

“They rejected the counsel of God against themselves.”

A remarkable ASSEVERATION – (*to declare a thing very, very seriously) – I say, A remarkable ASSEVERATION – appears at **Luke 7:29**; to wit:

“And all the people that heard him (Christ), and the publicans, JUSTIFIED GOD, BEING BAPTIZED WITH THE BAPTISM OF JOHN. But the Pharisees and lawyers REJECTED THE COUNSEL OF GOD against themselves, BEING NOT BAPTIZED OF HIM.” (Lk. 7:29,30)

The common, ordinary people AND the PUBLICANS “*justified*” God. How did they justify God? Well, under the particular, unique circumstances then and there existing – on the ground, as they say – they openly, notoriously, publicly, and boldly, submitted to the baptism of John; thereby giving their assent to John’s message, showing their approval of it.

Even the PUBLICANS – as Gill says, “*Even those wicked men, who were before profligate and abandoned sinners, when they came under John’s ministry, were so wrought upon by the power and grace of God through it, that they approved of and applauded the wisdom, goodness, and grace of God, in sending such a prophet as John; in qualifying him in the manner he did, and giving in him a commission to preach such doctrines, and administer such an ordinance as he did: and this their approbation of the divine conduct, and their thankfulness for the same, they testified by their being baptized with the baptism of John; they expressed their sentiments by their obedience; they declared it was right in God to institute such an ordinance, and for John to administer it; and that it became them to submit to it, as a part of righteousness to be fulfilled; they hereby signified, that they thought that it was agreeable to the nature of God, who is holy, just, and good, suitable to the Gospel dispensation, and very fit and proper for them.*”

But, – as in every dispensation – in addition to good people who gladly stepped into the water as the first public step in their journey desiring to flee from God’s wrath to come – there were others who “**REJECTED THE COUNSEL OF GOD AGAINST THEMSELVES,**” and who gave public evidence of their stubborn and rebellious hatred of God by one simple declination; to wit:

“But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, BEING NOT BAPTIZED OF HIM.” (Lk. 7:30)

Some ancient versions read, But the Pharisees, lawyers and scribes, because the lawyers and scribes are the same sort of persons; tending to comprise “*them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, thereby incurring unto themselves the indignation and wrath, the tribulation and anguish of God Almighty.*” This is “*the counsel of God against themselves*” – a fearful thing.

In a word, these smart guys rejected **TULIP** – Total depravity; Unconditional election; Limited atonement; Irresistible grace; and the Perseverance of the saints. The doctrines of grace. The Gospel. It is as the Lord Jesus prayed:

“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” (Lk. 10:21)

Gill says that in rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, these everlasting smart alecks have acted against their own best interest and advantage, to their everlasting hurt and detriment. Since by their impenitence and unbelief, and through their rejection of Christ and his forerunner, and the Gospel and the ordinances of it, they brought ruin and destruction, both temporal and eternal, upon themselves.

Ancient versions (as the Arabic) read, *“THEY REJECTED THE COMMAND OF GOD UNTO THEM.”* These wicked smart alecks reject all God-honoring doctrines such as Predestination, Election and Reprobation. For, by *“the counsel of God”* here, includes His purpose, intention, and design pertaining to all things and all persons whatsoever.

The Ethiopic version renders it, *“They despised the command of God;”* that is, the ordinance of baptism, which was of God, and the produce of his counsel and wisdom, as the whole scheme, and all the ordinances of the Gospel are, – and that they ARE NOT THE INVENTIONS OF MEN.

Here, Beloved, is a most important lesson for us to learn; to wit: In whatever the dispensation of God’s dealing with mankind, – in whatever time or place – when He raises up a man or a community of men – (such as a church) – with His unction; AT THEIR ETERNAL PERIL does mankind ignore or otherwise neglect or mistreat that man or community.

Another example is King Zedekiah, of whom it is written: *“Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, AND HUMBLED NOT HIMSELF BEFORE JEREMIAH THE PROPHET SPEAKING FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LORD.”* (2 Chron. 36:11,12). (bang! 18-month siege of Jerusalem). *“So they took the king (Zedekiah), and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.”* (2 Kgs. 25:6,7).

WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH HAS A BAPTISTRY!

Beloved, we must with all humility be required and enabled to lay hold on the concept, that WBC – this humble church of the Lord Jesus Christ – is in the line of, and directly descended from, Jeremiah and the prophets of the Old Testament, and John the Baptist, crying in the 21st Century Wilderness, *“Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”* Mat. 3:3. Westboro Baptist Church HAS A BAPTISTRY! WBC has been in this place for 50 years – in the center of America – the geographic center, the demographic center, the political center, the cultural center, and the religious center – 50 years, faithfully preaching the repentance message of John the Baptist – the Five Points of Calvinism – laying the ax to the root of the tree – warning sinners to flee God’s wrath to come. And, Westboro Baptist Church HAS A

BAPTISTRY! 50 years, in this place, pointing sinners to the Lamb of God, – of whom John spoke when he said, *“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.”* Lk. 3:17,18.

Among the *“many other things”* that John preached was a reproof of Herod the king for marrying his brother Philip’s wife; to wit: *“But Herod the tetrarch, being reprovod by John for Herodias his brother Philip’s wife, AND FOR ALL THE EVILS WHICH HEROD HAD DONE, Added yet this ABOVE ALL, that he shut up John in prison.”* Lk. 3:19,20.

Beloved, who, – at this hour in the dispensations of God’s dealings with mankind – just who preaches that divorce and remarriage is sinful? Who? Other than Westboro Baptist Church? Beloved, 50 years, in this place. And, Westboro Baptist Church HAS A BAPTISTRY! That kind of preaching cost John his head – shortly after he baptized the Lord Jesus at *“about thirty years of age”* (Lk. 3:23), when Jesus began His ministry of preaching and baptizing; to wit:

“After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and BAPTIZED. And John also was BAPTIZING in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.” (Jn. 3:22-24)

And so, it appears that John – who was six months older than Christ (Lk. 1:26) – lived, preached, and baptized in the Wilderness of Jordan before his imprisonment, about 6 to 12 months, in his 30th year before Herod ordered his death by decapitation. Christ said of this young man: *“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.”* Mat. 11:11.

During that short dispensation of time, wherein God dealt with mankind in, by, and through John the Baptist – a Voice Crying in the Wilderness – the only way to justify God and go to Heaven, was to submit to the baptism of John; and the sure way to reject the counsel of God and go to Hell, was to NOT submit to the baptism of John. Then and there – on the ground, as they say – if you sincerely wanted to do business with God about your soul, you HAD TO DEAL with John the Baptist. Beloved, John the Baptist has been gone from this scene for some 2000 years. Beloved, on the ground, as they say – here and now – Westboro Baptist Church HAS A BAPTISTRY.

“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance...Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none.” (Lk. 3:8-11)

John’s only injunction to the common people with particularity; and which is satisfied by such fruit hanging on the Gospel tree as that described in such passages as 1 Tim. 6:17-19; to wit:

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” (1 Tim. 6:17-19)

John’s other four injunctions, constituting fruits worthy of repentance, hanging by the law of nature on the Gospel tree, involve those wielding the power of government; to wit:

1). *“Then came also publicans (tax-collectors) to be baptized...And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.” Lk. 3:12,13.*

2). *“And the soldiers – (law-enforcement, cops in the Roman scheme of things) – “And he said unto them, Do violence to no man.” Lk. 3:14* Meaning, UNLAWFUL VIOLENCE. LAWFUL violence – it may be argued – is the business of soldiers and cops. But police brutality is rampant – even epidemic. And what about such cop-violence as deliberately leaving peaceful picketers – unprotected – to be beaten by mobs?

JOHN THE BAPTIST TO ALL COPS: ACCUSE NO MAN FALSELY

3). *“And he said unto them...NEITHER ACCUSE ANY FALSELY.” Lk. 3:14* Lying cops are Legion for multitude, and everywhere for mischief. False reports and false testimony in court is their stock in trade. All they have to do is change one word on a report, one date, one name, any one small matter – and a man’s life, liberty, property, family, reputation – all that is dear for time and eternity may be lost forever. *“Neither accuse any falsely!”* cried John the Baptist.

4). *“And be content with your wages.” Lk. 3:14* Greed. Another occupational hazard for those who make their living out of the public purse. Cops are like the two daughters of the horseleach, whose cry is, *“Give, give.” (Prov. 30:15)*. Cops are like the *“three things, yea, four things, that are never satisfied; that never say, It is enough: The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled – (i.e., saturated) – with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough.” Prov. 30:15,16.*

The cure for greed (i.e., covetousness) lies in the 5th Bullet of Hebrews 13 – right after *“Marriage is honorable in all;”* – to wit:

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” (Heb. 13:5,6)

Amen.