

Back to Bible Basics

Issue 21

"NEVERTHELESS, WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?"

Ian McPherson

National Israel thought that being a fleshly descendent of Abraham was sufficient to warrant them being heirs of the promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3). However Paul gave an allegory saying that Abraham had two sons, one by a bond woman and one by a free woman. The sons of the bond woman (Hagar), represented fleshly Israel who was in bondage to the law. The sons of the freewoman (Sarah) represented spiritual Israel. To prove his argument that the promises to Abraham were not for national Israel but for the faithful remnant, Paul appealed to Scripture. He said: *"Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman"* (Galatians 4:30). Every false doctrine can be refuted by putting it to the same test as Paul did. *"Nevertheless what saith the scripture?"* Below are some examples.

"It is not possible for all Christians to speak the same thing": Those who say that all Christians can come to a united understanding of Scripture are called "arrogant" *"Nevertheless what saith the scripture?"* *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Corinthians 1:10).

"Baptism is not necessary for salvation": Almost the entire religious community rejects the necessity of

baptism for salvation. *"Nevertheless what saith the scripture?"* *"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 3:21).

"God accepts instrumental music in worship": Many accuse the church of Christ as being legalistic because they do not play mechanical instruments in worship. *"Nevertheless what saith the scripture?"* The New Testament says nothing concerning the instrument music in worship. Therefore no Scripture can be given to support its use.

"Women can be church Leaders": Many are advocating that churches can have women leading in the assembly and having leadership roles in the church. *"Nevertheless what saith the scripture?"* *"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

"Two Homosexuals can marry": Modern advocates are saying that government has a right to redefine marriage laws to include same sex marriage. *"Nevertheless what saith the scripture?"* *"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."* (Matthew 19:4-6). *"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge"* (Hebrews 13:4).

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Many believe that men, governments and churches have a right to change modify and improve Scripture according to culture and social acceptance. *“Nevertheless what saith the scripture?” “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son”* (2 John 1:9).

DRUG USE

Brett Rutherford

I am frequently challenged by questions relating to drug use. Some of the people who ask me about their use sincerely want to know what the Bible teaches concerning the consumption of drugs. Others use the issue as a weapon against Christianity. They point out that the Bible does not specifically condemn recreational drugs. Some may actually be arguing that occasional drug use is okay because they have friends or family who are using.

It is true that the Bible does not condemn specific drugs. There is not a verse that includes the phrase “thou shalt not do cocaine.” You will not find a passage that specifically condemns the use of crack, heroine or ice. However, the Bible does forbid their use through principles that are laid forth throughout Scripture.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:6, Paul commanded all Christians to not *“...sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be SOBER.”* In verse eight the apostle wrote that *“... we who are of the day be SOBER, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.”* The Greek word that is translated as “sober” in these verses is “*nepho*.” According to Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, “*nepho*” *“signifies to be free from the influence of intoxicants.”* According to noted Greek scholar, Wesley J. Perschbacher, “*nepho*” means *“to be sober, not intoxicated.”* This command by Paul is repeated in II Timothy 4:5. Peter also used the word “*nepho*” in I Peter 1:13 to discourage Christians from taking any substance that would affect their judgment, and harm their bodies. These inspired commands by Paul and Peter are an obvious condemnation of the use of alcoholic beverages. Liquor and beer are well known intoxicants that affect our judgment and hurt our bodies. However, alcoholic drinks are not

the only drug condemned by Paul and Peter. Taking any drug for recreational purposes would be a violation of the apostle’s commands.

If it is wrong to take drugs that affect our judgment and harm our bodies, is it wrong to take powerful drugs that our doctor has prescribed? The answer to that question is “no”. Prescription drugs are given to counteract a serious condition. Although there may be harmful side effects to prescription drugs, they are given to fight a worse condition that may be affecting our body. Prescription drugs are not designed to harm the body, when implemented properly. They help the body recover from illness. That does not mean that one should not be careful when taking prescription medications. For example, certain pain killers are highly addictive, and can cause a patient to strongly desire these medications long after their condition has been treated. These drugs go from being helpful to being harmful to those who take them without medical guidance.

What about coffee and chocolate? Coffee contains the stimulant caffeine. Should Christians abstain from the consumption of coffee? I am not aware that coffee affects our ability to think clearly. If anything, coffee makes us more sober. Our judgment may actually be heightened by a sip or two of java. Drugs like cocaine, heroin and alcohol can cause car accidents, encourage violent acts, and lead to general criminal activity. Caffeine in coffee has never been the cause of a car accident, violent acts or other criminal activity. I am also not aware that coffee will cause lasting damage to the body. Alcohol, cocaine, crack, ice etc. will damage the body even in the smallest amounts. Remember our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and they need to be treated with the respect that this demands.

Why I Believe in the God of the Bible

by Brett Rutherford

This 13 chapter book provides evidence from physics, biology, astronomy, history and archaeology – as well as from the Bible itself – to prove the God of the Bible exists.

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