

## *God's Grace & Marriage Laws*

David Halbrook

It happened in Egypt, Israel, Persia, and Babylon. The leaders of these nations made laws which contradicted God's law (Exodus 5; Numbers 13; Esther 3; Daniel 3, 6). Many American leaders have been doing the same so the recent redefinition of marriage is not a total surprise. The greater surprise comes from people who claim to believe the Bible but reject its teachings. In March (2015), the Presbyterian Church (USA) changed its *Book of Order* from "Marriage . . . is between a man and a woman" to "Marriage . . . involves two people." By this, they reject Jesus who said a man and his wife are the "two" who are "one." (Matthew 19:5-6)

What is missing from man-made laws is *the grace of God . . . teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age* (Ti. 2:11-12). Man's social and religious traditions often change and contradict God's grace (*inherited sin* versus Ezekiel 18:20; *salvation by faith alone* versus Mark 16:16). We want every homosexual, adulterer, and liar to seek and find *the grace of God in truth* which brings salvation (Col. 1:6). We are interested in hearing your comments, questions.

Editor's Note: How many people in Batesville realize that "God's grace" teaches us how to live and is not a loophole for sin? Does your answer give you motivation to help teach our community about God's grace? One simple way to do that is to clip this article from *Arkansas Weekly* and give someone another opportunity to learn.

### Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

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

Pray and prepare for: Fair booth (July 13-18) & Summer Bible Series (July 27-31).

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

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*  
church of Christ--Quail Valley  
July 5, 2015  
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## *Nathan the Prophet*

Kyle Campbell

In a few words, I want to reach back into the Old Testament to look at the forgotten face of a man who cared. His name was a prophet called Nathan. Nathan was a man of God who served in the times of King David. We know little about him personally, but it is obvious that Nathan was a man who cared, as we will see from these episodes in the life of Nathan.

In 1 Chronicles 17, David wanted to build the house of the Lord. It had been in a tent for hundreds of years and David thought it was time to build a temple to worship God. David's intentions were good and Nathan approved his plan. He told David is v. 2, "Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee." But sometimes we do not think like God. So that night, Nathan received a visit from the Lord. Nathan was told to go back to David and tell him not to build a house. Nathan had to correct himself. He then told David that his son Solomon would build the temple. Verse 15 adds, "According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David." So sometimes we need to correct ourselves when we are wrong. That is repentance.

In 2 Samuel 11-12, in the most well-known event in his life, Nathan had to rebuke David for his sin. After setting up the parable of the poor man's ewe lamb and David rendering the correct judgment by saying, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity," Nathan had to tell him "Thou art the man" (2 Samuel 12:5-7)! It sometimes escapes us that Nathan was risking his own life. In David's state, he could have punished or killed Nathan. But because righteousness was important to God, it was important to Nathan. Nathan cared enough about God and about David to do the confronting. We should do the same. We need to realize

that the best action we can take for a fellow Christian sometimes is to confront them when they are wrong (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; Galatians 6:1).

Following his dark episode with Uriah and Bathsheba, David's repentance was complete. Psalm 51 is probably the best confession of sin ever written. The baby that was born did die as God, through Nathan, had promised. Second Samuel 12:18-25 shows us that God is righteous, but He also is merciful. Although David was disciplined for his sin, God did not withhold blessing and so, when Solomon was born, God loved him. Nathan was called to convey to David that the child was loved of God. Nathan even gave the boy a "nickname" - Jedidiah - which means, "Beloved of the Lord." Nathan could have stayed angry at David, even after God forgave him. But Nathan realized that if God forgave, blessed, and comforted David, he should too (Romans 12:15; Ephesians 4:32; Hebrews 10:24-35).

Christians should be people who care (Philippians 2:4; 1 John 3:17). The apostle Peter exhorted, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8). It is wonderful when Christians learn to mimic godly men and women of the past. Nathan cared about truth, about himself, and about others!

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### *How We React to Sinners*

*Joe R. Price*

Most of us have lost something valuable at one time or another – a pet, a wedding ring, etc. Like the woman who lost a silver coin, we “searched carefully” until we found it (Lk. 15:8-10). Do you remember the joy and relief when you found what was lost? Jesus used such a scene to impress on us the value of a single soul. With three "lost" parables in Luke 15, Jesus taught how heaven views lost souls - and how we must view them.

God shows love and compassion toward sinners. Jesus showed divine concern when He taught the tax collectors and sinners who gathered about Him (Lk. 15:1). The scribes and Pharisees did not share His care for the lost. They could only see the horribleness of sin in those troubled souls. All they could do was speak against the sinners. And, they also spoke against Jesus for His contact with them (Lk. 15:2). True, they were sinners. And yes, sin is horrible. Yet, the scribes and Pharisees had forgotten what must never be forgotten; they also were sinners in need of God's mercy and forgiveness! All of us have sinned, therefore, all of us need God's merciful forgiveness (Rom. 3:23). God is ready, out of His loving compassion, to save every sinner who repents (Lk. 15:7).

Jesus taught three of His most well-known parables to explain how we ought to respond to God's merciful attempts to save the lost: The lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. Each parable drives home lessons that shape us into the image of Christ as we apply them to ourselves and how we respond to sinners.

**The lost sheep parable teaches of God's compassion for the lost** (Luke 15:3-7). It pictures the courageous shepherd leaving the ninety-nine sheep to search for and find the one lost sheep. God is distressed when men and women sin. Heaven rejoices when even one sinner repents. Do we? If so, then let us be searching, seeking, and trying to save the lost.

**The lost coin parable teaches us the value of the lost soul** (Luke 15:8-10). The value of souls prompted Jesus to leave heaven *"to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Lk.19:10). But some will not diligently seek the lost. They are content with those already saved (“If we can just keep the saved ones saved...”). Of course we want to see the saved endure to the end (Matt. 10:22). That is not a compelling reason to avoid searching for even one lost soul.

**The parable of the lost son teaches of God's mercy and man's response to His mercy** (Luke 15:11-32). Like the wasteful son returning to his father, sinners were going to Christ and receiving God's mercy. The scribes and Pharisees were like the complaining elder son, unwilling to rejoice when sinners repent. They were unmerciful, and so they scorned Jesus' mercy. Even now, some Christians find it hard to rejoice when a sinner repents. The repentant sinner is kept at arm's length because of past hurt. (Who has been hurt by the sinner more than God? Since He readily forgives and receives, who are we not to forgive?) The "sinner" is looked down upon with suspicion and reservation instead of joyful acceptance and renewal. The elder son must not be our role model. Jesus is our example for how to react when sinners repent.

*The Spirit's Sword (XVII:38) - March 29, 2015*

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"If you will return, O Israel," says the LORD, "Return to Me; and if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, then you shall not be moved. And you shall swear, 'The LORD lives,' in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him they shall glory." (Jer. 4:1-2)

If the recent decisions of our government have been on your mind, read the book of Jeremiah. He is called “the weeping prophet” because of how he responded to Judah's sin. He once considered just keeping silent, believing that no one would listen to him, “But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not” (Jer. 20:9). If you don't have that fire, beware of lukewarmness (Rev. 3:15). Jeremiah spoke. Nathan spoke. Jesus spoke. Will you?