

Ministers:
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley
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Sunday:
8:00 AM: WGCY
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:
7:00 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofChrist.com)

This Past Week:
Worship—44
Wednesday—15
Contribution—\$1125

For meditation:
Proverbs 26.23–26
There are two
kinds of enemies:
those who are
open and
avowed, and
those who are
secret and hypo-
critical. Pick out
four things Solo-
mon says about
clandestine ha-
tred.

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

The power of suggestion

This past week, I proofread a book called *Becoming Psychic*, which discussed ways to increase your psychic powers, use your mind to foresee the future, move objects around, heal disease, injuries, etc. At one point, the author frankly admitted that the power of suggestion might explain a lot of psychic phenomena. When scientific tests to determine the reality of psychic power have been run, it's often the case that participants who were told to expect a certain experience, experienced the very thing they were told to expect. If they were told they would make contact with a dead relative during a seance, many came out after the seance to report they had talked with their dearly departed Aunt Gertrude.

With the resurrection, the power of suggestion had no effect at all. By express statement (Matt. 16.21, 17.23, 20.19) and prophetic promise (Lk. 24.25–26), Christ told the apostles exactly what to expect. And yet, not a single apostle expected to see the Lord on the third day. So unbelieving were the Twelve regarding the resurrection, that when Mary Magdalene told them she had seen the Lord, they didn't believe her (Mk. 16.11). When other women reported they had seen the Lord, the apostles didn't believe them (Lk. 24.11). When the apostles actually saw Jesus, "they still did not believe for joy" (Lk. 24.41). When Thomas was told by the others the Lord was risen, he refused to believe (Jn. 20.25).

It wasn't the power of suggestion that caused the apostles to believe in the resurrection. They were forced to faith by the blunt trauma of un-get-overable facts.

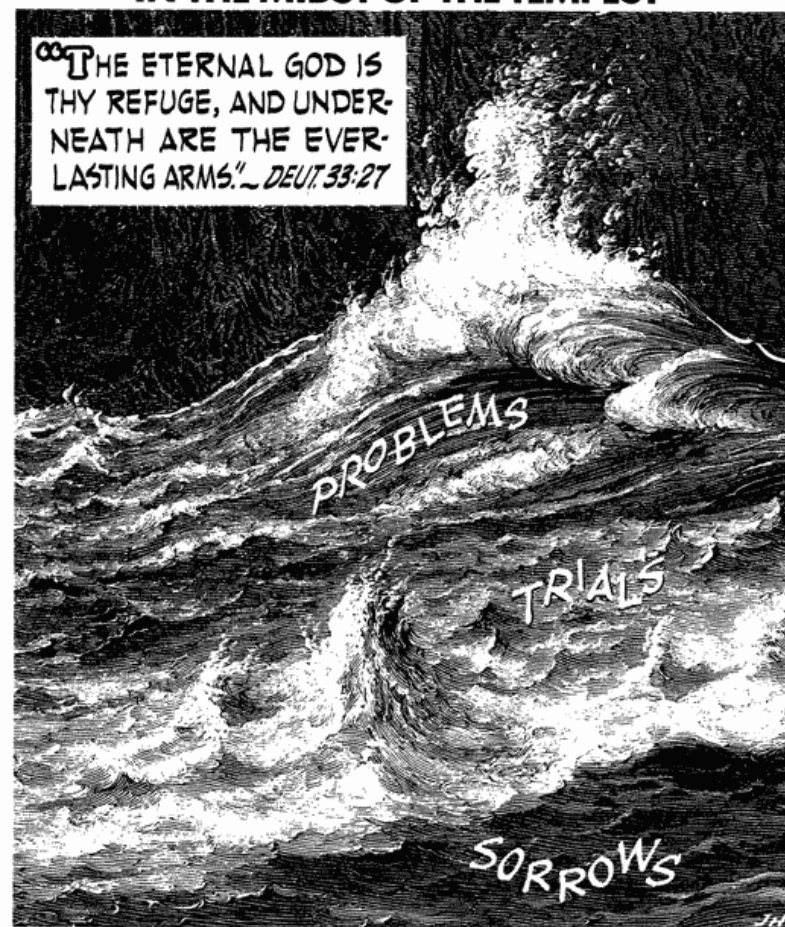
It doesn't take a psychic to see that.

kenny

Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

IN THE MIDST OF THE TEMPEST



Sermon: John 3.16

The golden text of the Bible

13 August 2023

Human opinion and God's will, 3

We attach a whole lot of value to our two cents. What I think is more important than what you think. And since I'm right, you're wrong if you don't think like me. And if you don't think like me on religious subjects, you're not only wrong, you're sinning.

Does any of this sound familiar? If so, Mark 7.1–13 needs to be carefully read. For here Christ discusses the three stages in the evolution of an opinion.

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When asked why His disciples ignored rabbinic teaching about washing their hands before eating, Christ quoted Isaiah 29.13. "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. *And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men*" (vv 6–7). The first stage in the evolution My understanding of a subject is so spot on that it is virtually the same as God's revealed word.

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Things don't stay at this first stage; they progress to the next stage wherein human opinion is elevated above God's word. "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men" (v 8). God's word is ditched; human opinion is promoted.

And it doesn't stop here.

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The invariable result of arrogant human opinion is that it destroys the very word of God it claims to protect. "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition" (v 9; NASB). Pharisaic tradition allowed them to avoid their responsibility to their parents, which was a blatant violation of the fifth commandment. They claimed to be honoring God at the very time they were dishonoring their parents. And the sincerity of the Pharisees didn't change anything; their sincerity only blinded them to the hypocrisy of throwing God's word out the window and keeping their own opinion.

It doesn't matter how well-intentioned one of our rules is; if it supplants God's word, no other consideration can make it right.

"And many such things you do" said Christ. When was the last time we took a hard look at the rules we've made and keep?

kenny

Impressions of Israel, 12

The famous British archaeologist Sir Flinders Petrie said he found evidence that in remote times, the area around Caesarea was a Riviera, where cities surrounded by palm trees hugged the shore of the sea. I can believe it. My memories of Caesarea are of brilliant sunshine, luxurious ruins, the bluest sea, and waves crashing along the seawall. As I noted last week, Herod was the master of flattery, and he spent twelve years building city and port to flatter Caesar Augustus. He sank massive stones in twenty fathoms of water and made a breakwater two hundred feet wide. The resultant deep-water harbor was magnificent, and Caesarea became the most up-to-date city in Judea, having a palace for himself and a hippodrome for the entertainment of the residents. "On the south quarter behind the port," wrote Josephus, "[Herod] built an amphitheatre capable of holding a vast number of men, and conveniently situated for a prospect to the sea." Not only is his theatre still standing, it is used to stage concerts. And the hippodrome could host a horse race anytime anyone wanted to have one.

After Herod died, his palace was turned into a government house, and Caesarea became the center of Roman political administration in Judea.

This is where the procurators, including Pilate, lived. This is where Herod Agrippa I died after ordering the death of James the Apostle (Acts 12). This is where Paul was held under house arrest for two years—a vacation from his missionary labors granted him by God in one of the most spectacular locations in all of Judah (Acts 23.33).

So many major things happened at Caesarea, take all the time you can to see it, walk it, and remember what happened there.

kenny



News about us

- The Millers are in Springfield today.
- When I last asked, Jerry is still waiting for Barnes to send him a time for an appointment.
- Remember to pray for Mark's mother, Betty.