

## From the Desk of David Lantz

*All it takes for evil to triumph in the world is for good men to do nothing.*

Edmond Burke

### **Confronting Evil In The World**

By David Lantz

Many people are familiar with the above quote by Edmond Burke. Whenever a great cause against injustice is begun, these words are invoked. Burke's statement assumes the following three premises:

1. Good and evil exist in the world
2. There is an ongoing battle between the forces of darkness and the powers of light.
3. Either by our action or our inaction, you and I are on one side or the other.

This battle between good and evil evokes images of the good guys getting ready to go to war with the bad guys.

Less well known, however, is this passage from 1 John 3:8:

*The Son of God appeared for this purpose: That He might destroy the works of the devil.*

As Christians, Christ calls us to confront evil in the world.

As Christians, there is no question that Christ calls us to be involved in this battle. As Disciples of Christ, the question is: How are we to confront evil in the world. I believe Christ Himself models three specific styles of confronting evil

#### **1. Jesus Goes to the Gates of a Pagan Culture**

In Matthew 16:13-23, Jesus goes to the region of Caesarea Philippi. From ancient times, it was a place of pagan worship. During Old Testament times, the city of Dan was built in the same area. In I Kings 12:28-29, King Jeroboam made two golden calves and set them in Bethel and Dan. By the time of Christ, the Greeks offered sacrifices to the goat god, Pan and created a place for idol worship at the mouth of a cave from which flowed a spring. Now called Banais in the country of Lebanon, the rock face of the cave had alcoves carved into it where idols of the

## From the Desk of David Lantz

gods were placed. (To learn more about this place, visit the following site: ([http://www.ancientsandals.com/overviews/caesarea\\_philippi.htm](http://www.ancientsandals.com/overviews/caesarea_philippi.htm)) In Jesus's day, it was known as the Rock of the Gods.

Just days before going to Jerusalem to die on a cross, Jesus brings his disciples to ask them this important question: "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answers: You are the Christ, the son of the living God. Then, Jesus makes this statement:

Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hell shall not overpower it. (Matthew 16:18)

At the AncientSandals' website, there is a picture of this area called The Rock of the Gods. If you go to this site and look at this picture, try to imagine Jesus standing before it as he speaks with Peter. Jesus doesn't do the "holy huddle." He doesn't retreat into the four walls of a church to keep evildoers out. No! Jesus is calling us to go out into the pagan culture, to the very gates of hell itself, and be ambassadors for Christ. When we practice life-style evangelism, we are to ask: Who do you say Jesus is? We can only ask that question of non-believers if we are willing to go to where the pagans are.

Therefore, we may state our first principle:

*All it takes for Satan to triumph in the world is for Christians to withdraw from being engaged in the world.*

### **2. Jesus is a Servant**

Time and again, Jesus healed the lost and hurting of his world. Despite what the religious leaders said and thought, he ate with sinners and tax collectors. In Matthew 20:20-28, the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to ask if her boys could sit at Jesus' right and left hand. Seeing that she was interested only in seeing her sons exalted, (and by implication she herself would be well rewarded). Jesus made this comment to his disciples:

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave." (Matthew 20:25-27)

## From the Desk of David Lantz

In your church, do you complain about not being "fed," spiritually? Do you make comments about "those people" need to do a better job of this or that? Or, do you ever catch yourself thinking: "After all I've done for this congregation, I deserve to be treated better?" Christ calls us to take up our cross daily and serve those around us. He promised that our reward would be great in Heaven - not on earth.

Therefore, principle # 2 is:

*All it takes for Satan to triumph in the world is for Christians to be concerned with being served instead of serving others.*

### **3. Jesus Defends His Flock**

In our day, there are many wolves in sheep's clothing that attempt to lead the flock astray. Rather than preaching the Gospel, they preach humanism. A number of denominations wrestle with such issues as ordaining gay ministers or affirming the concept that Christ is not the only way to salvation. Even in churches where the Bible is preached rather than humanism, many ministers are hesitant to preach on controversial social issues, such as abortion, gambling or New Age heresy.

God has given some a position in life from which they may influence a great many people. To those whom God has given such a position, He expects them to defend the flock. In Matthew 23:1-36, Jesus chastised the religious leaders of the day for their failure to not only perform this basic duty, but for their guilt in leading their flock astray. In vs. 15, He accuses the scribes and Pharisees of taking a new convert to Judaism and making him "twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." Jesus took seriously the duties and responsibilities of a shepherd. In John 10:11-13, He said:

I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hireling, and is not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flies, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep.

From this last point, we draw the following third and final principle:

*All it takes for Satan to triumph in the world is for the ministers of the Gospel to abandon their responsibilities as shepherds.*

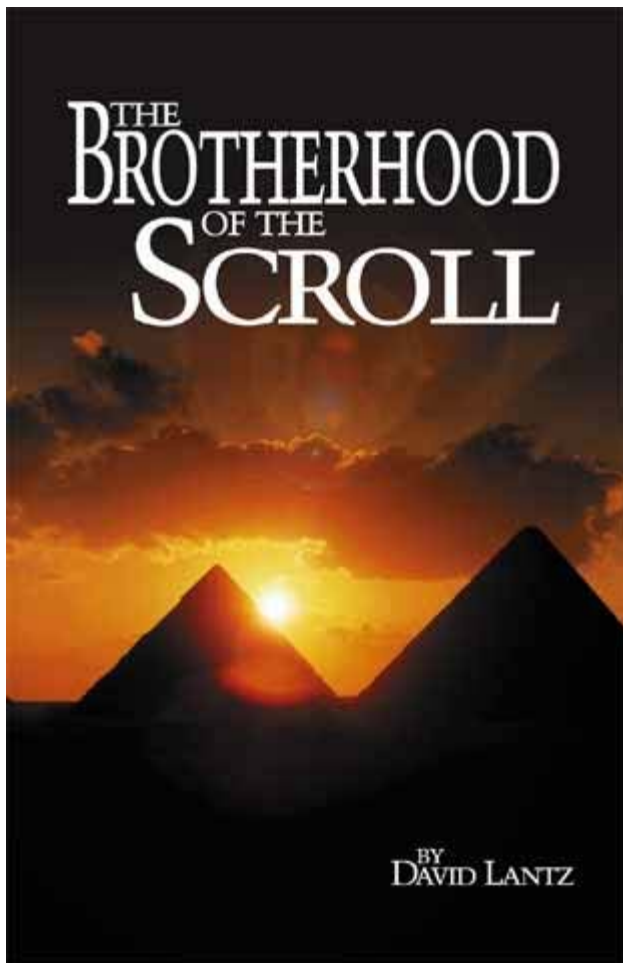
### **Conclusion**

All Christians are called to be ministers of God's word. We are called to go into a pagan culture and reflect the love of Christ in our lives so that people will be forced to answer the question: "Who do I say Christ is?" As servants of Christ, we are called to serve others. Finally, we are to take our roles as shepherds seriously and take a stand against the wolves of our culture.

## From the Desk of David Lantz

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus promises that the Gates of Hell shall not overpower the Church. Think about movies you've seen involving an army attacking its enemy camped inside the walls of a fort or castle. Have you ever seen the gates of that wall march out to attack the invading army? Of course not: Gates don't attack; they serve a purely defensive purpose. Christ calls us to go on the offensive and confront evil in the culture.

Have you answered His call?



David Lantz is the author of *The Brotherhood of the Scroll*. For information about his book, including how to order *Brotherhood*, please visit us on the web at [www.brotherhoodscroll.net](http://www.brotherhoodscroll.net)

DAVID LANTZ IS THE AUTHOR OF [THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE SCROLL](http://www.brotherhoodscroll.net), VISIT HIM AT [WWW.BROTHERHOODSCROLL.NET](http://WWW.BROTHERHOODSCROLL.NET) E-MAIL DAVID AT [DLANTZ@BUYINGTECHNOLOGY.COM](mailto:DLANTZ@BUYINGTECHNOLOGY.COM)