The Tragic Consequences of Sin and Apostasy
Collateral Damage of Sin

One of the more tragic and yet overlooked aspects of failing to live up to our Christian profession is the collateral damage it causes. The personal sin of one almost always injures others, for “no man is an island” and thus for better or worse our actions affect others. There are several examples of this truth recorded on the pages of sacred history. Perhaps the most well-known is the case of King David relative to his treacherous murder of Uriah in connection with his adulterous affair with Bathsheba. The extent of the collateral damage was great but is often overlooked. Though David repented and was graci:ously redeemed (Ps. 32.3-4; 51.1-19; 2 Sam. 12.13), yet the injuries caused by his actions deeply affected others and continued to linger and carry a negative influence for generations. In his rebuke of David, the prophet Samuel said, “Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme” (2 Sam. 12.14).

David violated four of the Ten Commandments in his sinful scheme: “thou shalt not kill;” “thou shalt not steal;” “thou shalt not commit adultery;” “thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.” The awful consequences of David’s actions were 1) the child born of his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba died (2 Sam. 12.14-18); 2) the sword never departed from David’s house (v. 10 and see 13.1—18.33); 3) evil came from inside his own family (v. 11 see 15.1—18.33); 4) his wives were publicly shamed (v. 11 and see 16.21-23); and 5) the name of the Lord was blasphemed (12.14).

Reproaching the Name of the Lord

The most tragic aspect of failing God is that as His representatives in the world, we do great injury to His holy name. The Lord expelled His people from the Promised Land for their sins, but it was toward a good purpose—namely, to chasten and restore them (Ezek. 39.23). Still it gave occasion for sinful men to mock God and slander His Word: The ancients believed that if a people were forced from their land--by conquest, famine, disease, etc.—it was a sign that their God was weak and unable to protect and care for them (see 2 Kg, 18.32-35; 19.10-12; Is. 52.5; et al). The name of the Lord was thus reproached (Ezek. 36.22-32). On the other hand, when God delivers His people and enables them to defeat their enemies, His name is glorified (2 Chron. 32.14; Is. 10.10-11; et.al).

The apostle Paul accused the Jews of this same thing: of giving occasion to the Gentiles or heathen peoples to blaspheme the name of the Lord by their disobedience to the law of the Lord and their hypocrisy. For they boasted of their God and religious system over against the Gentiles, yet they broke the law of the Lord and contradicted their own testimony (Rom. 2.17-29). And thus, he concludes, “For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you…” (v. 24).

Shining as Lights in a Dark World

When we profess to be one thing and live another, it does great harm to the cause of Christ. It is therefore a great responsibility to profess Christ in the midst of a fallen world—to claim that Christ dwells in us. And it is still a greater responsibility to claim to be the “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3.15). For this sets us apart not only as individual Christians but as a special body of people over against run-of-the-mill sinning Christianity and an ever-multiplying number of rag-tag maverick religious organizations. We claim to be a “peculiar people” and so we should, for the Lord Himself has called and ordained us to be so (Ex. 19.5-8; 1 Pet. 2.9). But recall that Jesus said, “ye are the light of the world” and “A city set on a hill [that] cannot be hid” (Mt. 5.14). It is thus incumbent upon us to be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in [a dark] world” (Phil. 2.15; see also Lu. 11.33-36; 2 Pet. 1.19).
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The Voice of Zion is the official publication of Zion Assembly Church of God. The purpose of the paper is to provide a channel through which the inspiration of the Spirit can flow to and from the field; to evangelize the lost; to disciple believers; to feed and nourish the church in the Word of God; to enhance fellowship between the members and ministers throughout the world.

“. . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

—Tim. 3.15
Witnesses Through Humility and Forbearance

This message was delivered on September 5, 2019 during the Sixteenth Annual Assembly in Cleveland, TN.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses (Mk. 11.25-26).

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful (Col. 3.12-15).

These verses indicate that we are to witness to the world and to one another of Christ and the ultimate perfection of the church through living out the graces of the Gospel: by manifesting the qualities of “bowels of mercies,” “kindness,” “humbleness of mind,” “meekness,” “charity,” “peace,” “forgiveness,” and “longsuffering,” the latter of which is related to forbearing and forgiving one another. All of these go hand in hand, but our scope here is humility and forbearance. You’ve noticed that people who manifest and illustrate these traits are the best witnesses for God’s church. They tend to be the anchors and sails that keep the church on course, no matter what. They are the durable things: entreating and edifying—making the person who embodies them mature in his/her thinking and actions, particularly not easily offended, for love is not easily offended (1 Cor. 13.5).

I want to focus especially here on the word forbearance because it may not be as easily understood as humility, although they tend to work together. So what does it mean to forbear? There are basically two nuances of meaning for this word. First, according to the Merriam Webster dictionary, it means “to choose not to do or say something (that you otherwise would); to hold yourself back; to control yourself when provoked (holding your peace). A biblical example is Jer. 20.9, “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.” In other words, he couldn’t forbear any longer but had to speak up. There are times that we should speak up and act with the unction of the Lord, and there are times we need to forbear from saying or doing something that might injure a brother or sister, even if we have every right to do so. Offenses will come from time to time between church members or ministers. But just like in a marriage, the offended one can by God’s grace choose to count the other as beloved and show bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, and forgiveness.

This brings us to the second meaning of “to forbear” in our text passage in Col. 3.13. One way of deriving the fuller meaning of a word is to go back to the original Greek language or refer to another English translation. I often use a parallel English (KJV)/Spanish Bible. The verb choice here in the Spanish Reina Valera 1960 translation is revealing. “Forbearing one another” is rendered “soportandoos unos a otros,” from the verb soportar in the infinitive form. That makes it sound like it means to support one another, which would make sense, right? However, that’s not what it means in Spanish. Soportar is a “false cognate.” In other words, it means something different than what it sounds like it should mean. English speakers often get in trouble using false cognates in another language. For example, I wouldn’t want to say in Spanish, “Yo soporto a mi esposa” if what I really
mean is “I support my wife.” For that really signifies, “I put up with my wife.” Soportar literally means, “to put up with.” The Scripture is saying here, “putting up with one another, forgiving one another.” The Greek word is anechomai – “hold oneself up against; put up with”. Another New Testament example of this usage is Eph. 5.27, “We then that are strong ought to bear (put up with) the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

So, it’s one thing to say we support one another in the church, but it is another thing altogether to say we put up with one another in the church! This is huge in meaning to understand. It is a greater witness to illustrate that we are in this thing for the long haul, and that, as such, we are becoming the church that Christ will receive unto Himself (Eph. 5.27). This trait comes by the divine dynamic working in us by the Holy Ghost! It is plain to me that this whole idea of “putting up with one another” for the sake of ultimate perfection and witness was bred in us, even pre-conceived in Zion Assembly before we became a reality in 2004. You are probably saying now, “What do you mean?” How many years did many of us, prior to April 2004, put up with the infirmities, failures, and the backsliding and gradual corruption of our former fellowship? How many assemblies did we endure in which we were ostracized, demeaned, ignored, and in some cases demonized, simply because we were holding true to what we had been shown by the Lord through the years and were considered “settled doctrines”? How many years did we bear with, or put up with, a church organization losing its vision and conviction? Another group left twelve years earlier, but we stuck it out trying to work from within to correct the errors, until at last we realized we could not save that fellowship. The time came to start over but only after much longsuffering, forbearance, and humility.

So, we see now that we were already of a disposition for God to do something greater among us than He had in our former fellowship. This should be an encouragement to us, as well as to serve as a witness to others that this is God’s church! These traits should be evidenced on a personal level as well as corporately. When I say ‘personal,’ I mean within the context of the church.

I will give here a few Bible examples of what it looks like to put up with one another because we believe in the church. Consider Moses. “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Numb. 12.3). We know that Moses was capable of severity and sternness, even sentencing some to death on certain occasions. However, he is better remembered for his meekness. Perhaps the best example of this is Ex. 32.1-7, 9-12, 19-22, 25, 30-33). While Moses was in the mount receiving the Ten Commandments the children of Israel rebelled and made a golden calf to worship. They had made themselves naked ---became unrestrained, rampant, unbridled, wild, unchecked, riotous, wanton, frantic, lawless, and self-indulgent before the Lord. If anyone had a legitimate reason to give up on a rebellious, incorrigible people, it was Moses. God had already said, “Get out of my way; I will wax hot in wrath and consume them . . . I will make of thee [another] nation . . . What then was Moses’ response? He plead with the Lord, “Forgive their sin, and if not blot me out [of your book of life].”

What an example of forbearance! Moses “put up with” a lot of rebellion and faithlessness because he believed in the church, and that in turn has been a witness to all of God’s people through the ages. Why was the tabernacle in the wilderness called the “Tabernacle of witness” (Num. 17.7; 18.2)? How was it a witness? It was a marker, or witness, against the faithless wanderings of God’s people, of His church, during those forty years. That scene speaks volumes of the humility and forbearance of Moses and later of Joshua and Caleb! I love the story of Caleb as recorded in Josh. 14.6-13. He put up with the failures of God’s people for more than 40 years, and it finally all paid off.

I cannot help but to think of David. Although he was anointed king of Israel as a boy by Samuel, his actual ascension to the throne in Jerusalem was not automatic and for some years seemed unlikely. Although he had
**Standing United Against Apostasy**

1 Tim. 4.1-2

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;”

Ricardo Valenzuela Chavez
National Overseer

Message delivered at the 2019 National Convention in Guatemala

**Introduction**

One factor that contributes to the decline of the church in these latter days is the general apostasy in the world. It is a subtle tragedy affecting also the life of the church. It is like a fog that slowly covers the earth, so also, many Christians are being covered by unbelief and indifference, and many are bluntly rejecting the truth that they once embraced. In his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul says, “having their conscience seared [cauterized] with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4.2).

**What is Apostasy?**

It means to abandon or break publicly from duly established doctrine and church [governing] authority. It is no exaggeration to say that what plunged the Early Church into apostasy in the third- and fourth century, is again threatening the church today. Many are denying, renouncing, and “departing from the faith” (1 Tim. 4.1; Heb. 3.12).

**Committed to the Truth**

I am convinced that only by uniting closer together than ever before will we be able to turn the tide of the present apostasy taking place among the common churches. We must be willing to stand and fight under the anointing of the Lord. Zion Assembly is firmly committed to the truth. Jude was the brother of Jesus and a great leader in the early church. In his New Testament epistle, he strongly urges us to contend earnestly for the true faith “once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

“The beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4).

The Greek word translated here “earnestly contend” is a verb that means “to agonize.” In this context it means to “struggle and fight fiercely and continuously.” Jude is not saying that we are going to have a constant struggle and fight against apostasy, but that true Christians will agonize until they overcome in the struggle in which they are immersed. We will rise victoriously against the ungodly men who enter the church covertly, to turn the grace of God and the purity of the Gospel into licentiousness. Just as smugglers sneak their goods in, so do these apostates attempt to smuggle into the church their leaven of false teachings and carnal ideas. The Bible commands us to avoid these disloyal and corrupt teachers. They are enemies of the truth! The apostle Paul speaks of these men in 2 Cor. 11.13-15, saying,

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

We must know that apostates not only twist the path of justice, but pervert truth. In 2 Peter 2.1-2, the apostle says,
“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”

Peter is telling us that these false men without fear or respect of God will covertly introduce “heresies” (false teachings) and seek to divide the brethren and destroy the unity of the church. Heresies by their very nature create dissensions seeking to replace well established truths with arbitrary opinions and a “lying spirit.” The apostle thus alerts us against these immoral and false teachers who endeavor to manipulate the people of God to achieve their wicked objectives. Today there is a proliferation of false teachers who are going about to deceive and conquer unsuspecting and naïve sheep.

Take account also of the words of the apostle Paul in Acts 20.28-30:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

Pastors, leaders, and members in general should be brave to sustain biblical truths and well-established standards of our faith. The church is committed to safeguarding the doctrine of Christ. We are all called to resist and fight against apostasy, and to strive together against sin and error.

Passivity is not an option for us. We are soldiers of truth. We must be prepared to fight! If someone wants to sit and be served and let others do their fighting, he should go to another church, for in Zion Assembly we are servants. There is no place for loafers in Zion Assembly. In Matthew 20.28, Jesus said, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” The early church and the first apostles were not looking for a comfortable moralism, nor a pleasant spirituality: they proclaimed the truth of the Gospel—a Gospel that has power to change lives!

**Let Us not Betray the Truth**

I want to define the word “treason” so that we have a clearer idea of betrayal, especially in the context of apostasy. Betrayal (treason) is the offense or crime committed by a person who does not keep his word or who does not keep fidelity or respect for life. In other words, it is the lack of loyalty to what one professes and of things to which he claims to be committed. In Zion Assembly we commit ourselves to certain standards—including doctrines, and a system of government and discipline: and we seal this commitment by a sacred covenant. The spirit and sacredness of our church covenant in Zion Assembly is no less than how the apostle Paul speaks of covenant in Gal. 3.15: “Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannuleth, or addeth thereto.” The apostle explains that a human covenant once ratified is inviolate—no court of man will invalidate it! Now brethren, this is even truer in the case of a divine covenant.

So, when a Christian betrays the truth of God, he becomes a traitor. A traitor is someone who betrays a friendship or a trust, and in the sense in which we are speaking here, he betrays the very trust of Lord and the church.

We have a clearer example of treason in the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. For 30 pieces of silver and a kiss, He sold out and betrayed his Master (Lu. 22.47-48). It is sad to say that many Christians and even some church members are victims of a spiritual cancer called apostasy—a cancer that is growing and spreading throughout the world. We all know that physical cancer is usually a devastating disease in human beings, and often diagnosed as incurable. In its advanced stages it is usually obnoxious and very painful. This is true likewise with the spiritual cancer of apostasy.

The church, “the body of Christ” must not allow itself to be contaminated and attacked by this deadly disease—the cancer of apostasy. In another sense, apostasy (“falling away”) is like a contagious and deadly virus. Beware! Let us not be fooled. In 2 Thess. 2.3, Paul says, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

Erroneous doctrines and false teachers will continue to increase and inevitably manifest themselves in these last days (2 Pet. 2. 1-22; 1 Jn. 2.18-20; 4.1-6; Jude 4-16). There will be multiplied heresies and church splits before the Rapture; no less so than there were in the first centuries leading up to the great apostasy in the year 325 B.C. under the influence and power of Constantine the Great, emperor of the Roman Empire—a calamity that ended in the marriage of Church and State at Council of Nicea [located in modern-day Turkey]. Subtly and gradually the church turned away from the Word of God and adopted the doctrines and traditions of men. Finally, the guiding light of the Holy Spirit and God-ordained leadership were set aside in favor of an unregenerate priesthood and doctrines and principles mixed with pagan tradition.

Oh, brethren, be not deceived! The Church of God must not imitate other organizations, nor mix our faith and
practices with the ways of the secular or religious world. We must not deviate from the precious truth that has been handed down to us. Do not be deceived: it is treason against the Lord and His church!

The church in these last days must have a clear understanding of the truth and be fully committed to it. This will require courage and conviction to stick to it! so much so that even if an angel were to bring in “another gospel,” we must reject him (Gal. 1.6-10)! Our teachings and our God-ordained government in the church are pillars of the truth (1 Tim. 3.15). We must not depart from them. Our all-powerful, all-wise Lord Jesus is the Head of the church and the King of kings and Lord of lords. And if we our fully committed to Him with our hearts and minds, He will always “keep [us] from falling” (Jude 17-25). We are further assured by our Lord in Mt. 16.18 that the “gates of hell shall not prevail” against the church. Amen.

Consequences for Apostates

Brethren the foundation has been laid by our Lord and the apostles (Acts 2.42; 1 Cor. 3.9-11; Eph. 2.20). As faithful ministers in Zion, we must not adulterate the truth nor deviate from it in the least; rather we must build according to the “original pattern” inspired by the Lord (Heb. 8.5). To deviate in any way will lead to further deviation and finally apostasy. We should be horrified at the prospect of apostasy! We must stand together as one man against any tendency to fall away from the faith. Together we must fight this modern scourge. Be not deceived, brethren, everything is uncovered before the eyes of the Lord, and there will be retribution for false teaching and misleading the people of God. The Lord sees all and knows all. In Rom. 1.21-22, 28, the apostle reminds us how apostasy worked in the early days of man and the judgment of God against it.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”

Notice that apostates are at first knowledgeable of the truth but then fall away from it and become false brothers and false preachers. What are the consequences and destiny for them? Undoubtedly eternal damnation. Again, the apostle says in Rom. 16.17-18,

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our
2019 National Convention
Guatemala

Congregational Singing

Annual Appointments

Praise and Worship
Nigeria

Bishop Yomi Adekunle is overseeing the construction of a new facility for a local church near Ibadan. The work in this up-and-coming nation is steadily progressing under the leadership and capable oversight of Brother Yomi.
The International Office was able to assist a family in Nepal in January whose house had burned to the ground. The fire had left the family without shelter and exposed to the elements high up in the Himalayan Mountains. National Overseer Pariyar met with the family to give aid.
Bishop Elijah Wafula reports that after several years of communication and interchanges with the Kenyan government, the church has finally succeeded in obtaining legal registration. In 2005 when the church in Kenya was first set in order, it had obtained a registration, but through fraud and sedition by a former administrator in the church, the registration was lost. The church was able to obtain the new registration by reactivating the registration of a defunct organization in the name of Zion Assembly Church of God. Many thanks to Bishop Wafula and Bishop Joannes Oboo for their persistence and faithfulness in this successful endeavor.

Haiti

The Mission Department purchased in January 2020 a much-needed vehicle for Bishop Saintaniel Hostelus, the overseer of Haiti. The work in this island nation is widespread throughout the country. The overseer has the care and general oversight of 226 churches and more than 33,000 members. The motorbike is much appreciated and much needed. It would be wonderful if the church could assist all our ministers—more than a thousand in over 40 countries who are faithfully laboring to reach the lost in struggling and underdeveloped countries around the world.

Kenya

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“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”

–I Cor. 15.58
Bishop Binoy just conducted a massive national convention for the churches in South India. More than 2,500 attended including many guest ministers and believers from far and near. His staff worked hard constructing facilities and raising huge tents for the meeting. It was a great endeavor. Brother Binoy is expecting to attend the School of Ministry Institute in May in Cleveland.

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Worth thinking about:

Flibbertigibbet
noun  flib-er-tee-JIB-ut

Dictionary definition: a silly flighty person; excessively talkative

The origin of this word reveals a nuance of meaning that is not carried over in its current usage. Flibbertigibbet derives from an old English word flepergebet meaning “gossip” or “chatterer.” Even the pronunciation alone seems to suggest chatter and nonsensical sounds—something not worth one’s attention. With the original connotation in mind, William Shakespeare used flibbertigibbet in his tragedy, King Lear, as the name of a devil.

The Bible condemns such a devilish habit as gossiping—spreading casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that may or may not be true, as well as talking incessantly about trivial matters. Even if uncomplimentary facts are true about a person, we should not be anxious to spread them. Scripture teaches us that “[a] talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter” (Prov. 11.13). Gossips and chatterers are seen in Scripture under different names with varying shades of meaning, but all are condemned: “talebearers,” “slanderers,” “whisperers” (sneaky gossips or backstabbers), “tattlers” (those who cause injury by loose talk), “busybodies” (meddlers), “froward men” (deceitful), etc. If you don’t know them by name, Prov. 6.18-19 identifies their traits:

- a heart that devises wicked imaginations
- feet that are swift in running to mischief
- a false witness that speaks lies
- he that sows discord

The Bible encourages unity among the brethren, truth, forbearance, trust, and respect, to name a few. Gossips and chatterboxes create division, suspicion, disrespect, and the list goes on. In the same chapter of Prov. 16, it is stated that God hates these specific sins. Love cannot abound in the body of Christ as such, and they greatly hinder, if not completely destroy the work of the Lord.

It is expected that disagreements and conflicts will arise among us, and even dislike of another’s actions, so it is with great care and love that we choose our words and modify our behavior if needed. Prov. 18.21 reminds us of a reality worth thinking about: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” Another reality worth reflection is taught in Mt. 12.34: “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

The next time you think about “venting” or “getting it off your chest,” take a moment to reflect on the wisdom of Scripture, as well as loving the erring individual. Peter knew that agapē love (divine love) will take you much farther than phileō love (brotherly love), for Christ had taught him firsthand. At a later time, Peter wrote about the power of divine love under the unction of the Holy Spirit: “And above all things have fervent charity [agapē love] among yourselves: for charity [agapē love] shall cover the multitude of sins” (I Pet. 4.8). And finally, John wrote, “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (John 4.7-8).
United Against Apostasy
Continued from p. 8

“Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

The worse thing about an apostate is that he becomes an enemy of God, for as he turns against the Lord, the Lord turns against him. God becomes his enemy, and he becomes the enemy of God. He fights and challenges God. But men who fight against God are fools, for it is a losing cause: no one has ever withstood the Lord and won the battle---not angel nor man. Satan and the fallen angels were cast out of heaven for fighting against God, and in the end, they will be cast into the lake of fire; and so will all apostates (Rev. 12.7-10; 20.10-15).

Let us then, brethren, unite more closely together than ever in Spirit and truth and stand firm against apostasy!

Welcome Home

Kris and Mindy Newberry reaffirmed their covenant at the Cleveland church on January 12, 2020. Pastor Anton Burnette administered the covenant to them.

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone one members one of another” (Rom. 12.5).

Witnesses Through Humility and Forbearance
Continued from p. 5

slain the lion and the bear; had taken down Goliath; had emboldened the armies of Israel; and continued to wage the Lord’s battles in guerrilla-type warfare, he was on the run for his life at the hand of King Saul, his predecessor, and later from his own son, Adonijah. During these extended periods he was deprived of his ordained place of honor on the throne in Jerusalem. He put up with some serious attempts from others to deny him the kingship of Israel and too also end his life. Through humility and forbearance, he eventually became Judah and Israel’s greatest king and a witness to the world of God’s great plan for His people.

The limited scope of time and space here prevents us from telling more elaborately of the many New Testament examples we have of forbearance in men such as Paul, Stephen, and our Lord Jesus Himself. Reminiscent of Moses’ plea, Paul even cried to God that he would be accursed from God (eternally lost) for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh (the Jews) if that could have indeed produced their salvation (Rom. 9. 2-3). In 2 Cor. 11.23-28 many things are mentioned that Paul had to put up with for the sake of the church and God’s plan of the ages. Likewise, Stephen pleaded to God in behalf of his kinsmen after the flesh, even as they were in the motion of stoning him to death, “lay it not to their charge.” He was a deacon. How wonderful it is to see deacons in the church epitomizing this quality.

I can look around this room (Assembly) today and see some stories right here that I have seen unfold over the last sixteen years! Jerry Nichols and Jerry Tingler have persevered in long suffering and forbearance with people in hopes of seeing God’s church rooted where they live in Kansas and Missouri. I see Marie and Robert Llaneza, along with Virginia Wilson who have prayed for fourteen years for Danny Wilson, Marie’s brother and former pastor, to return to the Lord and the church. (Danny was present and seeking the Lord during this Assembly.) I see Kim and Richard Merrill, and Peris Amara. These all have testimonies of forbearance and victory. I expect about every one of you here today have your own similar story of perseverance because of your love for the church. You are markers and witnesses to the church’s importance and prophetic destiny, past, present, and future. Some of you are actively forbearing some impossible situations, maybe even with your own family. God sees it all. You will reach the payoff if you faint not.
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