly be able to articulate a Christian worldview.

**Examples of Worldviews**

In his excellent book, *The Universe Next Door*, James Sire catalogs the most influential worldviews of the past and present. These are Christian Theism, Deism, Naturalism, Nihilism, Existentialism, Eastern Pantheism, and New Age or New Consciousness.<sup>6</sup>

Deism, a prominent worldview during the eighteenth century, has almost entirely left the scene. The Deist believes in God, but that God created and then abandoned the universe.

Nihilism, a more recent worldview,

is alive among many young people and some intellectuals. Nihilists see no value to reality; life is absurd.

Existentialism is prominent and can be seen frequently, even among unwitting Christians. The Existentialist, like the Nihilist, sees life as absurd, but sees man as totally free to make himself in the face of this absurdity.

Christian Theism, Naturalism, and New Age Pantheism are the most influential worldviews presently in the United States. Now we will survey each of them.

**Christian Theism**

Let's return to the six questions we asked earlier and briefly see how the Christian Theist might answer them.

Question: Why is there something rather than nothing? Answer: There is an infinite-personal God who has created the universe out of nothing.

Question: How do you explain human nature? Answer: Man was originally created good in God's image, but chose to sin and thus infected all of humanity with what is called a "sin nature." So man has been endowed with value by his creator, but his negative behavior is in league with his nature.

Question: What happens to a person at death? Answer: Death is either the gate to life with God or to eternal separation from Him. The destination is dependent upon the response we give to God's provision for our sinfulness.

Question: How do you determine what is right and wrong? Answer: The guidelines for conduct are revealed by God.

Question: How do you know that you know? Answer: Reason and experience can be legitimate teachers, but a transcendent source is necessary. We know some things only because we are told by God through the Bible.

Question: What is the meaning of history? Answer: History is a linear and meaningful sequence of events leading

to the fulfillment of God's purposes for man.

Christian Theism had a long history in Western culture. This does not mean that all individuals who have lived in Western culture have been Christians. It simply means that this worldview was dominant; it was the most influential. And this was true even among non-Christians. This is no longer valid. Western culture has experienced a transition to what is called Naturalism.

## Naturalism

Even though Naturalism in various forms is ancient, we will use the term to refer to a worldview that has had considerable influence in a relatively short time within Western culture. The seeds were planted in the seventeenth century and began to flower in the eighteenth. Most of us have been exposed to Naturalism through Marxism and what is called Secular Humanism.

What are the basic tenets of this worldview? First, God is irrelevant. This tenet helps us better understand the term Naturalism; it is in direct contrast to Christian Theism, which is based on supernaturalism. Second, progress and evolutionary change are inevitable. Third, man is autonomous, self-centered, and will save himself. Fourth, education is the guide to life; intelligence and freedom guarantee full human potential. Fifth, science is the ultimate provider both for knowledge and morals. These tenets have permeated our lives. They are apparent, for example, in the media, government, and education. We should be alert constantly to their influence.

After World War II "Postmodernism" began to replace the confidence of Naturalism. With it came the conclusion that truth, in any real sense, doesn't exist. This may be the next major worldview, or anti-worldview, that will infect the culture. It is presently the rage on many of our college campuses. In the meantime, though, the past few decades have brought us another ancient worldview dressed in Western clothing.

## New Age Pantheism

Various forms of Pantheism have been prominent in Eastern cultures for thousands of years. But it began to have an effect on our culture in the 1950s. There had been various attempts to introduce its teachings before then, but those attempts did not arouse the interest that was stirred in that decade. It is now most readily observed in what is called the New Age Movement.

What are the basic tenets of this worldview? First, all is one. There are no ultimate distinctions between humans, animals, or the rest of creation. Second, since all is one, all is god. All of life has a spark of divinity. Third, if all is one and all is god, then each of us is god. Fourth, humans must discover their own divinity by experiencing a change in consciousness. We suffer from a collective form of metaphysical amnesia. Fifth, humans travel through indefinite cycles of birth, death, and reincarnation in order to work off what is called "bad karma." Sixth, New Age disciples think in terms of gray, not black and white. Thus they believe that two conflicting statements can both be true.

On the popular level these tenets are presently asserted through various media, such as books, magazines, television, and movies. Perhaps the most visible teacher is Shirley MacLaine. But these beliefs are also found increasingly among intellectuals in fields such as medicine, psychology, sociology, and education.

## Conclusion

We have very briefly scanned the subject of worldviews. Let's return to a definition we affirmed in the beginning of this article: "A worldview provides a model of the world which guides its adherents in the world." If your model of the world includes an infinite-personal God, as in Christian Theism, that belief should provide guidance for your life. If your model rejects God, as in Naturalism, again such a belief serves as a guide. Or if your model asserts that you are god, as in New Age Pantheism,

yet again your life is being guided by such a conception. These examples should remind us that we are living in a culture that puts us in touch constantly with such ideas, and many more. They cannot all be true.

Thus some of us may be confronted with the need to think more deeply than we ever have before. Some of us may need to purge those things from our lives that are contrary to the worldview of Christian Theism. Some of us may need to better understand that our thoughts are to be unified with daily life. Some of us may need to better understand that the good life and hope and meaning are found only through God's answers. Some of us may need to let God's ideas guide our thoughts more completely. And some of us may need to let God's guidelines guide our actions more fully.

Paul's admonition to the believers in ancient Colossae couldn't be more contemporary or helpful in light of our discussion. He wrote:

"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (Col. 2:8).

## Notes

1. James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1988), 17.
2. W. Gary Phillips and William E. Brown, *Making Sense of Your World* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 29.
3. Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1984), 32.
4. Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 5.
5. Sire, 18.
6. Ibid.

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# MATTHEW 24 (Part 2)

by Rex Banks

## Introduction.

Jesus' disciples are greatly confused and alarmed by His lament over Jerusalem, (**Part 1**) and as they leave the city they draw His attention to the Temple, (Matt 24:1) remarking upon its massive stones and magnificent buildings (Mk 13:1; Lk 21:5). The city and the Temple represent the very heart of the Jewish political and religious system, and deep concern for their nation's future is at the forefront of the disciples' minds as they question Jesus about future events (Matt 24:3).

## The Disciples' Perplexity

**Matt 24:1** "And Jesus came out from the temple, and was going away when his disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him." **Mark 13:1** "As he was going out of the temple, one of his disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" **Lk 21:5a** "and while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said ..."

a. Likely the disciples' comments here reflect their concern and confusion at His words "Your house is being left to you desolate" (23:38 see **Part 1**). **R. C. Foster** observes:

"Thus when they called His attention to the immense stones and the beauty of adornment, there was much more in the comment of the apostles to Jesus than admiration and awe at grandeur of great buildings and exquisite architecture. Weighed down with sorrow over the fearful predictions of His imminent death, they

likewise were appalled at the dark background of the destruction of the holy city and the nation. Seeking further light upon this whole dreadful theme, they tactfully called his attention to the solidity and beauty of the temple buildings" (**The Life of Christ vol 3**)

b. The Temple was a magnificent structure. Josephus tells us that "in the eighteenth year of his reign, (Herod) ... undertook a very great work, that is to build of himself the temple of God, and make it larger in compass, and to raise it to a most magnificent altitude, as esteeming it to be the most glorious of all his actions..." (**Ant. Jews 15:11**). By about AD 27, some 46 years had been devoted to building the Temple (Jn 2:20) and it was completed just a few years before its destruction in 70 AD.

c. **Alfred Edersheim** gives us some idea of the Temple's resplendence:

"But alone, and isolated in its grandeur, stood the Temple Mount. Terrace upon terrace its courts rose, till, high above the city, within the enclosure of marble cloisters, cedar-roofed and richly ornamented, the Temple itself stood out a mass of snowy marble and of gold, glittering in the sunlight against the half-encircling green background of Olivet. In all his wanderings the Jew had not seen a city like his own Jerusalem. Not Antioch in Asia, not even imperial Rome herself, excelled it in architectural splendour. Nor has there been, either in ancient or modern times, a sacred building equal to the Temple, whether for situation or magnificence..." (**The Temple**).

d. Understandably Jesus' disciples are alarmed and perplexed at the Master's grim pronouncement, "Your house is being left to you desolate." The destruction of Jerusalem along with the Temple was simply unthinkable!

## Jesus' Dramatic Pronouncement

**Matt 24:2** "And He answered and said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down.'" (C.f. Mk 13:2; Lk 21:5b, 6)

a. We recall that Jesus had earlier used the words "these things" in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, (23:36) and now He uses these same words in responding to the disciples' question about the destruction of the Temple within the city. In these verses and elsewhere in this section (24:3, 8, 33, and 34) the words "these things" refer to matters involving the same event, namely *the destruction of Jerusalem*.

b. Jesus says, "not one stone here shall be left upon another," and we recall the words of **Josephus**:

"Now as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder, because there remained none to be the objects of their fury, (for they would not have spared any, had there remained any other work to be done,) Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as were of the greatest eminency... but *for all the rest of the wall, it was so thoroughly laid*



*even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited.* This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind” (**Wars 7.1.1**).

predicted the end of Jerusalem, (23:37-39) and the disciples, in consternation, have drawn His attention to the magnificent Temple within the city in order to elicit further information on the topic (24:1). Then He, in response, has spoken of the Temple’s complete destruction (24:2). Clearly their present question about “these things” (24:3) grows out of this discussion *about the city and the Temple*.

devastation to be visited upon Jerusalem in 70AD, but His response also suggests that the disciples are asking about more than simply the destruction of the Jewish system. This being the case, in my view it is a “reasonable assumption that in the disciples mind their question as to the temple’s destruction and the signs that will presage it are linked to the end of the age and Jesus’ return (cf. 16:27-28; 23:39; Luke 19:11-27) ...” (**D. A. Carson, Expositors vol 1** ). Evidently the disciples do not distinguish between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Certainly Jesus’ response seems to indicate that the disciples *mistakenly* associated the overthrow of the city and the Temple with the end of the world and the Lord’s final coming at the end of time. Many are convinced that

**Matt 24:3** “And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, (opposite the temple **Mk 13:1**) the disciples (Peter and James and John and Andrew **Mk 13:1**) came to Him privately, saying ‘Tell us when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age (world [**KJV**])?’”

c. Some students of scripture are convinced that the disciples ask *but one question* of Jesus, and that this question concerns *the destruction of Jerusalem, including the Temple, and the consequent termination of Jewish political and religious rule*. For example, Stanley **W. Paher** argues that “The structure of the sentence (in Matt 24:3) is Semitic parallelism, where, by altering the term, the second and third questions expand and explain the first one” (**Matthew 24: First Century Fulfillment or End-Time Expectation**). Thus, according to Paher, the questions, “what will be the sign of Your coming,” and “(what will be the sign of) the end of the age,” (NASV) are simply amplifications of the first question, namely “when will these things be ...?” All three questions concern the destruction of Jerusalem and nothing else. According to this view, the expression “end of the world” (KJV) is better translated “end of the age?” (NASV, NIV) and the disciples are asking about *the end of the Jewish age* “not a time thousands of years in the future” (ibid). It is argued by proponents of this view that Jesus’ response, *in its entirety*, concerns the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 AD. Jesus says nothing about His return at the end of time.

“Much of the confusion in interpreting the predictions of Jesus recorded in Matthew 24 and the parallel passages arises from the failure to see that the disciples asked and Jesus answered *two questions*: one, concerning the fall of Jerusalem; the other, concerning His second coming” (**R. C. Foster, The Life of Christ vol 3**).

a. The Mount of Olives, so called from the olive trees with which its sides are clothed, “is a mountain ridge on the east of Jerusalem (1Kgs11:7; Ezek11:23; Zech14:4), from which it is separated by the valley of Kidron... It is about 200 feet above the level of the city” (**Easton Bible Dictionary**). The road from Jerusalem to Bethany ran over this mount. Likely Jesus is at the middle part of the mount, because this is opposite the Temple. From this vantage point Jesus and the disciples would have had a magnificent view of the Temple with its golden roof, white marble stones and terraced courts.

Many good exegetes share this view. **Roy Deaver** comments:

b. **Matthew** records that the disciples asked: ‘Tell us when will *these things* be, and what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age (world [**KJV**])?’ **Mark** has: “Tell us, when will *these things* be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?” **Luke** has: “Teacher, when therefore will *these things* be? And what will be the sign when these things are going to take place?” Clearly by “these things” the disciples have reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. After all, Jesus has just

d. In my view, while this approach to Matthew 24 adequately explains *much* of Jesus’ response to the disciples’ questions, it does not provide the best explanation for *all* that He says in Matt 24: 4ff. Yes, Jesus certainly warns about the

“In thinking about the Lord’s final coming, the end of the world, and the destruction of the beautiful temple buildings the disciples really asked *two questions*: (1) *When* shall these things be? and (2) *what* shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass? In answering the disciples, the Lord discusses *two* comings and *two* ends of *two* worlds. He discusses His coming in judgment upon Jerusalem (to mark the end of Judaism and the Jewish nation); and He discusses His coming for final judgment (to mark the end of

the world)” (**Premillennialism, True or False**).

In similar vein William Hendriksen says:

“The very form of the question is cast -- the juxtaposition of the clauses -- seems to indicate that, as these men interpret the Master’s words, Jerusalem’s fall, particularly the destruction of the temple, would mean the end of the world. In this opinion they were partly mistaken, as Jesus is about to show. A lengthy period of time would intervene between Jerusalem’s fall and the culmination of the age, the second coming.” (**The Gospel of Matthew**).

e. Elsewhere Matthew uses the expression “the end of the age” to speak of the final judgment and the consummation of all things, (13:39, 40, 49; 28:20) and it is likely correct that the disciples assume that the destruction of the temple, and the end of the world, would occur at the same time. Accordingly in His response to the disciples’ question, the Lord makes it clear that these are two separate events, and His explanation consists of two main parts:

- **24:4-34.** In these verses Jesus discusses the **Roman destruction of Jerusalem**. This discussion ends with the words “Truly I say to you this generation will not pass away until all these things take place” (v 34). Some who are listening to Jesus’ words will live to see the effective end of the Jewish system in 70 AD.
- **24:35-51.** With the words “Heaven and earth will pass

away, but My words shall not pass away” (v 35) Jesus begins to discuss the **Lord’s second coming at the end of time**, an event which (unlike the destruction of Jerusalem) will not be preceded by signs.

Conclusion: In **Part 3** I will argue that in *the first part of His discourse* (vv 4-34) Jesus discusses certain *signs* associated with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and that in doing so He uses language which is virtually identical to that found in various Old Testament oracles of judgment. I will also argue (contra Paher and others) that in Matt 24:35 Jesus begins to explain that the *destruction of the city* and the *Lord’s return at the end of time* are separate events, and that unlike the former, the latter will occur suddenly and without warning of any kind.

## **PURITY IN A SENSUAL WORLD**

by Gary C. Hampton

Some things have been removed from polite conversation in an apparent effort to get rid of any sense of guilt. It is deemed inappropriate to label anything accept intolerance as sin. Killing an unborn child, for example, is described as a woman’s right to choose. Uncontrolled lust, which used to be known as fornication or adultery, is now labeled as love. The sin of homosexuality has become an alternative lifestyle. Millions of pages of graphic images are posted on the internet and defended as “freedom of speech.” In the process, God’s people struggle to remain pure.

By the nature of the case, some of the materials covered in this lecture are, at best, uncomfortable to discuss. The images and language

involved in the despoiling of our culture and God’s people are raw in the most sinful sense. However, we cannot afford to avoid the discussion any longer because the problems under discussion are a growing menace to the Lord’s church.

### **Internet Pornography**

For years, it was adolescent and adult men who were drawn to pornography, mostly in the form of dirty magazines. Now, children and women have likewise been enticed. Ninety percent of children aged eight to sixteen have viewed pornography on line, most while doing homework, according to statistics for 2006. The average age for a first exposure to pornography

**Beautiful, beautiful, Jesus  
is beautiful! And Jesus  
makes beautiful things of  
my life...**

**Carefully, watching me,  
causing my eyes to see,  
that Jesus makes beautiful  
things of my life.**

**“No eye has seen, no ear  
has heard, no mind has  
conceived the things which  
God has prepared for those  
that love Him”**

**—1Cor 2:9**

on the internet is eleven. It is little wonder since there are some 420 million pages of pornography appearing on 4.2 million websites.<sup>1</sup> There are numbers of people who have become addicted to internet porn. "One out of every six women, including Christians, struggles with an addiction to pornography. That's 17 percent of the population, which, according to a survey by research organization Zogby International, is the number of women who truly believe they can find sexual fulfillment on the Internet."<sup>2</sup>

According to Marnie Ferree, a licensed marriage and family therapist and clinician...the draw of pornography can be as complicated as childhood sexual abuse—or as simple as unresolved loneliness."<sup>3</sup> The combination of accessibility, anonymity and affordability "makes becoming an addict incredibly easy," as is reflected in research by the Sexual Recovery Institute of Los Angeles.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, "'More than 80 percent of women who have this addiction take it offline,' says Marnie Ferree. 'Women, far more than men, are likely to act out their behaviors in real life, such as having multiple partners, casual sex, or affairs.'"<sup>5</sup>

## Television

We have come a long way from the almost universal shock brought on by the use of one curse word in the movie *Gone With the Wind*. Now, television pumps garbage into millions of living rooms nightly over the major networks during times supposedly reserved for the family to watch together. Yet, those displays pale in comparison to the fare being offered by cable networks like MTV. The average Christian adult may only have brushed by such channels in a fit of channel surfing, but for our teens it is quite different. Brent

Bozell reported on Townhall.com February 6, 2005, "MTV claims that 73 percent of boys and 78 percent of girls aged twelve to nineteen watch their programming."<sup>6</sup> This amazing statistic has led some to call this the MTV Generation.

During the annual MTV Video Music Awards show of August 28, 2003, Madonna performed what was then her newest song, "Hollywood." During the performance, she kissed both Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, two former Mouseketeers. "The choice of Madonna's 'Hollywood' for the MTV lesbian tonguing couldn't have been more appropriate. Here's the song's key lyric: 'I'm bored with the concept of right and wrong.'"<sup>7</sup>

"But the oversexed worldview of MTV doesn't stop at that channel—the same people control MTV 2, Comedy Central, TV Land, VH1, Spike TV, and Nickelodeon, among others."<sup>8</sup> Sitcoms on the major networks have joined in emphasizing an anything goes morality. Allusions to sexual activity are frequent, with no reference being made to consequences. Those who would oppose such activities are depicted as prudish. Those characters who might promote Biblical values are made to appear out of touch and dangerous to society's well-being. This is all the more frightening because of the large number of latch key children in the United States whose only babysitter is the television.

## Music

It seems every generation adopts a new music style which the previous generation finds less than pleasant. So, adults might tend to shrug when their children listen to rap and hip-hop. However, the message within the music cannot be ignored without the potential for dire consequences. "The gangsta culture embodied by rappers

and their posses is not worthy of imitation or even exposure. It demeans women, degrades sex, and glorifies criminal behavior."<sup>9</sup> Yet, the Recording Industry Association of America reported hip-hop and R&B accounted for almost 25 percent of all sales in 2003, with hip-hop being the second biggest music genre.<sup>10</sup> "The rap constituency crosses racial lines as well: Soundscan, a sales-tracking company, estimated that 70 percent of rap music consumers are white kids from the suburbs."<sup>11</sup>

## Respect for God

While we could go on ad nauseam, it is clear the Lord's people must stress the need for purity, or holiness. Peter wrote, "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Pet. 1:15-16).<sup>12</sup> Purity begins with respect for God. Joseph was in a land far away from home, possibly feeling abandoned. Modern sages might have urged him to release his frustrations by accepting the advances of Mrs. Potiphar. Instead, this dedicated descendant of Abraham responded in a manner which all of us need to adopt as our own.

But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:8-9).

His response seems to be a living demonstration of Paul's instructions to the Corinthian church. "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but



he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:18).

Those called by the gospel (1 Thes. 2:13-14) must be constantly on guard against the open display of lust and passion which surrounds us. To Christians confronting similar circumstances, Paul wrote,

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit (1 Thes. 4:3-8).

Those who have been purified with the blood of Jesus need to remember they no longer belong to themselves. Paul explained to the Corinthians, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (6:19-20). Similarly, the apostle to the Gentiles told the Ephesian elders, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

## Respect for Self

Respect for God within an individual's life leads to a respect for self. If one respects himself, he will desire to remain pure. Failure to do so in sexual matters can result in contracting various sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Mental health is also impacted by impure acts which can lead to mental anguish, guilt, anxiety and depression. Obviously, maintaining purity is important to one's spiritual well being.

During the time when Job was defending his integrity, he told his friends, "My lips will not speak wickedness, Nor my tongue utter deceit. Far be it from me That I should say you are right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me, My righteousness I hold fast and will not let go; My heart shall not reproach me as long as I live" (Job 27:4-6). Everyone who would please God should readily echo his words. The wise man well said, "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches" (Prov. 22:1a).

## Respect for Others

Each must likewise remain pure out of respect for others, since so many things which leave us impure require the willing or unwilling participation of others. The actions of individuals within a nation can exalt or bring reproach to the nation. As the wise man said, "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Additionally, a Christian's life should serve as an example to those with whom he comes in contact. Jesus described his followers as salt and light, emphasizing the need for his disciples to have lives filled with good deeds so men will glorify the Father (Matt. 5:13-16).

When asked what the greatest

commandment was, Jesus answered, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40). Paul's words to the church in Rome effectively serve as an "amen" to the Lord's words (13:8-10). There is, according to the apostle, only one debt the Christian should owe anyone and that is love. True love for God will also motivate one to love his neighbor. In fact, even loving one's enemies is proclaimed by the Lord to be a sign of his being a son of God (Matt. 5:43-45).

## Choose Godly Friends

It is much easier to remain pure if one chooses godly friends. Paul knew the importance of choosing the right companions. He warned, "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits'" (1 Cor. 15:33). A perfect example of the impact of friends who do not know or follow the Lord's will was found in the very church to which he wrote. The Corinthian brethren had come to doubt the very resurrection because of false teachers!

Carefully chosen activities to attend is a good way to help one find godly friends. Some wonder why they cannot find a godly man, or woman, when they spend all their time in bars and other similar places. The singer of Israel wrote, "I am a companion of all who fear You, And of those who keep Your precepts" (Psalm 119:63). In fact, purity is much easier to maintain if one avoids tempting situations. Israel also sang, "Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat

of the scornful" (Psa. 1:1).

## **Cultivate Good Communication**

Whether married or single, a Christian needs to cultivate good communication skills to have relationships which will help him maintain his purity. First, learn to listen. James told his readers, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (1:19-20). It is good to restate in your own words what you heard another say and ask them if you have understood their meaning. Of course, this means one cannot be thinking what he is going to say while the other person is talking.

Second, learn to think before speaking. "Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Prov. 29:20). Third, when dealing with matters of opinion, place a numeric value on statements of feeling. For instance, going out to eat at restaurant A might be a 7 with you, while eating at restaurant B is a 6. If the person you are with has A as a 3 and B as an 8, your decision is obvious. This leads to the fourth point concerning communications and relationships. Simply put, everyone has the right to disagree, but not to be disagreeable. Strong relationships are built when both parties are willing to yield.

## **Put Pure Things in Your Heart**

The best support for purity in life is purity in thought. After all, the wise man of old said, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. 'Eat and drink!' he says to you, But his heart is not with you" (Prov. 23:7). To the Pharisees who had accused him of

casting out demons by Beelzebub, Jesus said, "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt. 12:34). So, each must carefully watch what goes into his heart realizing life's critical issues flow from it (Prov. 4:23).

One who would keep his heart secure, then, must carefully monitor television programs and movies he watches. He must guard against viewing internet pornography, perhaps by placing the computer in a very open spot where anyone passing by could see what was on the screen. The songs one listens to should not promote spiritually corrupting ideas. The places he goes should help him develop in purity as well.

To avoid allowing one's mind to be conformed to the world's thinking, it must be constantly renewed (Rom. 12:2). The best source of renewal is Scripture which is able to make one wise to salvation issues and completely furnish one to every possible type of good work (2 Tim. 3:15-17). God's law should be carefully studied so one can be a workman approved by God (2 Tim. 2:15). Also, the God-breathed words of the Bible should be a constant source of delight upon which the man of God meditates continually (Psa. 1:2).

In truth, spending time with the Bible is the best possible way to concentrate one's thinking in the right direction and fulfill Paul's instruction to the Philippian church. "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

## **Seek Help When Needed**

Self-sufficiency is highly prized, almost idolized in twenty-first century United States of America. However, faithful students of the Bible know the value of good counsel. The wise man told his son, "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14). He also said, "Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established" (Prov. 15:22).

Christians must recognize the importance of taking life's most important challenges, especially the challenge to remain pure, to God in prayer. Paul saw such as the ultimate source of anxiety relief. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

## **Conclusion**

Many today seem to have the spirit which characterized man in the day of Noah, "every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Christians must guard against viewing and becoming addicted to internet pornography. They likewise must learn to turn the channel or turn off the television rather than be exposed to filthy language and actions. Each should listen only to music suited to promoting good thoughts consistent with the Father's will.

Disciples of Jesus need to make respect for God, self and others the cornerstone on which all decisions are made. Godly friends, good relationships and putting pure things into one's heart likewise will

help us be the holy people God desires. Above all, be sure to seek the Father's help through prayer, as well as the good counsel of trusted saints.

(Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Ropelato, Jerry. "Internet Pornography Statistics." Top TenReviews.

<http://internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/internet-pornography-statistics.html?>

<sup>2</sup> Richards, Ramona. "Dirty Little Secret," Today's Christian Woman, May 5, 2007.

[http://www.christianitytoday.com/tcw/article\\_print.html?id=44838.](http://www.christianitytoday.com/tcw/article_print.html?id=44838)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> As quoted by Ben Shapiro, Porn Generation. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2005, p. 115.

<sup>7</sup> Shapiro, p. 50.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 118.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 66.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 69.

<sup>12</sup> All Bible references are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

**You cannot fight against sensuality if you **freely allow it** to reign in your home...**



# CLOCK WATCHERS

by Frank Chesser

Brief sermons are in great demand. If one could package and sell twenty-minute sermons with "preheat and serve" instructions, he would become an instant Forbes celebrity. The "hurry up and get this over with" philosophy has found a home in the church.

"If a man cannot strike oil in twenty minutes, he is drilling with a dull bit" may provide a chuckle, but not from the spiritual mind intent on drinking deep from the well of living water. Sunday's high noon sounds the gun for the Indianapolis 500 to the local restaurants; beating the Baptists to the drumstick has become a sporting event.

One brother said, "When the sermon goes overtime, I turn it off." Rest assured he never said that about his favorite television program. One can easily discern Sunday's time of day by taking note of the activity in the pew. Proceeding past the "allotted time" is like scraping the top of an ant bed. Overtime is no man's land where preachers void of stout hearts fear to tread.

Some attempts to justify this disturbing lack of interest in God, worship and the gospel by pointing to man's diminutive attention span.

This is insane. The application of this point is always limited to small children or adults in a worship assembly.

The truth is, the capacity of one's concentration is dependent upon his sense of priority and interest. One lacking in spirituality can devote rapt attention for several hours to some entertainment medium, while

experiencing a severe shortage of mental vigilance under the sound of gospel preaching.

Missionaries tell of people who walk for miles to sit for hours on backless boards in thatched huts and scorching heat to feast on the treasures of the gospel. It is indeed tragic when one's interest in spiritual things can be exhausted during the course of a thirty-minute sermon.

**"Brief sermons are in great demand. If one could package and sell twenty-minute sermons with "preheat and serve" instructions, he would become an instant Forbes celebrity"**





# HOMOSEXUALITY: LIFESTYLE OR PERVERSION? (Part 1)

by Brad Harrub

## Introduction

The trumpets were left at home and the parades were canceled. The press releases and campaign signs were quietly forgotten. The news was big, but it did not contain what some had hoped for. On April 14, 2003, the International Human Genome Consortium announced the successful completion of the Human Genome Project—more than two years ahead of schedule. The press report read: **“The human genome is complete and the Human Genome Project is over”** (“Human Genome Report,” emp. added). Most of the major science journals reported on the progress in the field of genetics, but also speculated on how the information would now be used. The one piece of information that never materialized from the Human Genome Project was the identification of the so-called “Gay Gene.”

Almost since the beginning of human history, homosexuality has been practiced. Simply put, homosexuality is defined as sexual relations between like genders (i.e., two males or two females). It was Sigmund Freud who first postulated that parental relationships with a child ultimately determine the youngster’s sexual orientation. But this “nurturing” aspect has effectively given way to the “nature” side of the equation. Can some behaviors (i.e., alcoholism, homosexuality, schizophrenia) be explained by genetics? Are these and other behaviors influenced by nature or by nurture? Are they inborn or learned? Some individuals believed that the answer would be found hiding amidst the chromosomes analyzed in the Human Genome Project.

The human X and Y chromosomes (the two sex chromosomes) have been

completely sequenced. Thanks to work carried out by labs all across the globe, we know that the X chromosome contains 153 million base pairs, and possesses a total of 1168 genes (NCBI). The National Center for Biotechnology Information reports that the Y chromosome—which is much smaller—contains “only” 50 million base pairs, and is estimated to contain only 251 genes. Universities and colleges such as Baylor, Max Planck Institute, Sanger Institute, Washington University in St. Louis, and others spent countless hours and millions of research dollars analyzing these unique chromosomes. As the data have poured in, they allowed scientists to construct gene maps—using actual sequences from the Human Genome Project. **And yet, neither the map for the X nor the Y chromosome contains any “gay gene.”**

What is the truth regarding homosexuality? Too often, speculation, emotions, and politics play a major role in its assessment. The following is a scientific investigation of human homosexuality.

## Behavioral Genetics and Civil Rights

In an effort to affect public policy and gain acceptance, the assertion often is made that homosexuals deserve equal rights just as other minority groups—and should not be punished for, or forbidden from, expressing their homosexuality. The fight for the acceptance of homosexuality often is compared to “civil rights” movements of racial minorities. The argument goes like this: “Just as they cannot help being black, female, or Asian, I cannot help being homosexual. We were all born this way, and as such should be treated

equally.” However, this argument fails to comprehend the true “civil rights” movements. The law already protects the civil rights of **everyone**—black, white, male, female, homosexual, or heterosexual. Homosexuals enjoy the same civil rights everyone else does. **The contention arises when specific laws deprive all citizens of certain behaviors (e.g., sodomy, etc.).** We should keep in mind that these laws are the same for all members of society. Because of certain deprivations, homosexuals feel as though “equal” rights have been taken away (i.e., marriage, tax breaks, etc.).

Skin color and other genetic traits, can be traced through inheritance patterns and simple Mendelian genetics. Homosexuals are identified not by a trait or a gene, but rather by their actions. Without the action, they would be indistinguishable from all other people. It is only when they alter their behavior that they become a “discrete” group. If we were to assume momentarily that homosexuality was genetic, then the most one could conclude is that those individuals were not morally responsible for being homosexual. However, that does not mean that they are not morally responsible for **homosexual actions!** Merely having the gene would not **force** one to carry out the behavior. For instance, if scientists were to prove that there was a behavioral “rape” gene, we might not blame the individual for possessing this gene, but we certainly would not allow him/her to act upon his rape disposition. [Also keep in mind that we would not introduce into public schools a curriculum supporting rape, using the argument that, statistically, some of the students would possess the “rapist” gene.]

Neil Risch and his colleagues admitted: “There is little disagreement that male homosexual orientation is not a Mendelian trait. In fact, a priori, one would expect the role of a major gene in male homosexual orientation to be limited because of the strong selective pressures against such a gene. It is unlikely that a major gene underlying such a common trait could persist over time without an extraordinary counterbalancing mechanism” (2064). Evan S. Balaban, a neurobiologist at the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego, noted that the “search for the biological underpinnings of complex human traits has a sorry history of late. In recent years, researchers and the media have proclaimed the ‘discovery’ of genes linked to alcoholism and mental illness as well as to homosexuality. None of the claims... have been confirmed” (as qtd. in Horgan 26). Charles Mann agreed, stating: “Time and time again, scientists have claimed that particular genes or chromosomal regions are associated with behavioral traits, only to withdraw their findings when they were not replicated” (1687). It appears that the gay gene will be added to this category of unreplicated claims.

Tony Marco, in his book, *Special Class Protection for Gays: A Question of Behavior and Consequences*, noted three criteria that the Supreme Court established in identifying a group that is an oppressed minority:

There must be a history of discrimination evidenced by lack of ability to obtain economic mean income, adequate education, or cultural opportunity. Friedeman observed that this certainly does not apply to homosexuals, who have an average annual income of \$55,430—over \$20,000 more than the general population.

Protected classes should exhibit obvious, immutable, or distinguishing characteristics, like race, color, gender,

etc., that define them as a discrete group. It is clear that this does not apply to the homosexual community.

Protected classes should clearly demonstrate political powerlessness. Again, it should be clear from the impact the homosexual agenda is having on Americans, that the homosexual community is far from politically powerless (Howe 14).

The central thesis revolves around homosexual **actions** that society has deemed immoral and illegal in many instances. Since no study has firmly established an underlying genetic cause for homosexuality, the arguments declaring “equal rights” are baseless and illogical.

## Real Statistics

Anyone who has tuned into prime time television within the past few years has observed an increasing trend of shows featuring characters who are homosexual—and proud of it. It seems as though modern sitcoms require “token” homosexuals in order to be politically correct. The perception is that these individuals share the same apartment buildings, offices, clubs, etc., with heterosexual people, and that we need to realize just how prevalent homosexuality is. So, exactly what fraction of the population do homosexuals actually represent?

The famous Kinsey Institute report often is cited as evidence that 10% of the population is homosexual. In his book, *Is It a Choice?: Answers to 300 of the Most Frequently Asked Questions About Gays and Lesbians*, Eric Marcus used the Kinsey studies to demonstrate that one in ten people is homosexual. In truth, Kinsey never reported figures that high. The Kinsey Report clearly stated that: “Only about **4 percent** of the men [evaluated] were exclusively homosexual throughout their entire lives.... Only 2 or 3 percent of these

women were exclusively homosexual their entire lives” (Reinisch and Beasley 140). However, there is good reason to believe that the real percentage is not even this high.

While no one has carried out a door-to-door census, we do have a fairly accurate estimate. Most interestingly, these statistics came to light in a “friend of the court” (*amicus curiae*) brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court on March 26, 2003, in the Lawrence vs. Texas case (commonly known as the Texas sodomy case). On page 16 of this legal brief, footnote 42 revealed that **31 homosexual and pro-homosexual groups admitted** the following: “The most widely accepted study of sexual practices in the United States is the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS). The NHSLS found that 2.8% of the male, and 1.4% of the female population identify themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual” (“Lawrence et al. v. Texas”). The study also found that only 0.9% of men and 0.4% of women reported having only same-sex partners since age 18—a figure that would represent a total of only 1.4 million Americans as homosexual (with the current census reporting roughly 292 million individuals living in America). The resulting accurate figures demonstrate that significantly less than one percent of the American population claims to be homosexual. The results from the NHSLS are similar to a survey conducted by the Minnesota Adolescent Health Survey (1986) of public students. The survey showed that only 0.6% of the boys and 0.2% of the girls identified themselves as “mostly or 100% homosexual.”

The 2000 census sheds even more light on the subject. The overall statistics from the 2000 Census Bureau revealed:

- The total population of the United States is 285,230,516.
- The total number of households



in the U.S. is 106,741,426.

- The total number of unmarried same-sex households is 601,209.

Thus, out of a population of 106,741,426 households, homosexuals represent 0.42% of those households.

**That is less than one half of one percent!**

But since most of us are not mathematicians, we would like to present this point in a way that most people will be able to better comprehend. If we were to start a new television sitcom, and wanted to accurately portray homosexual ratios in society, we would need 199 heterosexual actors before we finally introduced the first homosexual actor. And yet modern television casts of three or four often include one or more homosexual actors. The statistics from the 2000 census are not figures grabbed from the air and placed on a political sign or Web site to promote a particular agenda. These were census data that were carefully collected from the **entire** United States population, contrary to the limited scope of studies designed to show a genetic cause for homosexuality.

### Is Homosexuality Genetic?

It is one of the most explosive topics in society today. The social and political ramifications affect the very roots of this country. But is the country being told the truth concerning homosexuality? Is there really a genetic

basis for homosexuality? Having completed the Human Genome Project in 2003, have researchers identified a “gay gene,” or does the research point in a different direction?

Former democratic presidential candidate and Vermont Governor Howard Dean signed a bill legalizing civil unions for homosexuals in Vermont. In defending his actions, he commented: “The overwhelming evidence is that there is a very

significant, substantial genetic component to it. From a religious point of view, if God had thought homosexuality is a sin, he would not have created gay people” (as qtd. in VandeHei A-1). Dean is not alone in his thinking.

Most people are familiar with the idea that research has been performed that allegedly supports the existence of a gay gene. However, that idea has been a long

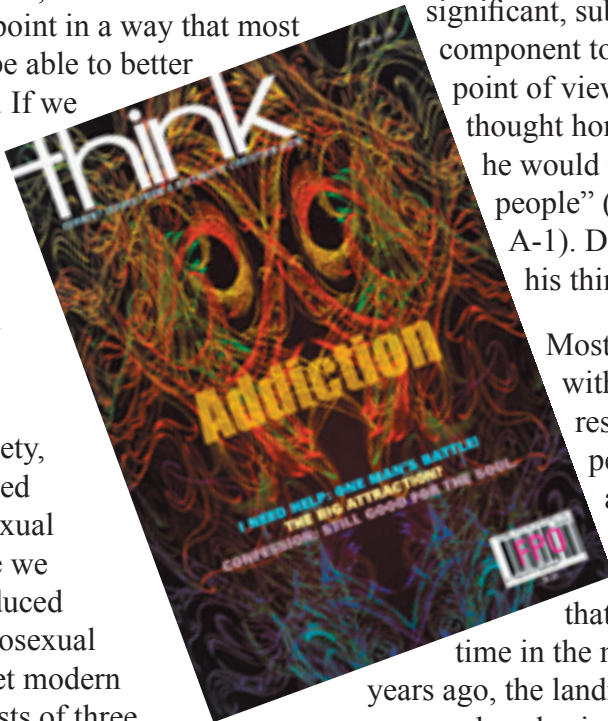
time in the making. Almost fifty years ago, the landmark Kinsey report was produced using the sexual histories of thousands of Americans. While that report consisted of a diverse sample, it was not a representative sample of the general population (Kinsey, et al., 1948, 1953). In 1994, Richard C. Friedman and Jennifer I. Downey published a review on homosexuality in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. In reviewing Kinsey’s work, they noted: “Kinsey reported that 8 percent of men and 4 percent of women were exclusively homosexual for a period of at least three years during adulthood. Four percent of men and 2 percent of women were exclusively homosexual after adolescence. Thirty-seven percent of men and 20 percent of women reported at least one homosexual experience that resulted in orgasm” (Friedman and Downey 923).

With this “statistical information” in hand, some sought to change the way homosexuality was viewed by both the public and the medical community. Prior to 1973, homosexuality appeared in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, the official reference book used by the American Psychiatric Association for diagnosing mental disorders in America and throughout much of the world. Homosexuality was considered a sickness that doctors routinely treated. In 1973, however, it was removed as a sexual disorder, based on the claim that it did not fulfill the “distress and social disability” criteria that were used to define a disorder. Today, there is no mention of homosexuality in the *DSM-IV* (aside from a section describing gender identity disorder), indicating that individuals with this condition are not suitable candidates for therapy (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Physicians treating patients for homosexuality—in efforts to bring about a change in sexual orientation—commonly are reported to ethics committees in efforts to have them cease and desist. Robert Spitzer lamented:

An increasing number of clinicians believe that such change rarely, if ever, occurs and that psychotherapy with this goal often is harmful by increasing self-loathing, lowered self-esteem, hopelessness, and depression. Several authors have argued that clinicians who attempt to help their clients change their homosexual orientation are violating professional ethical codes by providing a “treatment” that is ineffective, often harmful, and reinforces in their clients the false belief that homosexuality is a disorder and needs treatment (403).

Thus, the stage was set for the appearance of a “gay gene.”

*Look out for Part 2 of this scientific article by Dr. Brad Harrub in the April issue of The Summit Chronicle.*





# THE DA VINCI CODE AND THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST

by Eric Lyons

Among the many unsubstantiated accusations that author Dan Brown made in his bestselling novel *The Da Vinci Code* is one regarding the “unoriginality” of Christianity. Allegedly, “Nothing in Christianity is original” (Brown, 2003, p. 232). As “proof” of this statement, Brown’s fictional character, Sir Leigh Teabing, asserts:

“The pre-Christian God Mithras—called *the Son of God* and *the Light of the World*—was born on December 25, died, and was buried in a rock tomb, and then resurrected in three days. By the way, December 25 is also the birthday of Osiris, Adonis, and Dionysus. The newborn Krishna was presented with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Even Christianity’s weekly holy day was stolen from the pagans” (p. 232, italics in orig.).

Supposedly, the Gospel was nothing new 2,000 years ago when Jesus was born into the world. Stories that resemble “the Good News of Jesus” circulated centuries earlier. Pagans had previously worshipped and idolized god-like heroes who in some ways resembled Christ.

How can Christianity be “original” if stories that predate the time of Christ speak of gods who were born on December 25, presented with gold, frankincense, and myrrh, called the Son of God and Light of the World, and buried and raised only a few days after their deaths? As with so many things in *The Da Vinci Code*, this accusation is erroneous and terribly misleading. First of all, the Bible nowhere indicates that Jesus was born on December 25. There are no Old Testament prophecies about Him being born on this date, nor does any New Testament writer suggest it. On the contrary, Luke hints that Jesus was most likely born in a month other than December. In chapter two

of his gospel account, Luke wrote that Jesus was born when shepherds were “living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night” (2:8). It is highly unlikely that shepherds would have been “living out in the fields” with their sheep during the winter months. “Jews sent out their flocks into the mountainous and desert regions during the summer months, and took them up in the latter part of October or the first of November, when the cold weather commenced” (Barnes, 1997). Late December simply was not a time when flocks were in the fields at night. Thus, as Adam Clarke concluded, “On this very ground the nativity in December should be given up” (1996).

The early church did not celebrate “Christmas” on December 25, since the inspired apostles and prophets never commanded its observance as a religious holy day. “Christmas” was not observed until the fourth century A.D. (see “Christmas,” 1997, 3:283), and even then it was most likely adopted “to coincide with the pagan Roman festival marking the ‘birthday of the unconquered sun’” (“Christmas,” 3:283). In short, a December 25 “holy day” originated as a pagan feast, and true Christianity is not connected to this date in any way. Thus, the fact that history records stories of mythical gods being born on December 25 in no way diminishes the deity, superiority, or virgin birth of Christ.

Second, similarities between Christ and the stories of mythical hero “savior-gods” from the past are to be expected. Centuries **before** the time of Christ prophets foretold of the coming Savior of mankind Who would be “from everlasting” (Micah 5:2), yet enter the world miraculously by being born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). He would be of royal blood (Isaiah 9:6-7), reign over a kingdom (Psalm 110:1-2) that

will never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44), and wear names such as “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Finally, at His death He would be pierced (Zechariah 12:10), and yet His body would not see corruption (Psalm 16:10), i.e., He would be raised from the dead. Considering prophecies about the coming Messiah were being foretold since “the foundation of the world (i.e., since the fall of man—Genesis 3:15; cf. Luke 11:49-51) to both Jews **and Gentiles** (see Lyons, 2004), stories of various “savior-gods” who might sound similar to the true Messiah are to be expected. [NOTE: For further information, see Butt and Lyons, 2006, pp. 35-74.]

Third, although there are some parallels between the Gospel of Jesus and the “hero-god” stories that circulated centuries before Christ came to Earth, many of these professed similarities are untrue. For example, in hopes of casting doubt on the story of Jesus, Dan Brown asserted that, like Jesus, Krishna was presented with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Yet, according to Amy Welborn, “There is not a single story in actual Hindu mythology of Krishna being presented with gold, frankincense, and myrrh at his birth” (2004, p. 87). Brown may well have obtained this information regarding Krishna from Kersey Graves’ 1875 book *The World’s Sixteen Crucified Saviors*. Not surprising, neither Brown nor Graves provided any documentation for their comparisons. Furthermore, as Carl Olson and Sandra Miesel observed: “The stories of Krishna’s childhood recorded in the *Harivamsa Purana* (c. A.D. 300) and the *Bhagavata Purana* (c. A.D. 800-900) don’t mention gifts at all. Even if they did, these latter works were written after the first century, making

Graves' claim absurd" (2004). Finally, Christianity's weekly "holy day" was **not** "stolen" from pagans. Since there are only seven days in a week, there was a one in seven chance that Christians would assemble on someone's "holy day." If Jesus had been raised on Saturday, and Christians assembled for worship on the seventh day rather than the first day, the Jews would have cried foul play. Were early Christians to meet on Monday, they may have been accused of worshipping the moon. In truth, Christians have been meeting on the first day of the week to worship God for 2,000 years because God set aside this day for us to worship Him, including eating the memorial feast (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-26). Christians know nothing of **Sun**-worship, but much of **Son**-worship. As Tertullian wrote 1,800 years ago in his "Apology," Christians "devote Sun-day to rejoicing" for a "far different reason than Sun-worship" (XVI). To say that Christians "stole" their "holy day" from the pagans is an outright lie.

Sadly, Satan has used *The Da Vinci Code* and other popular writings and movies to deceive millions of people about the uniqueness of Christ and the originality of Christianity. Thankfully, however, even Satan cannot stop the power of the Gospel (Romans 1:16) from pricking the hearts of those who are open to the Truth (Matthew 13:1-23; cf. Acts 2:36-37; 16:14). May God help us all to distinguish between Truth and error, and obey that which God's Truth teaches.

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