

THE TRAGEDY OF MELVIN GORDON

Bill Hall

Melvin Gordon is dead. He loved his family, and was especially concerned for his sister who suffered from a serious kidney ailment. "I would do almost anything to restore my sister's health," he told his wife. So he drove to a local hospital, put a rifle muzzle to his head, and fired one shot. Pinned to his shirt was a note, "Get my kidney within one hour." A kidney, however, to be used for a transplant, must be taken at the moment of death and kept filled with flowing blood to avoid tissue deterioration. They found him too late. His kidneys could not be used. Melvin Gordon died in vain.

What a tragic story! And the story becomes doubly tragic in the realization that had Melvin Gordon taken the time to learn the facts, he could have helped his sister while continuing to live a normal life himself! But, he acted according to his feelings, on impulse, and, as a result, he is dead and his sister continues to suffer from her kidney ailment. He died in vain because he didn't take the time to learn the truth.

The tragic story of Melvin Gordon is being spiritually re-enacted in the lives of millions of people throughout the world – people who are religious, who are zealous in their religion, who are giving liberally of their time, money, and talents, who would gladly die for the cause they have espoused, who both expect and desire to go to heaven, but people who have really given little consideration to what God has said concerning that which pleases Him. In fact, while many of them read the Bible every day, they frankly admit that they have little knowledge as to what the Bible teaches. They have plunged headlong into some cause without demanding book, chapter, and verse to show God's authority behind that cause.

These people vary widely in what they are doing. One person may have done one thing "to be saved," while another may have done something entirely different. One person may be caring for the day nursery for the church while another is playing on the church softball team. But the one thing they have in common is that they are all "doing" without having taken the time to investigate what they ought to be doing.

Such action leads to spiritual tragedy. *"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that*

– Continued on page 3 –

– Continued from page 1 –

murderers were executed for their crimes, both before and after David.

The same Covenant treated adultery as a capital offense. *"The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death"* (Leviticus 20:10). Not only did David deserve to be slain for murder, but he and Bathsheba both should have been put to death for their sexual immorality. Again, though, God granted extraordinary mercy and forgave the sin, saying through Nathan, *"You shall not die"* (2nd Samuel 12:13).

If the case of Bathsheba allows the doctrine of Christ pertaining to divorce to be disregarded, then it also permits murder. No other conclusion is logically consistent.

Moreover, if this extraordinary circumstance is to be duplicated, then it must be applied in its entirety. Although Nathan told the king, *"Jehovah also has put away your sin"* (2nd Samuel 12:13), the seer continued, *"the child also who is born to you shall surely die"* (14). Those who would justify marriages deemed adulterous by Christ because of David and Bathsheba should readily forfeit the life of the first child to come from their union. Of course, that's not what anyone is after; they are trying to avoid punishment altogether.

The Bathsheba incident was not exemplary, but exceptional. God was not in the habit of sending prophets to rebuke sinners and then grant them forgiveness, but He knew David to be *"a man after [His] own heart"* (Acts 13:22), and so He extended extraordinary mercy to him.

Invoking this act of special forgiveness to legitimize adulterous marriage is tantamount to demanding salvation from sin like the thief on the cross received. Jesus commands baptism in order to be saved (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19), but He extended special forgiveness to a criminal crucified at His side (Luke 23:39-43), and most Protestants believe they can be saved as he was. However, baptism is a union with Christ's death (Romans 6:3-6), which had not yet occurred when He forgave that repentant man. Any Christian who can recognize the error of comparing the forgiveness afforded the thief to their own salvation can, likewise, perceive the flaw of justifying adultery based on David and Bathsheba's affair.

– Continued from page 2 –

doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in

– Continued on page 4 –

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Men's/Women's Studies
@ 6:30 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belen, New Mexico

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

– Continued from page 3 –
that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

In the judgment, the question will not be, "Were you religious?," but, "Did you do the will of the Father in heaven?" Only those who are diligently studying God's will and are doing it can face that judgment with confidence. Don't give your life in vain.

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 8

FEBRUARY 26TH, 2023

THE BATHSHEBA DEFENSE

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Despite the Master's straightforward instruction regarding divorce (Matthew 5:32; 19:9), many would evade the conclusion that some marriages are sinful and must be repented of. Wanting to justify themselves, they invoke the marriage of David to Bathsheba.

King David committed adultery with Bathsheba (2nd Samuel 11:2-4) while her husband was in a battle that David ought to have been leading (1). The affair resulted in pregnancy (5), so David plotted to conceal their sin (6-13), ultimately arranging for her husband Uriah to fall in combat (14-25). Afterward, David and Bathsheba married (26-27). Then, the prophet Nathan confronted the king, revealing that the sin was never hidden from God (12:1-12). Without delay or denial, David admitted his sin (13), and God granted him mercy. Some believe that since God forgave David, and he was permitted to keep Bathsheba as his wife, that they need not end marriages the Lord has forbidden (Luke 16:18).

David and Bathsheba were Israelites accountable to the Law of Moses, which commanded, "Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 24:17). The king would have been subject to the death penalty for his crime in orchestrating the battlefield death of his rival Uriah, if not for the direct intervention of God. This law remained in place until Christ (Romans 10:4). Under ordinary circumstances,

– Continued on page 3 –

RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

505-864-0282

rgvcoc@gmail.com

Box 989, Belen, NM 87002

www.RGVChurchOfChrist.org

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Facebook.com/RGVChurchOfChrist