

Trends

Sad statistics concerning children and divorce:

Half of all children will witness the breakup of their parent's marriage; half of these will witness the breakup of their parent's second marriage.

Among the millions of children witnessing the breakup of their parent's marriage; one of every 10 will also live through three or more parental marriage breakups.

—via *Marriage Success Secrets*

Malachi 2:16: "For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence."

Sentence Sermons

"Divorce is just the most awful thing in the world."

—John Denver

Matthew 19:9: "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

News & Notes

Please pray for those mentioned in the announcements after services and others listed on the bulletin board in the foyer of the church building.

Please consider donating funds to Zach & Taya Martin. Zach is a medical student and he and his wife Taya are planning to assist Ron Halbrook on one of his preaching trips to the Philippines. The Martins are worthy of our support. You can contact Zach at: zcmartin30@gmail.com.

Please pray for one another! "comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Please pray for Ryan & Jennifer and the brethren of the Northern Michigan church of Christ. They are now meeting in their newly purchased building in Roscommon, Michigan.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets such a good example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

Words of Life is published by the **Westside Church of Christ** meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

Times of Service: Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You
have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68

Vice Is a Monster

Bill Reeves

"Vice is a monster of such frightful mien (aspect, appearance),
As to be hated needs but to be seen,
Yet seen too oft', familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace." - Alexander Pope

Having lived 92 years, I have seen many changes in our country, both in common practices and in legal pronouncements. Our laws have reflected our morals, and as our morals fell, so did legality for sin rise.

When I was a child I did not know of anyone who was divorced, and certainly not among my kinsmen. Virtually all of the divorced persons were Hollywood actors and actresses. Today there is hardly a family, in the Lord's church or out of it, that has not experienced divorce. What happened?

There were sodomy laws in all of the states, but they began to be less and less executed, and finally the homosexuals came "out of the closet." Now there are even homosexual churches of Christ. Homosexual marriage has been approved by our Supreme Court. Sodomy laws are gone!

With Mormon sympathy and so many millions of Muslims now living in our country whose religion promotes polygamy, we will likely see the next big advocacy to be the legalization of polygamy. Will bestiality follow?

Many will find it hard to believe that when I went to grammar school in Covington, KY I remember that each week I marched with my class to a neighboring church building and there had a Bible study, not of any particular denominational doctrine, but of lessons based on the 10 Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, or the Proverbs. I have to this day a certificate signed by the Covington School Board, attesting to my completion of that series of classes!

Times have changed. Our nation has changed!

As the poem by Pope well states the issue, as a nation we used to be frightened by the very appearance of vice, but in time we find ourselves embracing it!

Many think that the oft' used phrase, "separation of church and state" is found in our Constitution, but it is not! What it prohibits is the legal establishment of a

national church as was the case with the “mother” land, England, and its Anglican Church. Do you know that the Anglican Church, with its clergy and operational costs, is financed by the tax-payers of England, like it or not? It is the national church. The framers of our Constitution did not want anything like that and put it in our constitution! The framers were not against religion, and things religious, but against the establishment of a particular religion to represent the newly founded states. But, as Pope above states: we have gotten used to the face of liberalism, even atheism, and more and more anti-God and anti-Bible is embracing our schools and public life. We have gotten used to seeing God and His Word trampled underfoot. Even little children are heard saying: “Oh, my God.” That is taking God’s name in vain. Where did they learn that? We all know the answer.

As the apostle Paul told the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 8:7, many of them, by the passing of time, practices and culture, “were used to the idol.” Over time they had embraced idolatry and now as Christians they found it hard to resist, and their conscience by their idolatry was being defiled. As the morals of the nation decrease, we get more and more “used to” vice and immorality. Children with easy access to the iPhone and computers are viewing pornography, and so fornication is rampant in the land.

No one hears the word “fornication” on the news-programs of TV. Euphemistic expressions, designed to make the “monster” have less “frightful mien,” and so, less negative, speak of “meaningful relationships,” “recreational sex,” “your significant other,” “sexually active,” etc. It used to be called “shacking up” when people hated fornication, but Alexander Pope got it right! (“there arose another generation after them that knew not Jehovah” (Judg. 2:10; see verse 19)

Apostasies can sometimes, to some degree, be slowed down, but they hardly ever reverse themselves. There is no bright future for the morality of our nation, although for a short time, there be a resurgence of need for God. But no matter how low a nation may sink, the individual can always choose for himself his destiny. It is in his hand. God will judge us as individuals, not as nations. Joshua well stated it long ago: “choose you this day whom ye will serve,” whether the gods of the world or Jehovah (Josh. 24:15).

“How Could God Kill People?”

Jarrod Jacobs

After last week’s article about Ai, I had a dear friend ask me how God could kill thousands upon thousands. He said it was hard for him to believe that God would want this. I appreciate this question and respect him for asking it. When we examine the Scriptures, we see that God wants folks to examine, test, and ask questions like my friend did (Isa.

1:18; Matt. 11:29; Acts 17:11; Eph. 5:10; 1 Thess. 5:21; Rom. 12:2). Below is my answer to my friend’s question. I print it here in the hope that perhaps this answer might help others who have had the same question.

“How Could God Kill Thousands Upon Thousands in The Old Testament?”

It is hard to imagine God telling the Israelites to kill another nation, but I have to remember that this is part of a larger context. It is not God randomly saying He wants to kill one group or another for no reason.

God had been patient with these people for at least 400 years. Go back to Abraham and read this in Genesis 15:1-17 where God promises to give the land of Canaan to Abraham but says he cannot have it now “because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” When God saw that the people would no longer repent, then He took them out of the land. Therefore, when the Israelites came there under Joshua’s leadership to take the land of Canaan, it was a fulfillment of God’s promise, yes, but it was also as a punishment for the sins of the Amorites, Jebusites, Canaanites, etc.

We see a similar theme through the rest of the Old Testament. Even the Jews would be allowed to be killed at times and taken into captivity because of their sins before God. When they refused to repent, they would be handed over to another nation for a while until they repented. We see this described in Judges 2:11-23. Also, when God gave over the northern tribes of Israel to Assyria, or later, the southern tribes over to Babylon, it was because of their sins and their refusal to repent. (Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.)

God would overthrow Babylon later for similar reasons. God has a way of making folks face the consequences of their sins. This is true of individuals, and this is also true for entire nations of people. Read Daniel 4:31-32 about Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

Read Romans 1:21-32 and you’ll see a synopsis of God’s dealings with the Gentiles over the years as they continued to sin before God. Especially notice v. 28. These people were given over when they got to the point they didn’t like to retain God in their knowledge.

I believe these things recorded in the Bible are also for our learning (Rom. 15:4). We need to understand that God keeps His word and that He will not allow sin to go unpunished. We learn that one day if we are in sin and away from God, we will be lost in Hell. Individual people will be judged...when He judges and shows how they had sinned before Him for years and years and years.

“Come now, and let us reason together,” saith the LORD: ‘though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Isaiah 1:18

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“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16