

July, 2005

Pause Ponder Profit

Voyage Toward Heaven

by James A. Brown



*When it was day,
they did not recognize the
land; but they observed a
bay with a beach, onto
which they planned to run
the ship if possible. And
they let go the anchors and left them in
the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder
ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to
the wind and made for shore (Acts
27:39-40)*

The text before us is taken from Luke's account of Paul's voyage to Rome as a prisoner. The ship and its crew had been pounded by a fierce storm for many days. Verse forty describes their actions as they prepared for shore: They cut their anchor away and left it in the sea. They loosed their rudder ropes, in order to steer the ship in the desired direction, and raised the mainsail in hope that the wind would push them to land. Then the verse says that they, "made toward shore." Vincent, in his Word Studies Of The New Testament, says the phrase "made toward" means a "bearing down for, holding one's course toward." The crew members were holding fast, keeping their course toward shore because

their hope of being saved from the storm depended on it.

Our eternal salvation also depends upon a holding fast and retaining hold of the hope that has been delivered to us in the faith — the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are to, "... hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering..." (Heb. 10:23), and this holding fast must be firm unto the end (Heb. 3:6). If we can do this we will be able to say like Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). Are you bearing down, holding the course toward the shores of heaven? Remember your salvation depends on it.

Gospel Meeting

Speaker: Jim McDonald

July 24th—29th, 2005

Sunday

9:45 & 10:45 A.M. & 6:00 P.M.

Monday through Friday

7:00 P.M.



Does The End Justify The Means?

by Clark Dugger

Throughout history many have concluded that the end justifies the means, that is, the greater good must be taken in consideration when determining whether something either unethical or immoral is to be done. For instance, in the early 18th century the Irish were crushed by poverty due to the cruel feudal policies of that societies elite. Because of this, many among the Irish were arguing the philosophy of pragmatic ethics. They argued that if a practice produces a useful result, it's ethical. Therefore, even the committing of certain crimes would be acceptable behavior if it supported a particular cause.

In an attempt to awaken the consciences of those who were proponents of such crimes in the name of the better good, Jonathan Swift (author of *Gulliver's Travels*) satirically offered a "solution" to the difficulties surrounding their severe poverty. He suggested, "that one solution might be that Irish babies could be killed and used for food. That way, there would be more sustenance for adults, and fewer growing mouths to feed. The 'balance' created would be a great benefit to society. In addition, 'baby skin would make a really soft leather, making possible a new industry that would create jobs and boost the Irish economy.'"

This suggestion, too horrible to contemplate, was, and is, sufficient to make the point that the end *never* justifies the means. In fact, the Bible clearly teaches this point. Paul says that he did not and would not teach, "Let us do evil, that good may come" (Rom. 3:8). Furthermore, he asks, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" (Rom. 6:1). Yet is that not exactly the argument that is being made concerning stem cell research?

"The embryo that results from the union of the male sperm and the female egg is human life. It is neither plant, beast of the field, fowl of the air, nor domestic creature, for its DNA indelibly stamps it as human. All this entity needs is water, food, air, and care - all the rest is simply development. There is no *qualitative* difference between the zygote, the embryo, the fetus, and the baby - any more than there is a qualitative difference between child, adolescent, the mature, or the elderly. These terms - all of them - are chronological indicators; they are not expressions of worth!"

When this embryo is purposefully destroyed, it matters not that it was done for the greater good of society. However many lives *might* be saved from the medical research done from the use of stem cells obtained from this embryo, the crime committed in the destruction of the embryo cannot be denied. It was murder.



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*Wine is a mocker,
Intoxicating drink
arouses brawling,
And whoever is led
astray by it is not wise.*

Establishing Authority

by James Hahn

Through the years God's people have been identified by their love for Him and their respect for His authority. In teaching others, emphasis was placed upon the means by which God communicates His will to us through His word. That will, it was noted, is set forth by a direct command or statement, or by an approved example, or by a necessary inference or conclusion.

In recent years such teaching has come under attack and ridicule. An example of such ridicule appears in an article appearing in the July, 1993 issue of "The Examiner", a paper edited by Charles Holt. The writer, in the title of his article, asked the question, "Direct Command, Approved Example, Necessary Inference: Whose Invention?"

The writer set forth the idea held by many that such an appeal to establishing authority is just some idea a man (or men) originated and that making such an appeal ignores the fact that we are under a system of faith as opposed to a system of law. He makes the same mistake made by so many in thinking that grace and faith exclude a demand for authority for all we teach and practice and that the demand for direct command, approved example or necessary inference is just some human invention unknown to God.

When we appeal to such means of establishing authority we are following the same rules of communication used in every area of life and those used by Jesus and the apostles.

Direct Command: In Mark 16:15 Jesus commanded His disciples to, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." A direct command easily understood by His disciples.

The apostle Paul does the same in 2 Thess. 3:6 when he commanded the Thessalonians to withdraw from those who walk disorderly.

Example: Jesus communicated His will to His disciples by setting the proper example. Peter tells us that He left "*us an example, that ye should follow his steps*" (1 Peter 2:21). When Jesus washed the disciples feet He told them that He had "*given you an example*" (John 13:15).

The apostle Paul called upon the Philippians to do the things they had heard and seen in him (Phil. 4:9). He wanted others to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).

Necessary Inference: Jesus, to teach the Sadducees the truth concerning the resurrection, quoted the scripture in which God declares, "*I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*" (Matt. 22:32). Since all three were dead at the time and, as Jesus declared, God is the God of the living, Jesus expected them to reach a necessary conclusion, i.e., Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were living though they had already tasted of physical death.

The Hebrew writer uses the same method of teaching when he states that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah and the law of Moses said nothing about priests from this tribe. The necessary conclusion? The priesthood being changed necessitated a change in law (Heb. 7:12-14).

Men may reject or ridicule our appeal for authority, but when we make an appeal for direct command, approved example or necessary inference for all we teach and practice we are following the example of Jesus and the apostles. To act without authority puts us in the company of those Jesus describes in Matt. 7:23, "*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*"

Churches And Fund Raising

by James A. Brown

Denominational churches having rummage sales, car washes, spaghetti dinners, carnivals, and raffles in order to raise funds is not authorized by the word of God. Churches of Christ putting their money into savings accounts, money market accounts, stocks, bonds, and mutual funds in order to raise money is also not authorized by God's word.

God has authorized only one way for churches to raise money, to be used in the work which He has assigned them, and that is through the free will offerings of the saints on the first day of the week.

The early Christians who made up local congregations in the New Testament were commanded to give as each one had decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion but cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7). Each one was to set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2). This voluntary giving of each member was the way the funds were to be raised. God's word speaks of no other way. When God specifies a way for His commands to be carried out, man has no right to substitute some other way (cf. Lev. 10:1-2; 2 Chron. 26:16-20). Remember God said, *"My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9).*

In order for any church to be vindicated in the manner in which it raises money it must follow the Bible way — God's way.



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Sunday
Radio 1490 AM 9:00 A.M.
Bible Study 9:45 A.M.
Worship 10:45 A.M.
Worship 6:00 P.M.
Wednesday
Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

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