

Prayer List

Sierra
Gene
Veda
Judy
The Williams' Family
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
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Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

What nation was Milcom the god of?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

A half shekel each - Exodus 30:12-16

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The Everlasting Covenant

by Kenny Chumbley

Paul Johnson's 1983 book, *Modern Times*, is a profoundly disturbing work. Page after page records the grim statistics of brutality and atrocity which have marked this century. Modern man may boast of his remarkable breakthroughs in medicine, transportation, and communication, but by far the most significant change of our time has been in the regression of human dignity. "By the 1980's, state action had been responsible for the violent or unnatural deaths of over 100 million people, more perhaps than it had hitherto succeeded in destroying during the whole of human history up to 1900" (Johnson, p. 729). Sadly, such cruelty shows no signs of slowing down.

There are some, though, who realize that we are, to use Trueblood's phrase, "engaged in a race with catastrophe." Their solution to the problem, however, is analogous to a drunken man reeling from one wall to another. While rejecting the notion that scientific progress provides a cure-all for society's ills, they have elevated subjectivity to a position of first importance. Thus the current mania over the New Age movement, the occult, and Eastern religions. Eventually these crazes will go the way of the hula hoop and be exposed as the disappointing solutions to the human predicament they are.

It's no great mystery how modern man got himself into such a mess. The problem now, as always, is that he has violated the

first and most fundamental commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” In place of God, modern man has enthroned himself. He has substituted faith in his own moral relativism for faith in the ethical absolutes of the Bible. But history is not ambiguous on this point; every time man rejects the authority of God and does that which is right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25), spiritual and moral collapse inevitably results. Once we lose our spiritual anchorage, technological advances that might have been a great blessing can become a terrible curse. General Douglas MacArthur recognized this when he wrote, “Military alliance, balances of power, League of Nations all in turn failed.... We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater, and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves ... [an] improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advance in science, art, literature ... It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh” (quoted by J. D. Bales in *How Can Ye Believe?*, p. 145). Sure, man has broken the sound barrier, but he can hate his neighbor while flying at Mach 2 just as much as while walking two miles an hour. The primary problem now, as always, is spiritual. Modern man, as much as classical man, needs healing for his soul.

If I’ve counted correctly, the Old Testament speaks of six “everlasting covenants” that God established with individuals and/or nations. While each of these covenants played a role in the unfolding drama of human redemption, they all looked to a seventh and final “everlasting covenant” that God would establish with “the house of Israel and the house of Judah” (Jeremiah 31:31). “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Hebrews 13:20). To see how completely this everlasting covenant addresses man’s unchanging needs, please consider the following:

1. The unchanging need for peace. I am fairly confident that within my lifetime there has not been a year (maybe even a month), but what a shooting war has gone on somewhere on this planet. Peace initiatives, peace treaties, and peace corps have not stopped aggression. An ancient prophet, however, spoke of a

time when men would “beat their swords into plowshares ... [and not] learn war any more.” In saying this, he was looking to the time of the everlasting covenant, wherein men could have peace with God (Romans 5:1), and learn to crucify the selfishness which lies at the root of all wars (James 4:2).

2. The unchanging need for hope. Rudyard Kipling once wrote that the western world clings to the dread of death more closely than to the hope of life. Death remains the one absolute modern man has not been able to destroy. Only upon the resurrection of Christ, the best attested event of antiquity, do men have a reason to hope beyond the grave (1 Corinthians 15:20).

3. The unchanging need for guidance. Haven’t we blown it enough to finally learn that “the way of man is not in himself”? Left to our own ingenuity, we will always be as sheep going astray. But in the everlasting covenant provision has been made for a Shepherd who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He cuts through the fuzzy-wuzziness of spiritual relativism and provides man with absolute, infallible leadership. No one who follows Him will be put to shame (1 Peter 2:6).

4. The unchanging need for redemption. Here again, man thought he had the solution. He once believed that psychoanalysis could effectively soothe his throbbing conscience; that by blaming others for his problems, he could ease the pain of his guilt. It has been an utter failure. What men need is a sacrifice that can provide pardon; they need the precious blood of Christ that can redeem them and cleanse them from all sin (1 Peter 1:18–19; 1 John 1:7). And woe to the man who counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing (Hebrews 10:29).

The only way this world can reverse its descent into a new Dark Age is by acknowledging its unchanging spiritual needs, and by embracing the unchanging covenant which supplies them.