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THE REVIEW

“The Just Shall Live by Faith”

By Pastor Mark Strangman, Moderator IBFNA

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’” (Rom. 1:17).

Last time, I wrote to you concerning the subject of faith and its necessary function in our lives. In light of that, I am very pleased to announce that the 2024 IBFNA Family Conference will further consider this vital subject so essential to our relationship with our Lord. The theme of the conference is “The Just Shall Live by Faith,” and the location is Vernon Forest Baptist Church in Winston Salem, North Carolina.

Pastor Jim Brown and the other brothers and sisters of the church are planning a wonderful time with us, scheduled for June 18-20, 2024. The beauty of the Piedmont of North Carolina is very dear to my wife Joyce and me, as we spent several years there in the early training stages of our life and ministry together. Please register early and plan on being with us next summer for a wonderful time.

We are in the process of setting the preaching schedule for the conference, and I am pleased to announce that our keynote speaker will be Brother George Matzko from Matzko Science Ambassadors. Dr. Matzko holds a PhD in Analytical Chemistry from Clemson University. Brother Matzko taught science at Bob Jones University for 39 years. He will be giving three messages based on Heb. 11:3 concerning faith and the creation account, while our other speakers will be delivering messages based on the rest of this chapter on faith.

Concerning Heb. 11:3, faith is that by which we absolutely trust what we could not know otherwise. It is not something we hope is true, wish to be true, or make true by ourselves. Through faith we have absolute confidence in that in which we believe, because we base our faith on absolute moral truth, which is guaranteed trustworthy.

Before the writer of Hebrews goes on to list example after example of life-changing faith, he sets the foundation for this absolute moral certainty. He starts at the very beginning with the subject of creation in verse 3. He tells us that by faith (moral conviction) we understand the creation account of the Lord. This is the strongest proof he could use because it is the eyewitness account of the Creator Himself. No one was there but God, and He shares with us how He made everything out of nothing. This is the testimony of the Word of God, and we believe it by faith.



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Brother Matzko's purpose statement says that "it's not science vs. Scripture, but science in Scripture that glorifies our Lord Jesus Christ and honors Him as the Creator."

Building on my previous article, I would like to propose that our living by faith establishes three certainties in us, who have placed our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Our faith is that which classifies us, characterizes us, and comforts us with certainty. We see this clearly expressed in the Scripture, "The just shall live by faith" (or as Habakkuk put it, "The just shall live by his faith").

Our Faith Classifies Us

As we consider the statement found in Hab. 2:4 and repeated 3 times in the New Testament, the foundation is laid for our entire lives. It is the just who lives by faith. Paul uses this timeless truth to clarify what true salvation is. It is not the law that justifies, but faith: "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. 3:11-12).

Justification classifies us - we are the just. We have been justified by our faith in Christ, having been declared righteous by the Lord, freed from the penalty of sin. Paul set the stage for this classification earlier in Galatians: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (2:20). It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that motivates, establishes, and enables every step of our lives.

Our Faith Characterizes Us

Let's consider the context of this powerful statement of our relationship to the Lord: "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). Habakkuk begins his book by declaring the burden he has for the nation of Israel and each person in it. He stands on the watchtower and waits for the Lord's answer to his pleading.

In His answer, the Lord declares that the character of the just man contrasts the proud man. He says that the proud man is lifted up in himself but not upright, while the just man is characterized by a life of faith. Paul takes this even further by connecting the statement with the saving power of the gospel message through preaching. The result is saving faith - "to everyone that believeth" (the verbal form of *pistis, pisteuo*).

He then says this: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" (Rom. 1:17). Paul's declaration that God's righteousness is revealed through our lifetime of faith (from saving faith to final, delivering faith) is a powerful truth that enables us to receive ongoing sustaining faith from God, step by step.

Our Faith Comforts Us

The last occurrence of this statement in Scripture is found in our conference theme passage, Heb. 10:38-11:40. As we consider verse 38, we see what precedes it - the promised return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the powerful promise that confirms our faith and comforts our hearts. God always keeps His promise, and we will forever be with the Lord.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

In a desperate and fearful world, we need confirming, comforting words to make it through each day. How precious is it to have a faith that classi-

fies us, characterizes us, and comforts us. How vital it is that we stay the course and live a life displaying our faith, so that those who are struggling may see our confidence in the Lord and come to Christ for the same assurance of faith.

I trust that you are looking forward to a powerful conference centered on this powerful statement, "The Just Shall Live by Faith." See you in Winston Salem next summer, and as always, may God richly bless the IBFNA.

Is Music Amoral? - Part Two

Brother Kurt Woetzel

Editor's note: Brother Kurt Woetzel serves the Lord as a member of Village Chapel Baptist Church in Weare, NH. Brother Woetzel co-authored Music in the Balance with Frank Garlock (Majesty Music, 1992). This article is the second part of a multi-part series. See the August Review for Part One.

In order to gain a more complete perspective of the dynamics of this debate, it is entirely appropriate and necessary for us to first consider when, why, and under what circumstances this issue evolved. It is critical to our insight because, as Michael Hamilton (Associate Professor of History at Seattle Pacific University) correctly points out in a *Christianity Today* article, "American churchgoers no longer sort themselves out by denomination so much as by musical preference" ("The Triumph of the Praise Songs," *Christianity Today* [July 12, 1999], 29-35).

Sacred music, which holds the marvelous power to unite the body of Christ in vertical praise unto the Lord, has become a divisive horizontal entity, subject to individual taste and preference, while at the same time creating a raging debate and grievous polarization among believers. Mr. Hamilton makes the observation that, "Our new sectarianism is a sectarianism of worship style. The sectarian creeds are dogmas of music . . . Churches that are too small to sustain separate congregations with separate worship styles are either trying to mix musical styles ('blended worship'), or they are fighting and dividing over which music to use." Later in the article, Mr. Hamilton reveals his position on this watershed issue when he writes, "The job of the local church is to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ, to draw people into a living relationship with God, and to remold disciples of

Jesus into a Sermon-on-the-Mount shape. Any worship music that aids a church in these tasks is almost certainly a conduit of the Holy Spirit."

The contemporary church employs virtually all pop music styles in worship. Thus we could well conclude that this author considers music to be amoral since he gives no caution—"any worship music." Yet he makes a valuable observation which greatly bolsters the moral position when he writes, "When one chooses a musical style today, one is making a statement about whom one identifies with, what one's values are, and ultimately, who one is." How has Mr. Hamilton aided the music-is-moral position with this statement? Music styles selected by individuals are a means by which values are espoused. Individual values are an evidence of morals; therefore, music styles have moral significance.

The inherent contradiction evident in the *Christianity Today* article reflects the dilemma of those in the Christian community who stoutly maintain that music is neutral, yet having to admit to its power and notable influence on character and values. 1 Cor. 15:33 gives further insight and an unmistakable warning—"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." Music is a powerful instrument of communication. Manners are the fleshing out of values and character.

That which is neutral, obviously, cannot impact character. However, when we ascribe or attribute morality to an entity, it must, by its very nature, have the capacity to affect and influence character. If music is moral, then it will, by necessity, prevail upon behavior--the evidence of character. We can't have it both ways. Music is either neutral and has

no bearing on values, or it is moral and, as do other moral agents, impacts character and values. Therefore, it is inconsistent and illogical to say music is amoral, but that it has influence upon values.

Some may well object with, "But don't you realize that the word *communication* in that passage does not literally mean *communication*, it speaks more of *manner of life*." True. But, we must understand that what Gutenberg did for words, Edison accomplished for sound. And as a result of the audio revolution which Edison began, today's music enjoys more air time with unparalleled influence on dress, buying habits, speech, politics, economics, pace of life, religion, relationships, work, play, and worldview than in any time in the history of man. Music has indeed become a manner of life.

Basil Cole, in his book *Music & Morals*, makes it rather clear for us: "If we are what we eat, we are likewise to a certain extent what we hear" (117). *Music, the Brain, and Ecstasy: How Music Captures Our Imagination* is an intriguing book written by Robert Jourdain. He is a scientist and a musician and gives us an accurate perspective how pervasive music has become in individual lives and society as a whole. He writes, "Music is everywhere and embedded in everything" (238). Music is, in truth, a manner of life.

Julian Johnson wrote a most interesting book with the title, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value*. He was educated at the University of Cambridge, Dartington College of the Arts, and the University of Sussex. This author lectures at the University of Oxford and is well known for his work on music aesthetics and the impact of music on society. He is also a respected composer. Consider Mr. Johnson's view on music and morality. He writes, "Different musics are not neutral in terms of value systems; they are positioned because they quite literally do different things. And our participation in different musical systems necessarily involves us in these different value-positions that different musics construct" (8). He continues, "Investing in the products of the music industry is one way we define our personal identities" (15).

Yet Mr. Johnson, like virtually all secular writers on this topic, disagrees with Mr. Hamilton's

position on music morality when he concludes "music has an ethical dimension, and our use of music and the musical choices we make involve us in ethical decisions" (115).

The Music Within You, written by two certified music therapists and music educators, Shelley Katsh and Carol Merle-Fishman, includes similar sentiment in the summary on page 208. They write, "Music is not just a special part of life; it represents life itself. From it we receive inspiration, excitement, and emotional enrichment. With it we create, communicate, and express who we are."

A timely, appropriate, and searching question to ask is, "Who are we?" We are the people who claim the Truth. Is that not the cry from our pulpits? Is this not the earnest personal testimony to friends, relatives, neighbors, and co-workers? If then, we express with our music who we are, the music in our homes, cars, and in our places of worship, becomes an integral Truth statement. Such a statement, the music therapists declare, is often "non-verbal" (206).

Indeed, much of music, including music in our worship services, is instrumental. And, after all, not everyone in every service can be familiar with the lyrics of every instrumental prelude, offertory or special. Thus the style of the sound, the mood which the music summons, the manner in which it is created and presented, the sensibility surrounding the presentation, and the pictures which it paints in the minds of listeners, all contribute to an unmistakable value statement. The music clearly expresses who we are--yet often without words.

The world has a rather precise perspective of music's influence on the individual and society as a whole. Dr. Peter Wicke is the Director of the Center of Popular Music Research at Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany. He has been active for many years as an author and music critic. In *Rock-in' the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*, he writes, "Music is a medium which is able to convey meaning and values which--even (or, perhaps, particularly) if hidden within the indecipherable world of sound--can shape patterns of behavior imperceptibly over time until they become visible background of real political activity" (81).

Endure Hardness

Pastor Paul Gustine

Just as Rev. Luther Rice (1783-1836) recruited John Mason Peck (1789-1858), so this missionary to the West recruited Alvan Stone (1807-1833) from Goshen, MA. He left Amherst College with the prospect to continue his education at a seminary in Illinois. As he helped Rev. Peck in several ministries he observed the lives of the Baptist missionary families.

One of his letters gives us an account of the hardships these pioneers endured [David Wright, *Memoir of Alvan Stone, of Goshen, Mass.* (Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1837), 219-223]. The letter was written from Edwardsville, Madison County, Illinois, June 24, 1832. The "Military Tract" refers to lands allotted to veterans from the War of 1812.

I have mentioned the Military Tract. I wish I could lay before you the wants of the people there, and the need of missionaries, humble, devout, unassuming missionaries. Imagine yourself, if possible, entering a rude cabin (I cannot call it a house), 14 by 12, built of logs, and "chinked and daubed" with mud from the prairie, the entrance scarcely high enough for a man of common stature to enter without bowing.

What do you see within? Why, a family of half a dozen small children; and of inanimate things, you see four or five chairs, a plain table, two decent beds, a few kitchen utensils under a shelf or two on which is neatly arranged what little table furniture is possessed by the inmates. You see also a little bookcase, on one shelf of which is a Bible, hymn book, *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, *Memoir of Mrs. Judson*, *Doddridge's Rise and Progress*, *Butterworth's Concordance*, and a few tracts; and on the other, a small Sunday school library. And as to the rest, save a ladder which leads into the loft, where the children sleep on pallets of straw, you see logs, bare logs, with mud between them.

And who lives there? A minister, a Baptist preacher, the most efficient one on the Military Tract, and I had almost said, the only one; a man who, for his love of the souls of men, has sacrificed 900 or 1000 dollars; and who, unless he is helped more efficiently from abroad, will, by his exertions in the cause of Christ, reduce himself to absolute want; a man who in youth had no opportunity of education, who now thirsts for information, but has not the ability to procure books and other means; one who rents his little prairie farm of 40 acres, and travels over Schuyler, Fulton, Knox, McDonough, Adams and Pike counties, preaching, constituting churches, baptizing, distributing tracts, advocating Sunday schools, temperance societies, and all the benevolent movements of the day, which through ignorance, as many now do, he formerly opposed; and who, on his return to the bosom of his family, though he meets the smiles of a tender companion, is destined to hear the anxious inquiry, "What shall we do for clothing for our children, and where shall we next get corn, for we are almost out?"

You, at the East who dwell in ceiled houses, what do you think of this? It is no fiction. I have seen it, and more. How think you, would some of our eastern preachers like to exchange their elegant mansions for such a habitation as I have described? Yet I would not give a "pickaioon" for one to come to this country, who would not be willing to make that sacrifice, if necessary.

And how would those dear sisters, who spend many precious moments at the toilet in decorating their frail bodies, and who, as Pollok says, are "convinced (O shame!) that God has made them greatly out of taste, and take much pains to make themselves

anew." How would such think of living without that indispensable, a looking glass?

And what would the wives of some of our eastern preachers think, if instead of sitting down to their work stands by the curtained window to work lace, plait ruffs, trim caps, &c. they were obliged to lay their hands to the spindle and hold the distaff; and when weary with household concerns, to sit down on a hickory chair or bench, and by the pure light of heaven through an aperture made by cutting out a log from the wall of the house, without a pane of glass or sash to intervene, to cut and make the homespun garment to protect the husband from the "pelting of the pitiless storm," in his journeys to gather in God's elect? Yet which employment may we suppose is the most pleasing in the sight of God? But I forbear.

I trust the time is approaching, when our brethren and sisters everywhere will understand and practice the principles of self-denial, and not an individual moment be lost, devoted to gaudy show and the pomp and circumstance of life, but every one tell well on the happiness of our fellow creatures.

I am sure that the modesty of the individual I have mentioned, would blame me for stating so freely his sacrifices and self-denial; but I do it, that the wants and condition of that region may be known. He himself earnestly requested me to use my influence to have a preacher sent to labor with him. Five or six active ardently pious preachers of our denomination are needed on that Tract this moment. "I hear," said he, "the Macedonian cry from every quarter, 'Come over and help us.'

"In some place they will come 10 or 15 and even 20 miles to my appointments. I cannot supply half the places where I am urged to preach, even once in two or three months. I find that what I receive from the Missionary society will not more than half support my family. But what shall I do? How can I bear to leave the field, when the

harvest is so great, while I am not in absolute beggary?" He has relinquished many important places more distant, as the calls have increased in settlements nearer his home.

My feelings were strongly enlisted in favor of the Military Tract. I was better pleased with the natural situation of the country, than with any other part of Illinois that I have seen. I wish people at the East knew just what kind of men are wanted; but it cannot be told them precisely, till they come and get familiarly acquainted with the prejudices, prepossessions, habits of thinking and acting of the people.

Above all, let not a Yankee speak of the manner of doing things in New England, and draw invidious comparison between eastern and western modes and customs. Let him be silent with regard to his native land, persevering and unassuming, and he will succeed.

He wrote to a friend a summary of an ideal wife based on his observation of co-laborers with whom he was impressed (177):

If ever you, brother, get a wife, get a help meet, not an ignoramus nor a toy, but a well bred, well informed, industrious, healthy, self-denying, praying female. These are the points, depend upon it. Not one should be lacking. Every thing almost in the cause of Christ depends upon ministers' wives.

After Alvan Stone died, February 13, 1833, in the home of Rev. Hubbel Loomis, president of the seminary that was moved to Alton, Illinois, Rev. Peck published his obituary in his *Pioneer and Western Baptist*, March 22, 1833. It was accompanied by a poem by Mrs. Sarah H. Bartlett, wife of Rev. G. Bartlett. She probably was one who influenced his opinion of an ideal wife. Here are a few lines:

Desire to spread afar the Savior's name
Led Stone away from all that blessed his youth,
To the 'Great Valley' of the 'distant West,'
Replete with nature's richest, fairest gifts;

Which proved, too soon, alas! his early grave.
Long years of blissful toil he hoped to spend,

Training the lovely youth of that fair land
To rules of virtue; and prepare their souls,
By consecration to God's service here,
For the bright glories of the world to come.

Duane Brown Home with the Lord

Dr. L. Duane Brown, one of the co-founders of the IBFNA, entered the presence of his Savior on 9/26. Brother Duane co-authored *What Happened to the GARBC at Niagara Falls?* while serving the Lord as the Pastor of Parsippany Baptist Church in New Jersey. His colleagues in our Fellowship remember him as an astute Bible scholar with a deep love for Christ and a good sense of humor. Duane enjoyed 70 years of marriage to his wife Shirley, who preceded him in death by just a few months. Brother Duane's obituary shared the following:

Duane accepted Christ as his personal Savior in high school through the testimony of his older brother Ken, who had received Christ while away at college through the witness of his dorm roommate, Paul Depue. This event changed Duane's life trajectory, who gave himself to serve Christ, claiming 1 Thess. 5:24 as his life verse: "Faithful is he who calls you, who also will do it."

Duane served the Lord faithfully through over four decades of active ministry that included five pastorates (Mount Vision, NY; Pine Valley, NY; Ames, IA; Houston, TX; Parsippany, NJ), served twice as the initial state representative of churches (NY; PA & WV), and Bible college president (Denver Baptist Bible College and Seminary).

Duane served in active leadership roles in many organizations that included camp director of BaYouCa camp in NY, president of the American Council of Christian Churches, member of the GARBC Council of 18, founding member of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America, as well as a board member for colleges and mission agencies. He received awards for



distinguished service from many organizations over his years of ministry.

He was a prolific author, notably authoring *Biblical Basis for Baptists* that has been used by hundreds of churches and translated into dozens of languages around the world. He would often pay the translation costs and donate to the printing of the book. He spent his life as a life-long learner, even researching theological liberalism just a few days before dying. He loved to travel, visiting six continents. He made 20 trips to France and lead about 20 tours to Israel. He was an avid golfer and student of history, reading widely on espionage, politics, and westerns. He seemingly never passed an historical marker without stopping.

Our brother's life is a testament to the truth of his life's verse. God is faithful. Thankyou, Lord.

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