

Unfamiliar Bible Words: Fornication

David Halbrook

One reason people give for not reading the Bible is that they do not understand it. Some words in the Bible are not commonly used by the average American, like *fornication*. God often warns of it in the Bible, but when did you last hear it used negatively in a movie, song, or news report? (Mk. 7:21; 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19)? Was it present in recent, alleged “Bible-based” productions such as *Son of God* or *Noah*?

The sexual relationship is a gift from God to mankind. For our benefit, He teaches us to only “unwrap this gift” after He has joined us to the opposite gender in marriage (Heb. 13:4). When this gift is shared by people not married to each other, they commit the sin of *fornication*. This is sin against God because we abuse the gift He gave and against man because we involve another in this sin (Gen. 39:9; 1 Cor. 6:13-18).

Why is *fornication* an unfamiliar word today? In the 1960s many present-day grandparents rejected this word and later allowed their children to be entertained by shows and music which presented fornication as normal. Many “ministers” do not believe it is sin. Why is homosexuality so controversial? Because many have grown up unfamiliar with Bible words, like *fornication*. (our *Arkansas Weekly* ad, 12-3-14)

The Good and Right Way

John Gibson

“Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way” (1 Samuel 12:23). To understand the setting, note that these words were spoken by Samuel at what might be called Saul’s coronation. In 1 Samuel 8 the Israelites had informed Samuel that he was old, his children were unworthy, and they wanted a king like the nations around them. It is obvious Samuel felt a certain hurt by Israel’s rejection of him (though God assured him that it was really His reign they were rejecting—1 Samuel 8:7), yet Samuel refused to become embittered. This noble judge and prophet intended to keep on teaching and praying for the people.

What a lesson for us today when we feel that our friends, family or brethren have in some way wronged us. If we feel mistreated do we get angry, pout, stay home, etc., or do we get on our knees and pray for those who have not shown us the respect we feel we deserve? Do we continue to preach and teach the good and right way, or do we find ourselves quietly hoping something will happen so they will “learn their lesson” and appreciate us the way they should? I know that in my own experiences I have not always been like Samuel, but this is the model we should strive to imitate.

The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*
church of Christ--Quail Valley
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WWW.QVCOCCOM

The Rapture...Again

Joe R. Price

I learned today there will be another "Left Behind" movie this fall. You know, the ones where people disappear and cars crash because "in case of the rapture, this car will be unmanned". Here we go again.

The doctrine of the rapture is getting some serious opposition from some unlikely sources, including William Craig, a Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology and Professor of Philosophy at Houston Baptist University. Craig says "This doctrine is not really found in the book of Revelation. If you read the book of Revelation, you won't find any mention of the rapture there" ("No, Christians Should Not Believe in 'Left Behind's' Rapture Theology, Says Prominent Apologist", Morgan Lee, www.christianpost.com). He is correct. Not only does The Revelation not teach the rapture doctrine, neither does the rest of the Bible.

"According to Craig, the rapture became a popular theory about the End Times due to the influence of the Scofield Reference Bible, which was published in the early 20th century and promulgated John Darby's mid-18th century's views on the rapture. Later, Christian institutions, among them Dallas Theological Seminary, and churches began teaching the validity of the rapture." (Ibid)

That sounds about right. Plus, there are variations on the theme: Pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation and post-tribulation (see "Rapture", *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).

The main verse used to support this error is 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, a verse that comforts Christians concerning participation in the events of Christ's return, whether dead or alive. This verse is very clear. It is a snapshot of Christians when Jesus returns. Christians who die before Christ's return will not miss out! There is hope and comfort in knowing Christians will be with the Lord when He returns, whether they are alive or have already died (1 Ths. 4:13, 18).

This verse destroys the rapture doctrine. Verse 16 says the return of Christ will be visual ("*the Lord Himself*") and audible (a shout, a voice and a trumpet) - the very opposite of what the rapture doctrine says (silent, invisible catching away). The verse also assures us that all Christians will be "*caught up together...in the clouds*" where we will "*meet the Lord in the air*" and "*thus*" (in this manner) always be with the Lord (v. 17). No coming back to earth after seven years - or ever. Comfort yourself with these words (1 Ths. 4:18). The rapture doctrine is false.

Easier Prevented Than Removed

Steve Wallace

*"A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city,
and contentions are like the bars of a castle"* (Proverbs 18:19, NKJV).

Our proverb moves from the familiar to the general. The first part teaches, the closer the relationship, the more difficult is reconciliation in the event of a rift. By contrast, its words about contentions are true of all people. According to Proverbs, contentions, whether of those close to us or of strangers, bring with them strife and disgrace, and are difficult to bear (22:10; 26:21; 19:13). At length, they call for one to put distance between one's self and the contentious person (21:9, 19; 22:10; 26:20). Thus, having once caused discord, contentions act as bars obstructing normal relationships, whether they be between husband and wife, brethren, or friends.

Especially formidable bars are erected when brethren fall out and strive, not about possessions or matters of this world, but about matters of faith. It is then that their contentions are most pointed and heartfelt. If proper attitudes toward the scriptures and/or one another are lacking, the barriers raised can be durable.

It seems best to take the words of this proverb as a warning. In light of the almost irreparable harm of which it speaks, "It is therefore our duty to guard against those mischiefs which are so much easier prevented than removed" (Lawson, *Exposition of the Proverbs*, p. 450). Far better is it to keep the gates of the strong city open and its people welcoming than to cause its gates to be closed and its battlements manned for war. What will help keep doors between brethren open?

1. We should avoid offending or taking offense. Jacob *offended* when he cheated Esau out of his birthright (Gen. 27:36). Joseph's brethren *took offense* when Joseph told them of his dreams which accurately foretold the future (Gen. 37:5-11, 26-28; 42:6,9). Barriers resulted in both cases. Since, as our proverb teaches, in a close

relationship, it is difficult to recover from offences, it is better to avoid them in the first place. Let us not aid in the erection of strong cities!

2. Let us beware of contentiousness. The word rendered "contentions" in the Hebrew means, "strife, quarrels" (*HALOT, Logos*). When there was strife between his herdsmen and those of his nephew, Lot, Abraham yielded, giving Lot place as he desired (Gen. 13:5-9). Let us always remember his words, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren" (v. 8). Proverbs teaches us that whisperers, scorers, those with proud hearts, wrathful and perverse people stir up strife (26:20; 22:10; 28:25; 15:18; 16:28). When we allow such characteristics to motivate us we are helping to build strong bars which separate men and brethren.

3. Let us endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). Let us make the ties that unite us strong. If we have sinned against a brother or if a brother has ought against us, let us make haste to resolve the matter (Matt. 5:23-25; 18:15). Do not let time pass for the walls to go up and the bars to be strengthened. "Agree with thine adversary quickly" (Matt. 5:25).

4. Let us mortify the unforgiving disposition which prevents proper reconciliation with any person (Eph. 4:31-32). It is a dangerous matter to refuse to be reconciled (Matt. 5:25-26). There are enough such "strong cities" in the world, let not the Lord's church be sullied with them!

A strong city that must be won at great cost is usually that of an *enemy*. A *brother* offended is a former friend. How many "strong cities" do we know today with whom we once had good relations? Let us do all we can to keep walls from going up. Let us strive rather to maintain relations with brethren that are in accordance with the Bible's teaching.

The Way of Truth and Life, 10/12/14

(We are helping send Steve Wallace to preach in India in Jan. 2015, Lord willing)

Pray for: Ed & Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians among us.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

Church of Christ—Quail Valley
4104 E. Harrison St.
Batesville, AR 72501
Office- (870) 793-6700

Evangelist:
David Halbrook 569-4491