

# The Harvester



## Preparing Souls

## To Serve The Lord



Volume 36

October 2015

Number 3

# WHAT IS THERE TO BE AFRAID OF?

By Brian R. Kenyon

On mission trips to places where people are very open to Bible studies, it is common to witness heart wrenching responses. People will know what they must do to be saved and how immediately it can be attained, yet due to circumstances they are not willing to give up, they will say with tears in their eyes and quivering lips, "I cannot obey the Gospel now."

These incidents are reminiscent of a situation recorded in the life of Paul,

And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. <sup>25</sup>And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. (Acts 24:24-25, KJV)

Some background information is helpful to better appreciate this incident. Felix was "governor" of Judea, appointed by Emperor Claudius in AD 53. The term "Procurator" was used specifically for the governor who presided over the imperial province of Judea. The Bible explicitly mentions three procurators: Pontius Pilate (Mt. 27:2); Felix (Acts 23:24); and Festus (Acts 24:27). Felix is said to have ruled the province in a cruel and blood thirsty way.

Drusilla (b. AD 38) was Felix's third wife. She was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I (cf. Acts 12:1) and sister of Herod Agrippa II (cf. Acts 25:13). At the age of 14, she married Azizus, king of Emesa (a Syrian petty state about a 100 miles north of Damascus). She was unhappy in this arranged marriage. Through the mediation of Atomos, a "magician from Cypress," Drusilla (at 16) was persuaded

into leaving him for Felix (Polhill 486). Josephus said this caused her to "transgress the laws of her forefathers" through adultery (*Ant.* 20.141-44). She may have been the source of Felix's information on "the Way" (Acts 24:22) as well as the motivation to speak with Paul in private (Acts 24:24). "Despite all the other characteristics that the Herodian family may have possessed, Luke always gives the impression that they were interested in persons connected with the Christian faith" (cf. Lk. 9:9; 23:8) (Newman and Nida 456). Felix and Drusilla's situation reminds us that choices must be made when we are presented with life-changing information (cf. Deut. 30:19).

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Paul's earlier trial before Felix did not permit him the opportunity to speak about "faith in Christ" (Acts 24:1-21), but "privately Paul did not hesitate to develop this theme" with Felix and Drusilla (cf. Acts 9:15-16) (Peterson 640). What is there to be afraid of? Nothing, if people are taking advantage of the opportunities God gives them! However, there is everything to fear, if people are not taking advantage of the opportunities God gives! All those reading this have been or are now confronted with the truth that will save from sin. Unless a person is Scripturally baptized, he or she cannot be saved from sin (cf. Mk.



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16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). Unless one who is baptized continues to live faithfully to God, he or she cannot be saved from sin (cf. Lk. 6:46; 1 Jn. 1:6-10; 2 Jn. 9-11). Have we been baptized into Christ? Are we continuing faithful in Christ? Do we have anything to be afraid of?

## THE ORATION

The word “reasoned [was discussing, NAS]” (from *dialegomai*, διαλέγομαι) means to discuss; debate. It is used often of Paul’s teaching (Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8-9; 20:7, 9). Also of note is that all three of the subjects Luke specifies in the content of Paul’s session with Felix and Drusilla call for repentance (cf. Acts 20:21; 26:20). Consider the three subjects about which Paul “reasoned.”

First, Paul spoke of “righteousness.” This can refer to the character of God (Ps. 116:5), to the ethical character God wants people to have, which will ultimately be the basis for the coming judgment (Acts 10:35; 13:10; 17:31), and/or to the system of faith built on the character of God, intended to give people the ethical character and right standing He wants, known as the Gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). How do we stand in relationship to righteousness? Do we have anything to be afraid of?

Second, Paul spoke of “temperance.” The word translated “temperance [self-control, NKJ]” (from *egkrateia*, ἐγκράτεια) refers to the “ability to command one’s self; being able to say no to one’s own desires; or holding one’s self down”

(Newman and Nida 455-456). It is a “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:23). Christians especially must exercise self-control (1 Cor. 7:9; 9:25; Tit. 1:8). How are we doing with self-control? Do we have anything to be afraid of?

Third, Paul spoke of “judgment to come.” Despite today’s AD 70 (or “realized eschatology”) crowd’s insistence to the contrary, this age will be brought to a close by the Lord’s return at the end of time (Jn. 5:26-29 cf. Mt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:11-15). Paul taught that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). If that day were to come right now, would we have anything to fear?

## THE OUTCOME

When Felix heard these truths, he “trembled.” The word “trembled [was afraid, NKJ; was terrified, ASV; became frightened, NAS; became alarmed, ESV]” (from *emphobos*, ἔμφοβος) means that Felix was full of fear. This is an intensified form of the usual word for fear (Lk. 24:5, 37; Acts 10:4; Rev. 11:13). People have a choice to obey God. If they obey Him, they have nothing at all to fear, for nothing can separate them from His love (Rom. 8:35-39), except their own unfaithfulness (Mt. 10:28)! Do we have anything to be afraid of?

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### The Harvester

Published Monthly  
Florida School of Preaching  
1807 South Florida Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33803  
(863) 683-4043

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## "Do You Understand Sin?"

41st Annual Lectureship **Jan. 18-21, 2016** Brian R. Kenyon, Director



Bill Davis



Will Vann

### MONDAY

9:00 Before Sin Entered the World

Doug Burleson

9:40 The Devil and His Work

Jackie M. Stearsman

10:20 BREAK

10:50 The Effects of the First Sin

Russ Crosswhite

11:30 LUNCH

### Forum: Young People and Overcoming Sin

1:30 Peer Influence

Thomas Wise

2:00 Wisdom on WiFi

Forest Antemasaris

2:30 Defeating Worldliness

Hiram Kemp

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 The Anatomy of Sin

Will Vann

7:45 The Promised Savior

Paul Sain



Jackie Stearsman

### TUESDAY

9:00 The Old Testament Sacrificial System

David Stearsman

9:40 The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

Stephen Atnip

10:20 BREAK

10:50 Sin and the Antediluvian World

Rick Kenyon

11:30 LUNCH

### Forum: Families and Overcoming Sin

1:30 Eli: Failures in Parenting Lead to Sin

Jon Podein

2:00 Sin in David's Family

Mike Elledge

2:30 Breaking Sin's Cycle in the Family

J. Brooks Boyd, Jr.

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 Sins of God's People: Then and Now

Ben Radford

7:45 Jesus' Birth and Its Effect on Sin

Jimmy Clark



Paul Sain

### WEDNESDAY

9:00 Calvinism's Influential View of Sin

Rick Kenyon

9:40 Jeroboam's Sinful System of Worship

David Dixon

10:20 BREAK

10:50 The Apostasy of Israel

Jimmy Clark

11:30 LUNCH

### Forum: Worship and Overcoming Sin

1:30 Nadab and Abihu

Cameron C. Freeman

2:00 When Gender Roles Go Too Far

Earl D. Edwards

2:30 Evaluating Current Trends in Worship

Rico Brown

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 "Repent and Be Baptized"

Jeremy Padilla

7:45 Jesus' Life and Its Effect on Sin

Bill Davis



David Dixon



Earl D. Edwards

### THURSDAY

9:00 Korah and His Cohorts

Cameron C. Freeman

9:40 Dealing with Divisive Brethren

Robert Bauer

10:20 BREAK

10:50 Gentiles Condemned

Melvin Otey

11:30 LUNCH

### Forum: Dealing with Sin

1:30 Between Individuals

Ulysses Richardson

2:00 What About "Congregational Sin"?

Jackie M. Stearsman

2:30 Withdrawing Fellowship

Tim Hayes

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 The Christian's Relationship to Sin

Brian R. Kenyon

7:45 Jesus' Death: Reconciliation and Justification

M. Otey



Mike Elledge



Cameron Freeman

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**The Harvester**

**October 2015**

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## CONCLUSION

Regardless of a person's initial motives for wanting to hear the Gospel, once confronted with it, he or she has a choice to make. "Do I adjust my life and get right with God, whatever the price? Or do I continue in my present way of sin, and pay the ultimate price?" God has provided a way for sinful humanity to be made righteous (Rom. 1:16-17). God has provided a means to maintain self control so people can stay righteous (Gal. 5:16-25), and in case they sin, He has given a way of forgiveness (Acts 8:20-22).

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- Polhill, John B. *Acts*. New American Commentary. Vol. 26. Ed. David S. Dockery. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1992.
- Newman, Barclay M. and Eugene A. Nida, *A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*. New York: United Bible Society, 1972.

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The value of the Florida School of Preaching has been well documented since 1969 in at least the following ways: (1) strengthening and stabilizing churches of Christ in Central Florida and beyond; (2) equipping men to preach the Gospel; (3) preparing men and women to better serve the Lord; and (4) spreading God's word through our alumni, our faculty, our publications (the Harvester, study notes, website, etc.), and our lectureship, including the accompanying book. We continue to need your help. We have made giving funds more convenient through our website. It is now set up to receive electronic contributions via debit/credit cards and Pay Pal. Of course, the standard way of mailing a check is fine too! Thanks for your support!

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