

How Shall We Then Live. Part 2

(Heb. 3:1-3) Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; ² He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. ³ For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.

By the 15th century Europe, Asia, and Africa had come to be connected by an incredible network of trade routes across land and sea using horses, camels, and merchant ships.

One route, for example, was the Silk Road. This was a trade route stretched from Japan to China through the west a span of over 4000 miles.

... trade routes extended through the regions of India, Persia, the Middle East, Far East, Africa, and Europe.

Much like the internet today it made a large world seem smaller than it had ever seemed before ...

... These trade routes linked nations, cultures, ideas, and traditions that had never been connected before.

... and these traveler traders came home to Europe bringing, not just goods and supplies, but new ideas, concepts, philosophies, religious beliefs and ways of thinking.

There was this one man named Petrarch, he has been called “the first tourist’ because he traveled, just for the sake of seeing what he had not seen before.

In 1340 Petrarch climbed Mount Vetoux just to climb it ... that was something brand new.

During his travels he began to collect ancient Greek and Roman texts and in the process rediscovered letters that had been written by a man named Cicero ... written somewhere around 50 years before the time of Christ.

Petrarch considered the ideas of Cicero superior to the ideas present in Europe in the 14th century.

By the 14th century the Roman Catholic Church ruled as tyrant over all society.

- Kings were forced to kneel before Popes
- The church orchestrated crusades that sent thousands of Europeans to the Holy Lands, many who never came home.
- As 1/3 or all soil in Europe was owned by the church, they controlled the both the economy and food supply (feudalism)
- ... and in the same way the church controlled, art, science, literature and all the other parts of academia.

This is why Petrarch was able to teach and popularize the idea of a worldview that did not include God, or anything supernatural.

This worldview was called humanism.

... Many in the European world were discarding any belief of God or the supernatural and instead begin to believe that everything revolved around man.

This was called humanism ... this was the Renaissance.

Now think for a moment, many of the complaints and grievances against the Church were true and valid ...

... However, unlike those who embraced the Renaissance, the Reformers said, the problem is not God but rather that the church has turned away from God.

... and instead of abandoning God the Reformers said, “we need to return to the key/core essentials of the Christian faith.

We talked about this last week ... the 5 Solas

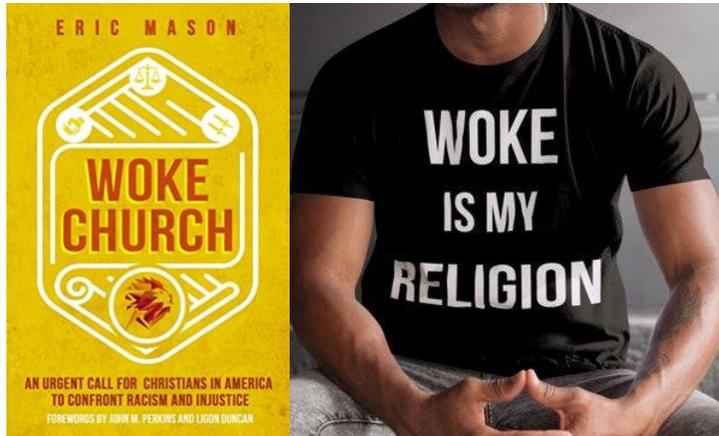
- Scripture Alone
- Christ Alone
- God’s Glory Alone
- Grace Alone and Faith Alone

Five Hundred years after the reformation society we find ourselves in another upheaval of society ...

... however instead of turning away from religion ... society long ago turned away from God ...

... in this societal upheaval we are seeing the rise of a new, man centered, godless religion.

Whether or not you are aware we are watching the rise of a new religion that has formulated itself under the umbrella of social justice.



Now, I believe we all agree that we want justice and equality for all ... but this new religion is about a lot more than that.

This “woke” group (inside and outside the church) is an intensely intolerant regressive movement that co-opted the terminology of social justice in order to advance its reactionary agenda. (It first came into prominence 5 or 6 years ago.

And this movement bears the marks of a fundamentalist religion

- This movement allows for no disagreement or opposition.
- It believes that it and it alone has the truth.
- This movement seeks out what it believes to be heresy to expose it and punish it (that’s what the cancel culture is all about)
- It legitimizes and promotes bullying in society, social media, and in Walmart.

Please allow me to use a humorous clip from the Seinfeld show to illustrate what I mean.

Under this new “societal religion” if someone refuses to say the correct words or happens to say incorrect words—at least what they judge to be correct or incorrect ... like the beast out of the

earth in Revelation 13, if someone doesn't bear their mark then there is an effort to break that person, get them to bow down, and if they won't ... destroy them.

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“People, very famous people, are writing to me every week to say that they now fear for their livelihoods. They are keeping their heads down, fearing what will happen if they dare to speak out against the dogmas of the time and the new totalitarians who promote them. Increasingly are being told what we are allowed to say, hear, see and know. Swarming over the internet, the Left-wing mob is waging a campaign to silence dissenting voices and get free-thinking people removed from their jobs. And they have succeeded.” –The London Mail on Sunday Douglas Murray

So how do we as Christians continue to live, love, and laugh in light of this new emerging judgmental, volatile religion?

I'm glad you asked.

If it were not for God, we would be hopeless, but we are not.

I believe the principles that guided the reformers in a world that was turning entirely away from religion to the deification of man ...

... these same principles will guide us as the world is turning to a religion that celebrates the deification of man.

Scripture Alone— stands as the exclusive foundation of for what we believe and how we live.

Christ Alone— expresses the biblical conviction that there is but “one mediator between God and men and that man is Christ Jesus.”

... Therefore, “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

... We have no need, for any other prophet

... We have no need for any other priest to mediate between us and God

... and we have no other king but Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Christ alone stands at the center of God's eternal purposes
- Christ alone stands as the singular object of our saving faith

God's Glory Alone – is the capstone for all for all of our belief and faith.

It is the thing that connects what we believe, how we live, how we treat one another ...

It is the litmus test...

If anything does not bring glory to God ... or takes glory away from God ... then it is in violation to God, it is not scriptural nor is it Christ centered.

... God will not give his glory to another.

Grace Alone & Faith Alone— Only God's grace can save, and the only way one can receive that grace is through faith.

1. Christ alone stands at the center of God's eternal purposes

consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession

The Bible was written over a period of roughly 2,000 years by 40 different authors from three continents, who wrote in three different languages.

... and yet despite the diversity of human authors the Bible speaks as one single unified voice and that voice is God revealing His purpose to humanity ...

... And what is God's purpose?

Our redemption!

... The triune God of the universe (who is infinite in wisdom and power) has chosen to bring everything in creation to a singular focus ...

... God has chosen to fulfill HIS purposes and plans of redemption in person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Everything the Father does centers on Jesus Christ to bring glory to the Son and as such to Himself.

In the 15th and 16th centuries when the world was turning away from God and all things Christian ...

... the reformers insisted that they were saved (not by the beauty of art, music, literature, or nature but by Christ alone!

... When the Roman Catholic church declared the only way to heaven was through the Pope ...

... that the RC was the guardian of grace and that in order for someone to get grace they had to “earn it” and “be righteous”

The reformers said, It is not our righteousness that saves us; it is Christ’s righteousness alone.

- (Titus 3:5). “He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy”
- We serve no human pope because Jesus alone is the King of kings (Revelation 19:16).
- We pray to no priest because Jesus alone is our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14).

You see, from beginning to end, the gospel uplifts Christ and Christ alone.

- He is the One who came from heaven to seek the lost (Luke 19:10).
- He is the One who has obeyed the Law perfectly.
- He is the One who was crucified, and He is the One who rose again.

As one reformer put it, “*We are the grateful recipients of His bounty. We are the beggars, and He is the Benefactor. We are the lepers, and He is the Healer. We are turmoil, and He is Peace. –Solus Christus.*”

Christ alone stands at the center of God's eternal purposes

The gospel is not a message of what we must do for God; the gospel is the good news of what God has done for us.

Salvation is not essentially about us; it is about Jesus ... might I say **Jesus in us the hope of glory.**

... not social justice, not food and shelter for everyone, not universal health care ...

... these are good and noble things but they are secondary!

We are not one because we agree on some political issue, or because we agree certain people should be helped and others hurt ...

... we are one because we are in Christ and Christ is in us.

The path to heaven does not lead through the activist rally or the protests and march for human rights ...

... The path to heaven leads through an empty cross, an empty tomb, and a RISEN SAVIOR!

... We do not bow our knees to one another or certain individuals—we only bow before the Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁵ *When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him.* ²⁶ *But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am just a man." (Acts 10:25-26)*

2. Christ alone stands as the singular object of our saving faith

For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses

The author of Hebrew is writing this because these Jewish believers are putting too much stock in Moses ...

... some were almost deifying Moses.

Hebrews says, “Moses is a good man who did good things and followed God ... but he’s not Jesus, he should not be worshipped.

... Jesus is the one who has received the glory.

The opening verses of Hebrews declares that the singular focus of God, God’s final declaration to humanity, and the singular object of our faith is Jesus!

“In the past God spoke . . . at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son . . . the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of God’s person.”

Not Moses, not a man, not humanity ... JESUS!

... There is nothing more dangerous than having too HIGH a view of humanity.

Here is why this is so important ...

Not only do people today NOT believe they need to be saved ... they do not believe that Jesus can do what the Bible says He does.

In fact, they believe the opposite... they believe they can do anything.

Adherents to this new religion of wokeness and social justice see themselves (or humanity at large) as god, and as god, it is humanity’s job to save the planet and save one another.

... and as god, their will is absolute and no matter what they do, or the lifestyle they choose ... DON’T you dare tell them “no” or “that’s wrong” or “that’s immoral.”

Here is what is not really understood...

When we, who are NOT God, attempt to be God, the results are always chaos, confusion, contradiction and devastation.

... the more humanity denies God

... and the more humanity attempts to be God ... even if they are trying to stop something bad ...

... man does not stop the bad (without God) in fact he does the opposite ... he provokes and stimulates the evil.

In his book “The Strange Death of Europe” Douglas Murray gives this example.

The Black Lives Matter movement that started in the United States in 2012, as a result of a number of killings by police of unarmed black men and eventually spread to Britain and other European countries.

Now, whatever the rights and wrongs of the BLM movement in America, almost none of the circumstances for such a movement exist in Britain.

Mr. Murray says that in 2016 he watched a BLM protest of several thousand people marching through the center of London giving black-power salutes and chanting,

... among other BLM themes, ‘Hands up, don’t shoot’.

All the while they were escorted along the route of their march by British police officers, who of course do not carry guns.

He writes, “Whatever was comedic about this evaporated weeks later when on one of the hottest nights of the year a large crowd chanting BLM slogans met in Hyde Park. By the end of the evening one police officer had been stabbed and four other officers injured. Elsewhere the protest spilled over into one of London’s busiest streets where a man was set upon by three men armed with a machete.”

He concludes, “This was the most serious violence that had occurred in the London for many years.”

This new “woke” religion has jettisoned Jesus Christ and enthroned themselves ... they have discarded God’s Word and made sacred their own views and opinions.

We must not allow ourselves to be deluded, distracted or discouraged.

The writer of Hebrews gives us a good word.

(Heb. 3:13)¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

The reformers, 500 years ago, were able to stay true and stand for the faith in a crumbling world ... first because their faith rested, not on themselves, but Christ ...

Because Christ was their heartbeat, The Word of God, The Scriptures that declared Christ, was their solid foundation ...

... but there was another element.

Because Christ was the object of their faith, those in Christ were in unity!

It's easier to stand when you don't have to stand alone.

Queen Mary ascended the throne of England in 1553. One of her first acts was to arrest Bishop Ridley, Bishop Latimer, and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

Ridley was asked if he believed the pope was heir to the authority of Peter as the foundation of the Church,

... he replied that the church was not built on any man but on the truth Peter confessed -- that Christ was the Son of God.

Ridley said he could not honor the pope in Rome since the papacy was seeking its own glory, not the glory of God.

Latimer told them, "Christ made one sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and that was a perfect sacrifice therefore there cannot be, and should not be, any other propitiatory sacrifice."

Both Ridley and Latimer were burned at the stake in Oxford on this day, October 16, 1555.

*As he was being tied to the stake, **Ridley prayed**, "Oh, heavenly Father, I give unto thee most hearty thanks that thou hast called me to be a professor of thee, even unto death. I beseech thee, Lord God, have mercy on this realm of England, and deliver it from all her enemies."*

*As the flames quickly rose, **Latimer encouraged Ridley**, "Be of good comfort, Mr. Ridley, and play the man! We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out."*

At the end, with a loud voice Ridley cried, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit..."

Unlike the new “woke” religion, as Christians, we understand that there are some will not accept Jesus as Lord ... there is a broad way that leads to death and destruction.

... they will call good evil and evil good

... they will punish the good and reward the evil

Jesus gives us some very sobering words

"These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling.

(Jn. 16:1-3) ² "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. ³ "These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.

What we are seeing is new to us ... but it really isn't new.

Even in John's day, he writes in Revelation that Antipas was killed in Pergamum because he refused to deny the faith ... he would not call Caesar God.

When in doubt ... never forget God's word is true and it is the absolute foundation of all our faith and practice.

When you are discouraged because things look bad and there is turmoil on every hand ...

... remember your faith was never in a nation or a society, it is in Christ and Christ alone.