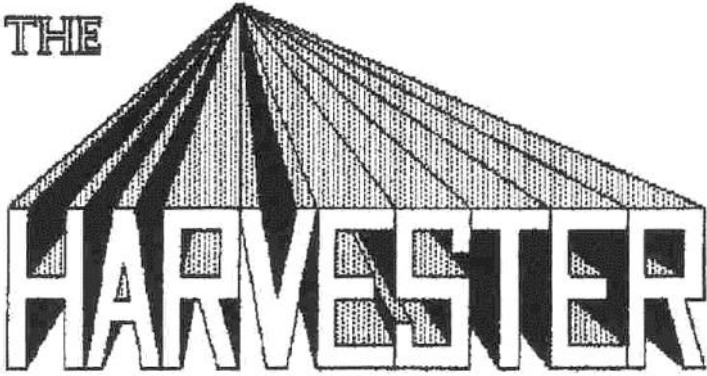


THE



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

June 2015

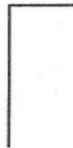
No. 354

BIBLICAL ILLITERACY

The United States as a whole used to be a country of citizens that lived by what the Bible taught. It used to be a country that respected the Word of God and its teachings. But these days we see all around us the decline of people living by God's Word. We also see a decline of people even knowing what God's Word is. Biblical illiteracy is becoming a poison that is rapidly sweeping all over the world.

The problem of Biblical illiteracy is not just a problem that we see in those that are lost but also in the religious world. We see so many abominations being accepted in churches across the world.

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Women teachers, homosexual teachers, those that teach false doctrine, just to name a few.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:9-10)

Some of those that are of the world can also see that Biblical illiteracy is a problem. As Charlie Daniels sang in one of his songs, “Well, you know what's wrong with the world today, People done gone and put their Bibles away. They're living by the law of the jungle not the law of the land.”

Now let's look at three things Biblical illiteracy can have an effect on: individuals, churches, and communities.

On individuals Biblical illiteracy will destroy our salvation. If we do not know God's Word and His teachings in the Bible we will have no chance at salvation. We are told to study and meditate on His Word.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Psa. 1:1-2)

And if we do not have knowledge of God's Word we can not teach it to others as Jesus told us to do.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15-16)

Without knowledge of God's Word we have no direction in life and how we should live our life. “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*” (Psa. 119:105). How many lives are being destroyed, how many people are stumbling through life,

because they do not have the light of God's Word guiding them?

On churches, Biblical illiteracy can affect the lack of leaders that are carrying on the work of the Church. We see so many congregations dwindling down because the older members are passing away and the younger generations are not there to carry on the work.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. (Heb. 5:12)

Another effect that Biblical illiteracy can have on churches is the infiltration of false teachers and false doctrines. If a congregation is not knowledgeable this can happen. False teachers can come in and destroy a congregation.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall 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. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. (2 Pet. 2:1-3)

The effect Biblical illiteracy can have on our communities is happening everyday around us. We see so many evil and sinful things being accepted in the world today. As Brother Brad Prince said in a lesson, "This country is legalizing sin." We see things such as abortion continue to be accepted. Divorce is made easy and is looked upon as just an easy way out. So much evil is being accepted as "alternative lifestyles" because people are illiterate to God's Word or even twist His Word to try and make it fit to the evil they are doing.

And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men

working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. (Rom. 1:27)

We see people doing evil things being rewarded (such as movie stars and entertainers). Then on the other hand we see those that do good are being scrutinized and looked down upon. The world's standard of morality is skewed, where good is evil and evil is good. "*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*" (Isa. 5:20). Evil is being accepted just because it makes people feel good and doesn't hurt their feelings.

What is the antidote to this poison? Studying God's Word diligently. This will bring us closer to God. It will help us in understanding His Word. Also it will help us in distinguishing what is good and what is evil. We must do our part daily in stamping out this problem of Biblical illiteracy. We must love God's Word and live by it. "*O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me*" (Psa. 119:97-98). We must spread God's word even if we face scrutiny for doing so. But also we must show ourselves as good examples if we want to help those that are illiterate to God's word. "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Tim. 2:15). We as parents must teach our children and younger generations God's Word.

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. (Deu. 6:7-9)

We must also help our other brothers and sisters in Christ. Studying the Bible and talking about God's Word together is a great way to help one another. "*And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one*

another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”
(Heb. 10:24-25)

The Bible is a gift given to us to use in our everyday life throughout our whole life. We do not need to be illiterate of the Bible.

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APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Fasting is mentioned several times in The Bible. Should Christians do it?

ANSWER: Fasting is defined as: not eating, that is, abstinent from food (religiously): - fasting. (In other words, not to eat). (Strong's)

The inspired Moses' writing clearly states in Leviticus 16:29-31:

And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

The phrase “*afflict your souls*” is defined by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 58:3-5:

Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?

wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

The children of Israel would fast because of war (Judges 20:26, 1 Samuel 7:6). David fasted because of a sick child (2 Samuel 12:16-23). He also fasted for his enemies (Psalm 35:11-13). Ahab fasted to be forgiven (1 Kings 21:17-29). Nineveh fasted at the preaching of Jonah (Jonah 3:4-10). The listeners fasted when Ezra read the law (Nehemiah 9:1-3).

In the book Matthew 6:16-18 Jesus said:

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

When married couples agree to be incontinent for a season they are commanded to:

Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. (1 Corinthians 7:5)

We read in Acts 14:21-23 about fasting when elders were being ordained:

And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disci-

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ples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

In conclusion let us answer the question, "Is Fasting for Christians Today?" with an affirmative yes. It was commanded in the Old Testament on a given time of the year. In the New Testament married couples, for example, are commanded to for a specific reason. Due to the brevity of space of this article we cannot exhaust a treatise of the subject under consideration. However, we readily conclude that to gain God's favor we should very much consider engaging in fasting. We all need humility in our Christian lives. God HATES pride! Ahab humbled himself before God and received a blessing. If a king can humble himself before God --- you and I can as well.

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What was the name of the country where Christ sent the unclean spirits of Legion into the swine?
2. What was the name of the ruler of the synagogue whose daughter died and Christ brought her back to life?
3. Who is not without honor, but in his own country and among his own kin and his own house?
4. When Christ fed the 5000 in a desert place, how many loaves and fish did the Apostles tell Christ they had?
5. Who carried Stephen to his burial place after he was stoned to death?

Gospel Meetings

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
June 1 - 3	Hopkinsville Hopkinsville, OH	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 7 - 12	Taylor's Cross Roads Roanoke, AL	Brad Prince (Wedowee, AL)
June 13 - 14	New Bethel Cullman, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) & Tim Lewis (Eubank, KY)
June 14 - 19	Mt. Carmel Woodland, AL	Donald Thompson (Wedowee, AL)
June 15 - 19	Freefield Stateline, MS	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) & Tim Lewis (Eubank, KY)
June 21 - 26	Ephesus Ephesus, GA	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 24 - 26	Fellowship Conference Guntersville State Park	Various Speakers
June 26 - 28	Estesburg Eubank, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
June 26 - 28	Hokes Bluff Hokes Bluff, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
