

THE 144,000 - GOD'S PECULIAR PEOPLE

It is interesting that so many cities call their main streets Broadway. Jesus described the Broadway as the road to destruction. A casual walk down the main street of most cities will show you just how right He was. The further one walks, the more aware one becomes that they are drawing close to the devils headquarters.

Can the Christian share in the carnal pleasures, desires, and conduct of those walking down the Broad Way to destruction and hope to arrive at the city of God?

God has given us His Word to be a lamp to lighten our feet as we tread the path of life. *Psalms 119:105* As long as we walk in the light of this Word we will not stumble and fall. But once we seek to direct our own steps disaster will be the sure end. *Jeremiah 10:23*

Our only safety is to allow God to direct our steps and His direction is found in His word.

Often when people seek to follow their own wants and desires instead of the clear counsel of God's Word they seek to justify this unwise course by stating "Well, I don't see any thing wrong with it." However, the Lord has warned that "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." *Proverbs 16:25* This is why we are told that the one "that trusteth in his own heart is a fool, but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered." *Proverbs 28:26*

It is clear that the "fool" is the one who rejects the clear instruction of God to follow the direction of their own perverse heart, and the "Wise-hearted" are the ones who shall do "all that the Lord hath commanded." *Exodus 35:10*

God calls upon us to present our bodies "a living sacrifice" to Him by not being "conformed to this world." *Romans 12:1-2*

We are to realize that we are the temple of God and as such we are to come out from the world and its standards, maxims, conduct, appearance, and lifestyle in general. *2 Corinthians 6:14-18*

A Christian is to seek to glorify God in every aspect of their life. *1 Corinthians 10:31*

The prophet Isaiah says that we are to prepare "the way of the people" by casting "out the stones(of stumbling)" and lifting "up a standard for the people." *Isaiah 62:10* The churches today however have begun to lower the standards for God's people to the point they are being conformed to this present evil world. They attend the same places of amusement and entertainment as the world. They act like, talk like, dress like, eat like, drink like, the world because they have begun to think like the world.

The churches are rejecting God's call to "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (*2 Corinthians 6:17*) and have begun to compromise the Bible principles which had been so sacredly guarded through the centuries.

Webster defines compromise as "Blending qualities of two different things."

There was a time when the churches would give no sanction to theater attendance, dancing, gambling, drinking, adornment, etc., but today all these things are common place in the nominal Christian churches. Many of them even permit the practice such things as gambling, drinking,

and dancing, in the churches themselves on their so called "Las Vegas Night" fund raisers. This trend is in stark contrast to the Bible principles held by God's people in the past as can be seen from the following statements.

The Methodist Church: "Dancing is detrimental to Christian life." "Members are counseled not to dance."

Congregational Church: "Resolved: That in the opinion of the association the practice of dancing by members of our churches is inconsistent with the profession of religion, and ought to be made a subject of discipline."

Presbyterian Church: "We regard the practice of dancing by church members as a wonderful inconsistency, and the giving of such parties for such dancing on the part of heads of families and tending to compromise with their religious professions; and the sending of children of Christian parents to dancing schools as a bad error in family discipline."

Episcopal Church: "Dancing is chargeable with waste of time, the indulgence of personal vanity, and the premature incitement of the passions, and no ingenuity can make it consistent with the covenant of baptism."

Catholic Church: "We consider it to be our duty to warn our people against those amusements which may easily become to them an occasion of sin, against those fashionable dances which, as at present carried on, are revolting to every feeling of delicacy and propriety, and are fraught with the greatest danger to morals."

Those who have attended dances sponsored by, or even conducted in, some of these churches may be surprised to hear these statements. Why have they changed their position? Are they not as earnest about following the counsel of God's word today? Has the dance gotten better? Have the principles of God's word changed? Never forget that God does not follow the churches - the churches must follow God, or be lost. Gambling - card playing - movie attendance - immodest dress - etc. are areas in which the Christian should remember that he or she has a standard to uphold.

"There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life, than theatrical amusements... The only safe course is to shun the theater." Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4, p. 653

DENOMINATIONAL STANDARDS, ANNUAL COUNSEL 1935.

"They (the churches) should not give license... to attendance to the theater or movie, to commercialized baseball or other professional sports, to the worldly party of pleasure, even though held in the home of personal friends." P. 5

"Christ's true representative will make careful selection of that which comes over the radio (or television)... We appeal for far more discriminating use of the modern developments... Let us not do, nor hear, nor see, nor read, nor say ... anything prohibited by the divine rule." PP. 6, 13

"In cases where members ... hold bridge or other similar card parties in their homes ... or have dances ... or attend them elsewhere or frequent shows ... we recommend that faithful labor be put forth to reclaim such individuals ... but if this proves unsuccessful, that they be dismissed from church membership." P. 14

Over and over God calls upon His people to be separate and distinct from the world. - Not to be

conformed to its customs, or its ways. *2 Corinthians 6:17-18, Philippians. 4:8*

God has given us instruction in His word that is not very popular among many professed Christians today. *1 Timothy 2:9-10* This used to be an explicit part of the teachings of most churches. What has changed? The word of God, or the churches? Have the fashions become more modest? It is the Christian that has changed, desiring to be more like the world. The very thing that God has warned against again, and again, and again.

"Dignity, modesty, and simplicity should be the guiding principle in the choice of the attire... Our standards call for the discarding of jewelry ... such as rings, earrings, bracelets, and necklaces, the avoidance of extravagance and immodesty in dress." *Denominational Standards, p. 6, 14*

"Should we insist on rules concerning dress? By all means. This is no time to give encouragement to wrong methods of apparel; Therefore receive none into the church until they have left off all superfluous adornments... Give no admission to those who wear rings." *Methodist Discipline, 1855 ed., Chapter 5, Sec. 1, p. 88:*

Today people can wear rings on every finger, their ears, nose, navel, tongue, or anywhere else; and be in good and regular standing with the church. What has happened?

"I have been shown that our church rules are very deficient. All exhibitions of pride in dress, which is forbidden in the word of God, should be sufficient reason for church discipline... There is a terrible sin upon us as a people, that we have permitted our church members to dress in a manner inconsistent with their faith." *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4, p. 647, 648*

We are headed for the promised land and we must be making the needed preparation. We must heed the word of God and learn from the errors of His people in the past. That is why these things are recorded in the Bible. *Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11*

As the children of Israel were headed from Egypt to the promised land they began to adorn their bodies with the ornaments of the pagan people who had kept them in bondage for so many centuries.

God became so displeased that He said "Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee." *Exodus 33:5, 6*

It says that "the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments."

What do you think would have happened if they had disobeyed?

We find that adornment in the scripture is a consistent sign of those who were in rebellion against God.

1. In *Judges 8:24* it states that they wore earrings BECAUSE they were Ishmalites.
2. In *Genesis 35:2-4* it is associated with false gods. Even today it becomes idolatry for people place their desire for it above their desire to surrender all to God.
3. God uses it to describe those who have turned their backs on Him and gone after strange gods. *Hosea 2:13*
4. The apostate church, or "great whore" and all of her "harlot" daughters are pictured all

decked out in their ornaments. *Revelation 17:3-5* What a contrast with the true church of Revelation 12.

5. In Isaiah God pronounces judgement upon His people for their love of adornment. *Isaiah 3:9, 16-23*
6. He declares it all to be filth and that He shall "wash away the filth...by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." *Isaiah 4:4*

Remember, Satan directs his temptations to our weaknesses - not our strengths. He attempts to pervert those good instincts God has placed in us. He often uses different temptations for men and women. For example: God has placed in man's heart the basic instinct to provide for his family. In fulfillment of this a father will deny himself, and work unceasingly to provide for his family needs. There, Satan often urges his strongest temptation upon this point; telling him if he keeps the Sabbath his family will suffer. Most men are little disturbed about outward adorning. Thus, Satan would not be able to tempt them as much in this area.

On the other hand God has placed in the woman's heart the instinct for beauty. In fulfillment of this she beautifies the home, teaches the family to appreciate finer things, and keeps herself attractive and becomingly groomed. This is as God would have it, for it brings a refining influence upon the family. Satan, realizing this instinct for beauty, labors to turn it into wrong channels; and cause it to bring about vain, foolish adornment; and a copying of worldly fashions and customs. But God's instruction is "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel... not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." *1 Timothy 2:9-10*

"Those who cling to the ornaments forbidden in God's word, cherish pride and vanity in the heart... When the heart is fixed upon pleasing God alone, all needless embellishments of the person disappear." *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4, p. 465*

"Those who are too conscientious to wear these things are regarded as narrow-minded, superstitious, and even fanatical. But it is God who condescends to give us these instructions... and those who disregard them do so at their own peril and loss." *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4, p. 465*

We must be willing to stand firmly on the word of God and follow all of its instruction.

God has always forbidden His people from following the customs of the heathen by adorning their bodies. *1 Peter 3:2-4*

A fellow minister was conducting a Bible class and the question came up "What about lipstick?". The pastor read this verse we just looked at "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning". Then he asked: "Is lipstick and outward adorning or not?" to which all answered "Of course it is".

The sincere follower of Jesus will always take the Scriptures for its true and obvious meaning.

A young girl once went to a Pastor and asked him about wearing make-up. He asked her: "Why do you want to wear the stuff?" - "Because it makes me look nicer." - "How does it make you look nicer?" "I don't know what you mean." - "Does it make you look more spiritual?" - "No." - "Does it make you look more intellectual?" - "No." - "Does it make you look more sexy?" - "I ... I guess so." - "Is that what you want?" - Of course she said no - perhaps she had just never

thought it through before.

People are always referring to how "sexy" someone looks.

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

The first mention of make-up in the scriptures is found in reference to the pagan high priestess and queen Jezebel (*2 Kings 9:30-31*) and was an item used only by pagan women, or the people of God when in rebellion against Him.

As well as being a consistent mark of heathen women (Jezebel, Cleopatra, etc.), it is a vain attempt of women in the last days to be accepted by a worldly society; but will ultimately end in their destruction. *Jeremiah 4:23-31*

It's happening today. Many say it is a cultural thing, but our culture is in heaven.

When God says something we are to follow it.

A young girl once said "If God wanted my eyelids blue He would have made me a lizard."

Jezebel led the whole nation away from God until Elijah said "How long halt ye between two opinions, if God be God then follow Him." *1 Kings 18:21*

We need to make that decision too.

Things have come into the church through heathenism, through paganism.

The church fought it off for centuries, but within the last few decades it is hard to believe the changes that have been taking place.

The way people have been trying to rationalize these things away is absolutely mind-boggling.

God says if my church has been this way for 6,000 years, who are you to think you can change it now?

To try and bring the world into the church of the living God is an awesome thing indeed.

"As soon as any have a desire to imitate the fashion of the world, that they do not immediately subdue, just so soon God ceases to acknowledge them as His children. They are the children of this world and of darkness." *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, p. 137*

We must each one, individually, determine in our own hearts to shun, to shut out, to put away all worldly desires. We must come all the way out of the world and shun the evil of worldly ways. We are not to be of the world in any way. *John 17:15-17*

The only way we can be sanctified by God's Word is if we are willing to follow it FULLY.

God has given us a warning and a promise that I want to leave with you today.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." *1 John 2:15-17*

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." *James 4:4*

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:17-18

Are you willing to allow God's Word and His Spirit to be your only guide in life. To direct you as to what you should eat, drink, see and say? How you should dress, act, look and live? Where you should and should not go? Who you should and should not associate with?

Are you willing to come all the way out of the world and fully surrender to the will of the Father that you might abide with Him forever?

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. Isaiah 30:21, 22

Study Helps

- Jeremiah 10:23 ----- The way of man is not where?
- Proverbs 16:25 ----- Where could it end?
- Proverbs 28:26 ----- What does a fool trust in?
- Exodus 35:10 ----- What do the wise do?
- 1 Corinthians 10:31 ----- In what things are we to glorify God?
- 2 Corinthians 6:15-18 ----- What is God's call to His people?
- Isaiah 62:10 ----- What are we to set before the people?
- 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 ----- What are we and what are we to do?
- Exodus 33:5, 6 ----- What did God tell the people to take off?
- Judges 8:24 ----- What identified them as Ismaelites?
- Genesis 35:2-4 ----- What were the ornaments associated with?
- Hosea 2:13 ----- How does God portray apostate Israel?
- Revelation 17:3-5 ----- How is the corrupt church described?
- Isaiah 3:9, 16-23 ----- What were their ornaments a sign of?
- Isaiah 4:4 ----- What does God call their adornment?
- 1 Timothy 2:9, 10 ----- How should God's people adorn themselves?
- 1 Peter 3:3-5 ----- What should be the only ornament of a Christian?
- 1 John 2:15-17 ----- What are we not to love?
- Romans 12:1, 2 ----- What does God want us to do?
- 1 Thessalonians 5:22 ----- What are we to avoid?
- Titus 2:11-14 ----- What kind of people are we to be?