

# New England Christian Bulletin

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## A Christian Response to Church Scandals

God is not the Problem; He is the Solution

By James Moriello

Like you, I am deeply saddened by scandal in the church. The devil is having a field day, and people are understandably getting disillusioned with the institutional church. Men, women, boys, and girls have been violated by depraved men who hide behind the collar or the plaque on the wall. Covetous men and women have stolen the hard earned and graciously given money that the faithful have donated for the purpose of furthering God's work. Scandals have rocked both the Catholic and Protestant churches. And every time another scandal is revealed, and they always come out, eventually, God weeps. And so do I. In this article, I shall set forth what the churches should do about it, including what steps I as a minister have always taken to be above reproach personally and publicly, and how you as a Christian should respond and deal with the disgust that learning of scandals evokes.

First, what the churches should do about it. Set standards and keep people accountable to those standards. No man or woman should be above accountability. If a crime is being committed, and we know about it, having good evidence or reasonable belief, we need to bring it out into the light within the church, and if it's validated, we need to report it promptly, so it can be dealt with promptly, before anyone else gets victimized. Now I understand that



Photo Credit: Tonya Hay

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior..." (1 Timothy 3:2)

there are also false claims made by folks with an axe to grind. To minimize this, those in church positions should take steps to protect themselves. In our church, we have several steps of accounting that involve several

people signing off on documents, which ensures that things are done above board financially. We also, and I speak for myself personally, limit our contact with people of the opposite sex and minor children to where

we are not alone with them in a private setting, so nobody ever even gets the idea that something untoward is going on.

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## When You Call Yourself a Christian, What Does That Mean?

By Scott Lancot

Hopefully, a Christ-centered life. Seeking God's will. Believing Jesus came to earth as God in the flesh to take away the sins of the world. He was obedient to the Father, and in going to the cross, made the way of salvation for all men (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2). The heart of Christianity is that Jesus died, was buried, and rose the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Today He is seated at the right hand of glory.

The Bible is clear and simple to understand. The problem comes when man sticks his fingers in it (to deviate from simple Bible doctrine). There is always a motive for one's response to the Bible truth, whether positive or negative. It is either to praise, worship and glorify God, or for self. "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7). As a Christian, it's been drilled into me. Compare Scripture with Scripture. What's the context of the verse or passage? Who are they writing to?

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## Are You Asleep?

"Awake thou that sleepest."-Ephesians 5:14 (KJV)

By J.C. Ryle

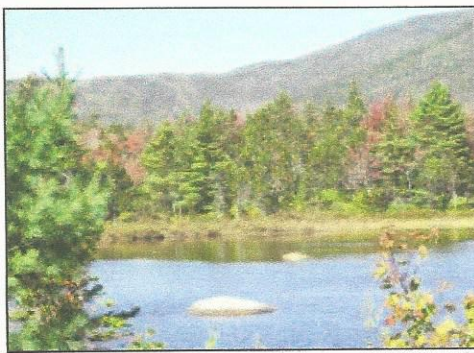


Photo Credit: Tonya Hay

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8)

I put before you now a simple question. Look through the pages of this paper and you will soon see why I ask it. "Are you asleep about your soul?"

There are many who have the name of Christians, but not the character which should go with the name. God is not King of their hearts. They mind earthly things.

Such persons are often quick and clever about the affairs of this life. They are, many of them, good men of business, good at their daily

work, good masters, good servants, good neighbors, good subjects of the Queen: all this I fully allow. But it is the eternal part of them that I speak of; it is their never dying souls. And about that, if a man may judge by the little they do for it, they are careless, thoughtless, reckless, and unconcerned. They are asleep.

I do not say that God and salvation are subjects that never come across their minds: but this I say, they have not the uppermost place there. Neither do I say that

they are all alike in their lives; some of them doubtless go further in sin than others: but this I say, they have all turned every one to his own way, and that way is not God's. I know no rule by which to judge of a man's estate but the Bible. Now when I look at the Bible I can come to only one conclusion about these people: they are asleep about their souls.

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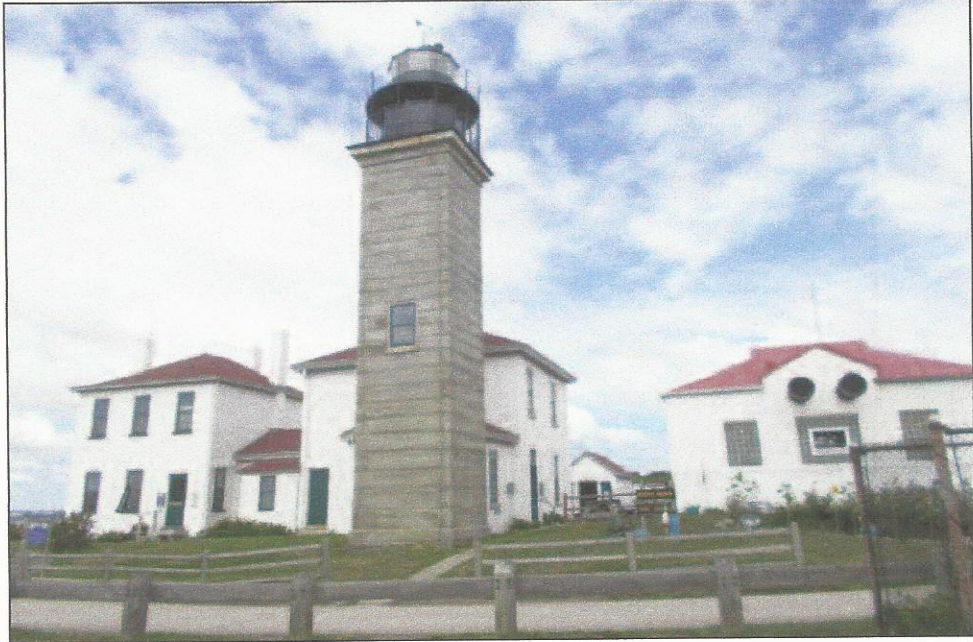
## Happy Anniversary, FFCC!

### Celebrating 9 Years of God's Faithfulness

By Susan Moriello

Wow! Another year has gone by so very quickly, and now we at Firm are celebrating our 9th Anniversary of service to the Lord through our local church! Our past year has been amazing. We are encouraged to see our brothers and sisters growing in the Word of God, and moving forward to serve Him in many ways.

We have been delighted to work with New Beginnings by donating goods that they need for their work of feeding the homeless and the poor. What a wonderful work that is for the Lord's glory. If you want to help them in any way, call them at 401-356-4066.



Beavertail Lighthouse, Jamestown, RI, Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it" (Psalm 127:1)

On the other hand, we are sadly missing our brothers and sisters that have moved on, and we pray that they keep going forward in worshipping the Lord.

It's been a blessing to receive into our church family new people who have come to join us at FFCC, not

only on Sundays, but also at Friday night Bible Study. At this time, we are studying the Book of Revelation. It is an exciting study.

Starting in September, we are resuming the Women's Ministry. We will be studying "The Woman Who Pleases God", which is an in-

depth Bible Study of how God wants all women to grow in godly character while engaged in the Lord's service. With all this being said, please join us this Sunday to worship the Lord. We would love to have you visit and (if the Lord leads) join our church family.

Whatever trial you are going through, the Lord is there waiting to hear your prayer. Jesus our God is our strength, comfort, and hope at all times. We would also like to pray with you about anything at all that is troubling you.

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## Intercessory Prayer

### Praying to God for Others

By Cheryl Correia

As a woman who loves the Lord, I frequently find myself praying for my family. This is intercessory prayer. A proper definition of intercessory prayer is "when one makes a request of God on behalf of another." The Bible contains examples of intercessory prayer in both the Old and New Testaments, and even Jesus Himself teaches us how to pray this way (John 17). There are other types of prayers that one can pray, but interceding on another's behalf is profitable.

An Old Testament example of intercessory prayer is found in Exodus 32:11-13. Moses went up to Mount Sinai, where God gave him the tablets of stone commandments. The people did not expect Moses to be gone forty days, and so they gathered to pressure Aaron. Exodus 32:7 states: "And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.'" In verse 10, God replies, "Now therefore,

let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation." It is at this point that Moses intercedes for the people. Verse 11 states, "Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?"

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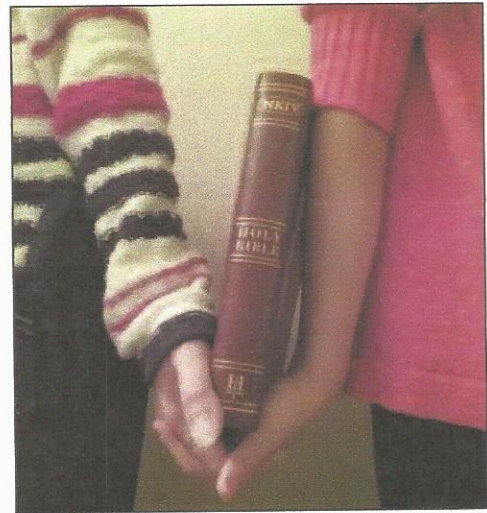


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"pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

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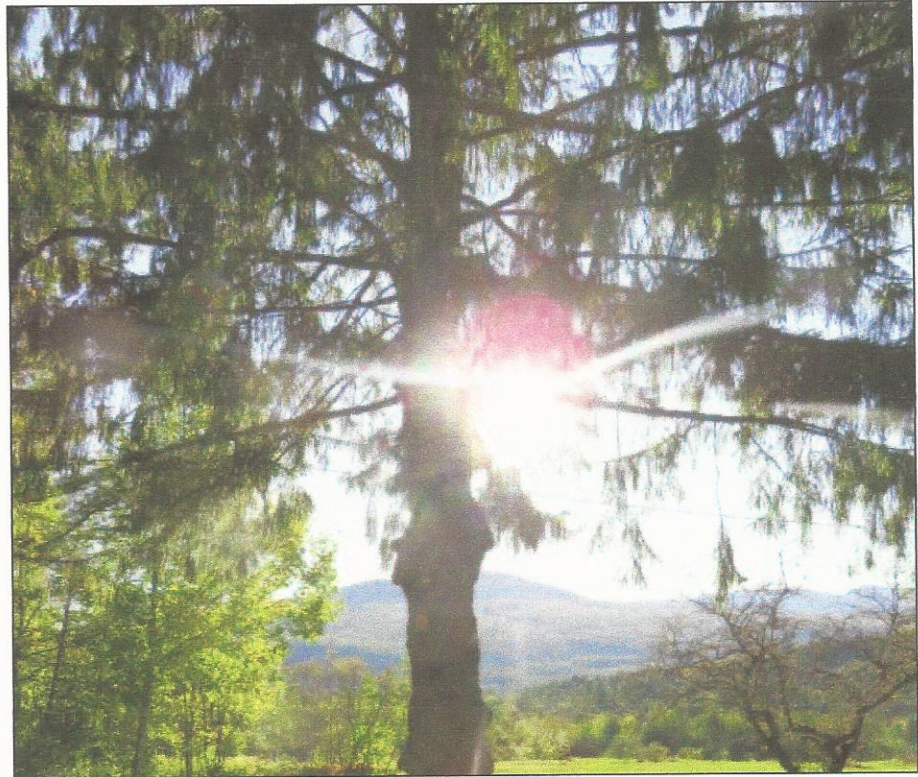
This newspaper is one of our many Great Commission outreaches. How can I be a part of what God is doing at

Firm? Glad you asked. Please join us for Christian worship Sundays at 10 am, or for Bible Study Fridays at 7 pm, at 84 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, RI. You may also peruse our extensive website, listed above. Find us on TV anywhere in

Rhode Island every Wednesday at 3:30 pm on Cox Channel 14/Verizon Channel 33, and/or in Northern Rhode Island every Tuesday at 10 am and every Saturday at 10 am on Cox Channel 18/Verizon Channel 23.

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17:20-23).

Photo Credit: Tanya Hay



## Intercessory Prayer: Praying to God for Others (Continued from Page 2)

By Cheryl Correia

Moses understands that God's name must be vindicated, so in verse 12, he says, "Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?' Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people." Moses again appealed to God in the next verse, pointing out that if Israel were destroyed, then the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant could not be fulfilled. "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own Self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" Moses continues to intercede for Israel in Exodus 32:31-32. "Then Moses returned to the

LORD and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written." This is just one example of many in which Moses intercedes for yet another sin of Israel.

The New Testament gives us an example of intercessory prayer when Paul intercedes on behalf of Onesimus by writing to Philemon. Paul appeals regarding Philemon's loss on behalf of his runaway slave, Onesimus, who now has a death sentence as a result of his departure. Paul says in Philemon 1:9-11, "yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ—I

appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me." Paul is interceding on behalf of Onesimus to Philemon. He is requesting that Philemon impute Onesimus' debt to Paul's own account, and to receive the

returning slave as he would receive Paul himself. This is a beautiful example of intercession made on behalf of another. Jesus demonstrated intercessory prayer in John 17:9 in praying for His disciples. "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours." Jesus continues with His appeal in verses 20 and 21. "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in

Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." These exciting words are actually on our behalf, if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is interceding on our behalf before our Heavenly Father. Although there are other forms of prayer, such as thanksgiving, praise, confession, and so forth, I often find myself exercising intercessory prayer on behalf of those I love or meet. Intercessory prayer is profitable because, rather than worrying, it allows me to place my requests or appeals on the altar of my Lord. I trust, plead, and understand that the Lord knows best. The Bible says to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and these examples encourage me to lift people up to the Lord in intercessory prayer.

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

(John 17:24)

"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path.  
I have sworn and confirmed  
That I will keep Your righteous judgments.  
I am afflicted very much;  
Revive me, O Lord, according to Your word.  
Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord,  
And teach me Your judgments.  
My life is continually in my hand,  
Yet I do not forget Your law.  
The wicked have laid a snare for me,  
Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.  
Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever,  
For they are the rejoicing of my heart.  
I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes  
Forever, to the very end."  
(Psalm 119:105-112)

Photo Credit: Tanya Hay



## When You Call Yourself a Christian, What Does That Mean? (Continued from Page 1)

By Scott Lanctot

The Old Testament was written to the Israelites. The Gentiles were outside the law. The events of the four gospels took place while Israel was still under the law. Jesus was born under the law, and came to fulfill the law (Galatians 4:4; Matthew 5:17). To have a good understanding of the New Testament, you must have an understanding of the Old Testament. Like a hand in glove, they fit perfectly together. The whole Bible points to Jesus Christ, and believers can apply both Old and New Testament truths to life. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). My thoughts go racing on how and why Christians can't

agree on what the Bible clearly says. Some think that a woman should be a preacher. What does the Bible say?

"And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:12). Why do people think speaking in tongues is okay, a gift for today, when it was a sign gift that ceased after the early church? What does the Bible say?

"Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease" (1 Corinthians 13:8). Other people focus on Mary as "Co-Redemptrix" and "Mediatix", and genuflect before statues. What does the Bible say? "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image--any likeness of any-

thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them" (Exodus 20:3-5). "For there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Some say the times have changed, saying, "Scott, we're in the

21st century."

That's true. What does the Bible say? "Every word of God is pure; He is

a shield to those who put their trust in Him" (Proverbs 30:5). There are other folks who think that all people will enter heaven. What does the Bible say? "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). There is a requirement to get to heaven. Believe in faith upon Jesus. God is both

loving and just. Most people forget the "just" part. I have a question for you. If you go to work and disobey your boss, lying or flat out refusing to do a job, do you think there's no consequences for your actions? Do you think God is any different? I'm not here to argue. I'm here to let people know that there is a way out. We're all sinners in need of a Savior, and that Savior is Jesus Christ. Let me share with you an eye opening Scripture. These are Jesus' words. "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:23). Opinions are opinions, and facts are facts. What does the Good Book say? You might not believe me. I'm okay with that. Take a leap of faith. Take a read of God's Word, His Holy Bible. Pray. Have an open mind. See for yourself if this writing is true. The Bible is a life changer.

**"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith."**

*(2 Corinthians 13:5)*

# Are You Asleep? (Continued from Page 1), By J.C. Ryle

These people do not see the sinfulness of sin, and their own lost condition by nature. They appear to make light of breaking God's commandments, and to care little whether they live according to His law or not. Yet God says that sin is the transgression of the law, that His commandment is exceeding broad, that every imagination of the natural heart is evil, that sin is the thing He cannot bear, He hates it, that the wages of sin is death, and the soul that sinneth shall die. Surely they are asleep.

Is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. ARE You ASLEEP?

These people do not see their need of a Savior. They appear to think it an easy matter to get to heaven, and that God will of course be merciful to them at last, some way or other, though they do not exactly know how. Yet God says that He is just and holy, and never changes, that Christ is the only way, and none can come unto the Father but by Him, that without His blood there can be no forgiveness of sin, that a man without Christ is a man without hope, that those who would be saved must believe on Jesus and come to Him, and that he who believeth not shall he damned. Surely they are asleep!

Once more I say, is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. ARE You ASLEEP?

These people do not see the necessity of holiness. They appear to think it quite enough to go on as others do, and live like their neighbors. And as for praying and Bible-reading, making conscience of words and actions, studying truthfulness and gentleness, humility and charity, and keeping separate from the world, they are things they do not seem to

value at all. Yet God says that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, that there shall enter into heaven nothing that defileth, that His people must be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Surely they are asleep!

Once more I say, is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. ARE You ASLEEP?

Worst of all, these people do not appear to feel their danger. They walk on with their eyes shut, and seem not to know that the end of their path is hell. Some dreamers fancy that they are rich when they are poor, or full when they are hungry, or well when they are sick, and awake to find it all a mistake. And this is the way that many dream about their souls. They flatter themselves they will have peace, and there will be no peace; they fancy that they are all right, and in truth they will find that they are all wrong. Surely they are asleep!

Once more I say, is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. ARE You ASLEEP?

If conscience pricks you, and tells you you are yet asleep, what can I say to arouse you? Your soul is in awful peril. Without a mighty change it will be lost. When shall that change once be?

You are never failed to make His

dying, and not ready to depart, you are going to be judged, and not prepared to meet God, your sins are not forgiven, your person is not justified, your heart is not renewed. Heaven itself would be no happiness to you if you got there, for the Lord of heaven is not your friend: what pleases Him does not please you; what He dislikes gives you no pain. His word is not your counselor; His day is not your delight; His law is not your guide. You care little for hearing of Him: you know nothing of speaking with Him. To be forever in His company would be a thing you could not endure; and the society of saints and angels would be a weariness, and not a joy. At the rate you live at, the Bible might never have been written, and Christ might never have died, the Apostles were foolish, the New Testament Christians madmen, and the salvation of the Gospel a needless thing. Oh, awake! and sleep no more.

Think not to say you cannot believe your case is so bad, or the danger so great, or God so particular. I answer, the devil has been putting this lying delusion into people's hearts for nearly six thousand years. It has been his grand snare ever since the day he said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die." Do not be so weak as to be taken in by it. God never failed yet to punish sin, and He never will: He never failed to make His

word good, and you will find this to your cost, one day, except you repent. Reader, awake: awake!

Think not to say you are a member of Christ's Church, and therefore feel no doubt you are as good a Christian as others. I answer, this will only make your case worse, if you have nothing else to plead. You may be written down and registered among God's people: you may be reckoned in the number of saints; you may sit for years under the sound of the Gospel; you may use holy forms and even come to the Lord's table at regular seasons; and still, with all this, unless sin be hateful, and Christ precious, and your heart a temple of the Holy Ghost, you will prove in the end no better than a lost soul. A holy calling will never save an unholy man. Reader, awake: awake!

Think not to say you have been baptized, and so feel confident you are born of God, and have His grace within you. I answer, you have none of the marks which St. John has told me, in his first epistle, distinguish such a person. I do not see you confessing that Jesus is the Christ, overcoming the world, not committing sin, loving your brother, doing righteousness, keeping yourself from the wicked one. How then can I believe that you are born of God?

(Continued on Page 6)



Photo Credit: NECB Staff

# Are You Asleep? (Continued from Page 5), By J.C. Ryle

If God were your Father, you would love Christ: if you were God's son, you would be led by His Spirit. I want stronger evidences. Show me some repentance and faith; show me a life hid with Christ in God; show me a spiritual and sanctified conversation: these are the fruits I want to see, if I am to believe you have the root of the matter in you, and are a living branch of the true vine. But without these your baptism will only add to your condemnation. Reader, awake: awake!

I speak strongly, because I feel deeply. Time is too short, life is too uncertain, to allow of standing on ceremony. At the risk of offending, I use great plainness of speech. I cannot bear the thought of hearing you condemned in the great day of assize; of seeing your face in the crowd on God's left hand, among those who are helpless, hopeless, and beyond the reach of mercy. I cannot bear such thoughts, they grieve me to the heart. Before the day of grace is past, and the day of vengeance begins, I call upon you to open your eyes and repent. Oh, consider your ways and be wise. Awake: awake! Why will ye die?

This day, as the ambassador of Christ, I pray you to be reconciled to God. The Lord Jesus who came into the world to save sinners, Jesus the appointed Mediator between God and man, Jesus who loved us and gave Himself for us, Jesus sends you a message of peace: He says, "Come unto Me."

"Come" is a precious word indeed, and ought to draw you. You have sinned against heaven: heaven has not sinned against you. Yet see how the first step towards peace is on heaven's side. It is the Lord's message: "Come unto Me."

"Come" is a word of merciful invitation. Does not the Lord Jesus seem to say, "Sinner, I am waiting for you: I am not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. I would have all men saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Judgment is my strange work, I delight in mercy. I offer the water of life to every one who will take it. I stand at the door of your heart and knock. For long time I have spread out my hands to you. I wait to be gracious. There is yet room in my Father's house. My long-suffering waits for more of the children of men to come to the mercy-seat before the last trumpet is blown, for more wanderers to return before the door is closed for ever. Oh, sinner, come to Me!"

"Come" is a word of promise and encouragement. Does not the Lord Jesus seem to say, "Sinner, I have gifts ready for you: I have something of everlasting importance to bestow upon your soul. I have received gifts for men, even for the rebellious. I have a free pardon for the most ungodly, a full fountain for the most unclean, a white garment for the most defiled, a new heart for the most hardened, healing for

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broken-hearted, rest for the heavy-laden, joy for those that mourn. Oh, sinner, it is not for nothing that I invite you! All things are ready. Come: come unto Me."

Hear the voice of the Son of God. See that you refuse not Him that speaketh. Come away from sin, which can never give you real pleasure, and will be bitter at the last; come out from a world which will never satisfy you: come unto Christ! Come, with all your sins, however many and however great, however far you may have gone from God, and however provoking your conduct may have been. Come as you are: unfit, unmeet, unprepared as you may think yourself, you will gain no fitness by delay. Come at once: come to the Lord Jesus Christ!

How indeed shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation? Where will you appear if you make light of the blood of Christ, and do despite to the Spirit of grace? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, but never so fearful as when men fall from under the Gospel. The saddest road to hell is that which runs under the pulpit, past the Bible, and through the midst of warnings and invitations. Oh, beware, lest like Israel at Kadesh, you mourn over your mistake when it is too late; or, like Judas Iscariot, find out your sin

when there is no space for repentance.

Arise, and call upon the Lord. Be not like Esau: sell not eternal blessings for the things of today. Surely the time past may suffice you to have been careless and prayerless, Godless and Christless, worldly and earthly-minded. Surely the time to come may be given to your soul.

Pray, I beseech you, that you may be enabled to put off the old ways and the old habits, and that you may become a new man. I yield to none in wishes for your happiness, and my best wish is that you may be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is a better thing than riches, or health, or honor, or learning. A man may get to heaven without these, but he cannot get there without conversion. Verily if you die without having been born again you had far better never have been born at all. No man really lives till he lives unto God.

I leave my question with you. The Lord grant that it may prove a word in season to your soul. My heart's desire and prayer to God is that you may be saved. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Arise, O sleeper and call upon God. There is yet hope. Forsake not thy mercies. Do not lose thine own soul.

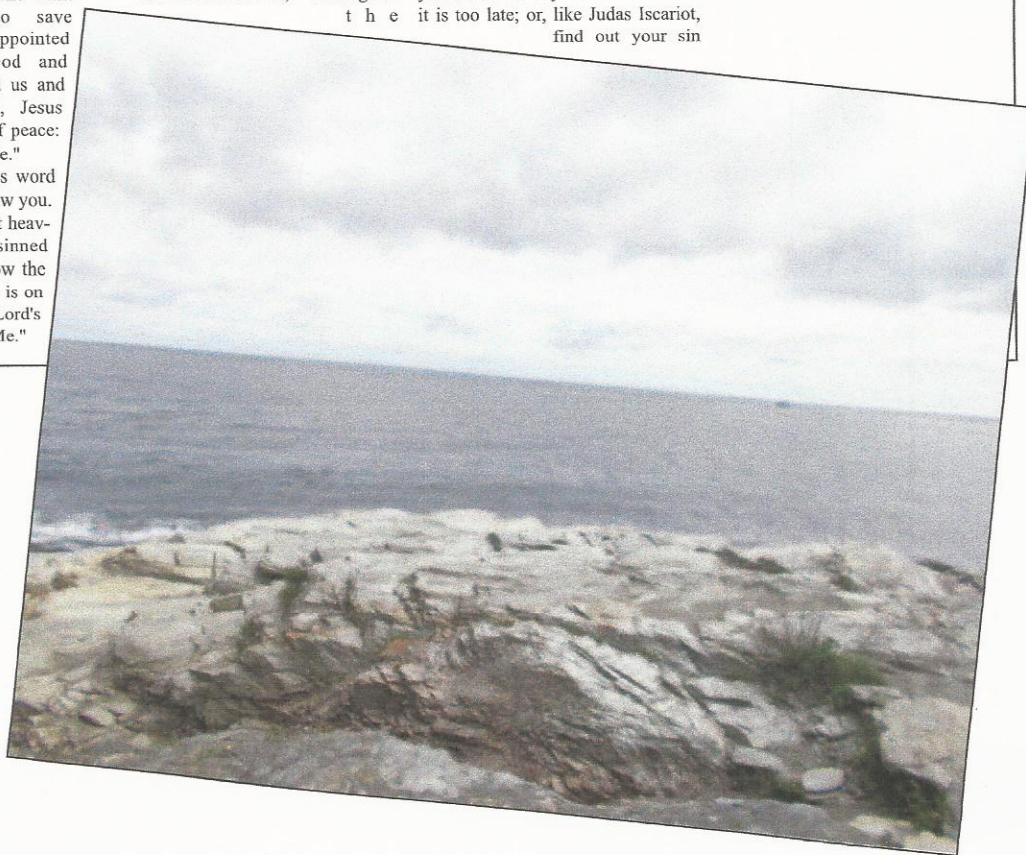


Photo Credit: NECB Staff

# Eighteen Rules for Understanding the Bible

By James Moriello

i. The Bible means what it says. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

ii. If the text makes sense, seek no other sense.

iii. The Bible should be read and scrutinized the same way as other books. For example, if multiple attestation is used to accept a historical fact in other books, the same criteria should be used to accept the well attested fact of the Resurrection, even though it is also supernatural (Acts 24:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:5-8). This is consistently violated by the "Historical Jesus" movement.

iv. Most Bible texts have only one meaning, but all have many applications. Genesis 2:24 is a good example.

v. Base the subjective on the objective. Objective truth always trumps applicational truth when bringing to bear on theological understanding. Applications are subjective by defi-

nition, unless the Scripture itself provides the applications.

vi. A text taken out of context is a pretext. Examples of texts that are commonly lifted out of their context include Daniel 12:4, Galatians 3:28, 2 Peter 3:8, and Revelation 7:4.

vii. We interpret unclear texts in light of clearer texts.

viii. We should understand Scripture literally, unless the context gives us reason not to (as is the case with Luke 22:19-20).

ix. Whenever possible, allow the Bible to interpret itself (e.g. Revelation 1:20).

x. Beware of allegorical interpretations. Some claim that the USA is in the Bible because of references to the seas and eagles, but this is based on bad hermeneutic principle (it violates this biblical one).

xi. Every word is part of, and fits with the whole of, Scripture.

xii. The Bible will never contradict itself.

xiii. The Bible is best understood within the framework of dispensations. A dispensation is a period of human history in which God works in particular ways with particular people. This is a biblically sound

framework (Ephesians 1:10; Hebrews 1:1-2). It also accounts for many difficulties, especially those relating to law and grace. See my

paper, "Framework of Biblical Ordinances," for more detail on this point.

xiv. The Bible is Christocentric. Jesus is the subject of both Old and New Testaments (Proverbs 30:4; Isaiah 53; Luke 24:27; John 5:39; Hebrews 1:1-3).

xv. The Bible reveals progressively

from beginning to end.

xvi. Prophecy is sometimes fulfilled in type or partially at a point in time (e.g., Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32).

xvii. We must distinguish between the things that the Bible commands and the things it records. For instance, polygamy, divorce, and slavery are recorded, and laws are even given to regulate the practices, but they are not God's ideal.

xviii. Last but not least, my favorite one: The Perspicuity of Scripture, which means that the Bible is simple and clear enough that even a child can understand its basic message (the gospel). God made it simple. Man complicates. See Psalm 119:130; Matthew 11:25, 18:3, 21:15-16. Hebrews 6:4-6 is an excellent case study of this principle, and incorporates many of the others.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

(2 Timothy 2:15)

## A Christian Response to Church Scandals (Continued from Page 1)

By James Moriello

Let me give some examples of how we as a church can keep things above board regarding personal boundaries. We can ensure that either our spouse or the spouse of another person is present during counseling sessions. We can make sure that an adult woman is present in all our youth Sunday School classes. We can make sure that our volunteers are well known before we put them in certain positions. Now I understand that these things are more conducive to the Protestant church environment where the Pastor is usually married. So what about the Catholic priesthood? Now in full disclosure, I have my own theological disagreements with that institution based on 1 Timothy 3:1-2 and 4:1-3. Celibacy is a rare gift (See 1 Corinthians 7:1-7). If Catholic ministers were to be allowed to marry, this would not contradict Scripture. Beyond saying that, I am content to let them work things out internally.

What should you do? If this is a concern of yours, observe, and see how things are conducted. In many churches, things are on the up and up, but all those fine servants of God don't make news. Is there a culture of secrecy in your church? If so, address it. Did not Jesus Christ come to bring light into the world?



PHOTO CREDIT: NECB STAFF

"Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Finally, realize this. God did not perpetrate any evil. He never has, and never will. Sinful man does evil due to covetousness and depravity. Pray for the church and its ministers. And as imperfect as the human beings are who run things, remember that many are indeed called by God to preach and teach the

Gospel of Jesus Christ. You have a duty to attend services, at a minimum (Hebrews 10:24-25). Disillusionment with institutional religion does not give you the out of avoiding the church which Christ Himself instituted for people to be a part of. Sins of others are not an excuse for your own spiritual laziness. Get to a

church that preaches the Word of God, serve there, and be a part of the solution. After all, God has provided His Son Jesus as your spiritual solution. He didn't cut out on you because of your sin. Let's thank Him and praise Him for that this Sunday as never before!

Happy  
Anniversary,  
FFCC!  
(Continued  
from Page 2)  
Celebrating 9  
Years of God's  
Faithfulness

By Susan Moriello

We have a vibrant Children's Sunday School, where the children receive biblical teaching at their level while the sermon is being preached. Our students are doing very well studying the Word of God through Emmaus classes. They do lesson a lesson a week, followed by a test to challenge them, which we generally go over afterwards. Our teachers are competent and patient with the children. I thank them for their service, and for the wonderful job they are doing.

On the second Sunday of each month, we offer adult Emmaus courses, which are done as independent study, so people can do them on their



Beavertail Lighthouse, Jamestown, RI, Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1).

own time at their own pace. We recommend that students complete a book a month, which is very doable. This will equip you spiritually, as you continually learn God's Word. The first Sunday of each month is the Advanced Discipleship Program, which

allows the mature and seasoned Christian to advance even more through biblical studies. But I do advise you to begin with the Emmaus courses, which will get you started in the discipline of setting aside time for serious Bible Study, which is very reward-

ing. Pastor James and I would like to thank all our church family for their continued support and prayers. We pray for another productive year of seeing more souls added to God's Kingdom. Our Evangelism Team is always

working to bring the message of salvation to all. Praise the Lord! Consider prayerfully if you want to be a part of God's work here at Firm, and if so, I very much look forward to meeting you soon! Until next time, blessings and peace to all!

**"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid,  
which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).**

**Join us this Sunday at 10 am!**

**Join us this Friday at 7 pm!**

**Join us for our 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service Sunday 9/16, at 10 am!**

**Free luncheon to follow!**

**Firm Foundation Christian Church**

**84 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, RI**

**401-765-0107, [www.firmfoundationri.com](http://www.firmfoundationri.com)**