

An Unchanging Standard in a Changing World

Introduction

1. One-fourth of all the people who have ever lived are alive today.
 - With every pulse-beat, the population of the world increases by one.
2. Ninety percent of all scientists who ever lived are alive now and creating change is the work of scientists.
3. Time does not wait for anybody.
 - a. It leaves behind those who do not keep step.
 - b. Styles, political ideas and scientific theories are subject to change.
 - c. We are in the age of the atom, jet engine, space travel, mass communications and medicines so new and powerful that they are often called “miracle drugs.”
4. The progress of civilization has relegated to the background many ideas and items once held in great respect.
5. Man is learning so much about the world and universe that it is said that more has been learned in the last generation than in all time before that.
 - a. A scientific textbook is scarcely off the press before something in it is outdated.
 - b. Technological advances have placed at our fingertips conveniences and gadgetry which have revolutionized our lives.
6. All of the changes have not been for the good.
 - a. At best we have advanced at a frightful price.
 - b. Industrial output has polluted the air we breathe, defiled our rivers and devastated our landscape.
7. Neither are all changes are evil and destructive.
 - a. Some things need changing.
 - b. Many modern discoveries and scientific accomplishments are a blessing to all mankind.
 - They enable man to live a better life, accomplish more, alleviate suffering and prolong life itself.
8. The exercise of human wisdom, though, can be dangerous.
 - a. The amazing accomplishment of man within the past few decades have caused some to conclude that man has changed, that he has modern answers to life’s most perplexing questions and scientific solutions to all problems.
 - b. Man has started to rely more on himself and his knowledge and wisdom and less on the wisdom and knowledge of God.

9. As people lost faith in God, they abandoned His word as a standard of conduct.
 - a. Yet, no people can rise higher than the standard which they respect and use.
 - b. Some pertinent questions.
 - 1) "Can a book over 1900 years old be relevant for the 21st century?"
 - 2) "Is Biblical morality out of date?"
 - The way a person answers these questions will hinge upon what he believes about God, the Bible and the nature of man.
10. If God is, if the Bible is His word, and if man's nature has remained unchanged, then the Bible remains a relevant standard of conduct for today.

I. God's Unchanging Standard of Conduct

A. Has man changed? Not really.

1. He has the same desires and dislikes, virtues and vices, strengths and weaknesses, and sin and righteousness as he has had in all ages.
2. Man's nature, his basic problems and great questions have not changed.
 - a. Our creator knows us and knows our needs.
 - b. Because of this, the word of God remains relevant, active and functional, in our world today. (Hebrews 4:12)
 - 1) As God's word was "living and powerful" in the first century, it is "living and powerful" in the 21st century.
 - 2) The word of God provides solutions to man's basic problems and answers to his great questions.

B. If man has not changed, has God changed? No.

1. God is the same as He has been throughout eternity — omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent.
2. The one who talked to Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses now talks to us through Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 1:1-2)
3. Malachi 3:6. "For I am the Lord, I do not change..."

C. Has Satan changed? No.

1. He works the same as always. (John 8:44; 1 Peter 5:8)
2. In 2 Corinthians 11:3, the apostle Paul spans all time from Eden to the age of the gospel when he warned of the devil and his ability to corrupt.

D. Has sin changed? No.

1. Sin is lawlessness, transgressing the law of God. (1 John 3:4)
2. Every sinful person from Adam to the present has sinned in the same manner — by transgressing the law of God applicable to him.
3. Romans 3:23. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
 - All have been under law from God and have sinned when they were disrespectful and disobedient to that law.

- E. Have the avenues of sin and temptation changed? No.
1. Man is tempted and transgresses the law of God through one or more of the three avenues of sin—the lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and pride of life. (1 John 2:16)
 2. Genesis 3:6 illustrates all three avenues of sin.
 - a. “Good for food”—lust of the flesh.
 - b. “Pleasant to the eyes”—lust of the eyes.
 - c. “Desirable to make one wise”—pride of life.
 3. Satan tempted Jesus by these same avenues. (Matthew 4:1-10)
 - a. “Command that these stones become bread”—lust of the flesh.
 - b. Deliver from the pinnacle of the temple—pride of life.
 - c. Being shown all the kingdoms of the world—lust of the eyes.
 4. 1 John 2:16 shows that these three avenues incorporate the sin of all time.
- F. All of these factors have remained the same throughout the centuries.
1. Yet modern man has devised new moral standards and principles with an almost total disregard for the word of God.
 2. Most of these modern “efforts” are similar to the efforts of man in the past.
 - a. People in Bible times lived for satisfaction of physical desires and material wants just as man today.
 - b. Man’s approaches to moral issues were carnal then, they are still carnal today.
 3. Our society has chosen a changeable standard of morals and conduct to please themselves.
 - a. **“They Misled Us”** “They” told us that, if we’d relax about sex, take our clothes off and not get all up-tight about it, there would be no more sex crimes. So we let it all hang out—and the incidence of rape has increased 10 percent in one year! Maybe we’d better question some of the other advice “they” gave us.

“They” told us we’d been too tough with criminals, that we should go easy on them. So we went easy on them—and the rate of violent crime has increased 47 percent since 1968, increased 6 percent last year, is increasing 15 percent this year.

“They” told us that, if we’d be more generous with poor folks, there would be no motive for stealing anymore. So we gave everybody a guaranteed income, and robbery, burglary, larceny, and auto theft are running 15 percent ahead of one year ago.

“They” said churches are “old-fashioned,” that they must modernize, liberalize, rationalize, compromise. And those that compromised most are shrinking fastest. If it is appearing up to here that “they” gave us some awfully bad advice, they did.

“They” insisted that our schools must boot God out and rely on enhancing junior’s intelligence. So we graduated a generation of juniors with refined intellects and undisciplined emotions, and school-age suicides have soared 92 percent in two years.

“They” told us alcoholism and drug addiction were sicknesses, not crimes. Now we’re choking, gagging, strangling, on forbidden fruit.

“They” said informal marriage was enough, so now the odds are 5 to 4 your rapture will be ruptured and 2 in 7 that the next baby will be born illegitimate.

Who are these “they” who have been misleading us? “They” are the materialists who defy the finite sciences.

“They” meant well, but their intentions are paving the road to hell. Now I have quit commentating and gone to preachin’. I don’t mean to. But I can’t separate goodness and badness from today’s news and explain it. Every ugly headline in today’s newspaper—and yesterday’s and tomorrow’s is somebody’s emotions gone out of whack. He might be smart as all get-out; but if he’s emotionally color-blind, he is an unguided missile destined inevitably to self-destruct. (Paul Harvey)

4. With the moral decay of the world and the country what it is, we must go back to the Bible if we are ever to rise above the sin, corruption and death of this world.

II. God’s Unchanging Standard for Redemption, His Unchanging Plan of Salvation

- A. Just as man has devised many new moral codes of conduct, he has also manufactured many diverse plans for salvation.
 1. In his own wisdom, man has thought to change God’s plan.
 2. In doing so, he has strayed far and wide in every direction—every direction, that is, except towards heaven and towards what is right.
- B. God, not man, has a plan that does not change with time.
 1. The purpose of His plan is to save man from sin.
 2. Jesus came to earth to fulfill and empower that plan.
 - a. He died on the cross, shedding His blood, so that there could be forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:28)
 - b. He established the gospel, the power of God unto salvation. (Romans 1:16)

C. The gospel has not changed for it does not need to change to be relevant to man today.

1. Our creator is conscious of all our needs and has supplied them.
 - a. Temporal needs. (Matthew 6:32)
 - b. Spiritual needs. (John 3:16)
2. If man has not changed and his spiritual disease, sin, and its source have not changed, why change the remedy?
 - a. The gospel remains the power to save just as it was on the Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 and just as Paul said it was in Romans 1:16.
 - b. 1 Peter 1:24-25 tells of the endurance of the gospel.

Conclusion

1. The Bible tells us that, to God, the wisdom of this world is foolish. (1 Corinthians 1:25)
2. If we rely on any other standard than the word of God to guide our moral and spiritual lives, we are most certainly an abomination in God's sight and trying to say that we are as smart as He is.
3. God has given us a code to guide our lives to make them acceptable to Him.
4. If our lives do not measure up to God's standard, then we have lived in vain.
5. If we reject His standard of redemption, His plan of salvation, we will be lost eternally.