

# The Golden State Scroll



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*Equipping you to  
change the world . . .*

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**The Association for  
Biblical Higher Education**

*And the things that thou hast  
heard of me among many  
witnesses, the same commit  
thou to faithful men, who shall  
be able to teach others also.  
(2 Tim. 2:2)*

## *Ode to the Prophet Jeremiah*

“Amid all the bright stars of Old Testament history,” writes Irving Jensen, “there is not a name that shines brighter than that of Jeremiah.” I agree and return to Jeremiah often for encouragement in the *responsibilities, rigors, and even rejections* that come with biblical ministry and the proclamation of Truth. God called Jeremiah to minister during the darkest days of Judah’s history, and the following “ode” is offered as a tribute.

1

Jeremiah was called by God to preach,  
Set apart while yet in his mother’s womb.  
God sent him throughout Judah to beseech  
And warn the people of impending doom.  
Pleading with the whole nation to repent,  
He toiled in his task with a will unbent.

2

Idols of the pagans were everywhere,  
From the hilltop groves to the homes and streets.  
The stench of base wickedness filled the air,  
The nation’s corruption was complete.  
Into this horror the lone prophet went.  
Armed only with truth and Divine intent.

3

Even the priests and the prophets were vile,  
Speaking lies the people wanted to hear.  
But Jeremiah spoke truth all the while,  
Bathing it by the flooding of his tears.  
From wicked devices none would relent,  
While he was exhausted and all but spent.

4

Laboring in youthful expectancy,  
And God’s will desiring to achieve,  
‘Twas not what he expected it to be,  
For God warned him that no one would believe.  
For forty years his labor was fervent.  
Through persecution and discouragement.

*Continued on page 3 . . .*

# The Waning Authority of Christ in the Churches (2) A. W. Tozer

To avoid the hard necessity of either obeying or rejecting the plain instructions of our Lord in the New Testament we take refuge in a liberal interpretation of them. Casuistry is not the possession of Roman Catholic theologians alone. We evangelicals also know how to avoid the sharp point of obedience by means of fine and intricate explanations. These are tailor-made for the flesh. They excuse disobedience, comfort carnality and make the words of Christ of none effect [Mk. 7:13]. And the essence of it all is that Christ simply could not have meant what He said. His teachings are accepted even theoretically only after they have been weakened by interpretation.

Yet Christ is consulted by increasing numbers of persons with "problems" and sought after by those who long for peace of mind. He is widely recommended as a kind of spiritual psychiatrist with remarkable powers to straighten people out. He is able to deliver them from their guilt complexes and to help them to avoid serious psychic traumas by making a smooth and easy adjustment to society and to their own ids. Of course this strange Christ has no relation whatever to the Christ of the New Testament. The true Christ is also Lord, but this accommodating Christ is little more than the servant of the people.

But I suppose I should offer some concrete proof to support my charge that Christ has little or no authority today among the churches. Well, let me put a few questions and let the answers be the evidence.

What church board consults our Lord's words to decide matters under discussion? Let anyone reading this who has had experience on a church board try to recall the times or time when any board member read from the Scriptures to make a point, or when any chairman suggested that the brethren should see what instructions the Lord had for them on a particular question. Board meetings are habitually opened with a formal prayer or "a season of prayer;" after that the Head of the Church is respectfully silent while the real rulers take over. Let anyone who denies this bring forth evidence to refute it. I for one will be glad to hear it.

What Sunday school committee goes to the Word for directions? Do not the members invariably assume that they already know what they are supposed to do and that their only problem is to find effective means to get it done? Plans, rules, "operations" and new methodological techniques absorb

all their time and attention. The prayer before the meeting is for divine help to carry out their plans. Apparently the idea that the Lord might have some instructions for them never so much as enters their heads.

Who remembers when a conference chairman brought his Bible to the table with him for the purpose of using it? Minutes, regulations, rules of order, yes. The sacred commandments of the Lord, no. An absolute dichotomy exists between the devotional period and the business session. The first has no relation to the second.

What foreign mission board actually seeks to follow the guidance of the Lord as provided by His Word and His Spirit? They all think they do, but what they do in fact is to assume the scripturalness of their ends and then ask for help to find ways to achieve them. They may pray all night for God to give success to their enterprises, but Christ is desired as their helper, not as their Lord. Human means are devised to achieve ends assumed to be divine. These harden into policy, and thereafter the Lord doesn't even have a vote.

In the conduct of our public worship where is the authority of Christ to be found? The truth is that today the Lord rarely controls a service, and the influence He exerts is very small. We sing of Him and preach about Him, but He must not interfere; we worship our way, and it must be right because we have always done it that way, as have the other churches in our group.

What Christian when faced with a moral problem goes straight to the Sermon on the Mount or other New Testament Scripture for the authorita-

*Continued on page 3 . . .*

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tive answer? Who lets the words of Christ be final on giving, birth control, the bringing up of a family, personal habits, tithing, entertainment, buying, selling, and other such important matters?

What theological school, from the lowly Bible institute up, could continue to operate if it were to make Christ Lord of its every policy? There may be some, and I hope there are, but I believe I am right when I say that most such schools to stay in business are forced to adopt procedures which find no justification in the Bible they profess to teach. So we have this strange anomaly: the authority of Christ is ignored in order to maintain a school to teach among other things the authority of Christ.

The causes back of the decline in our Lord's authority are many. I name only two.

One is the power of custom, precedent, and tradition within the older religious groups. These like gravitation affect every particle of religious practice within the group, exerting a steady and constant pressure in one direction. Of course that direction is toward conformity to the status quo. Not Christ but custom is lord in this situation. And the same thing has passed over (possibly to a slightly lesser degree) into the other groups such as the full gospel tabernacles, the holiness churches, the Pentecostal and fundamental churches and the many independent and undenominational churches found everywhere throughout the North American continent. 

Excerpted from *God Tells the Man Who Cares* (Christian Publications). The article originally appeared in *The Alliance Witness*, a publication Tozer edited for many years, on May 15, 1963, just two days after his death. In a very real sense it was his valedictory, for it expressed the concern of his heart. —*Editor*

## Sermon Starters

### Paul's Prayer for the Believers Ephesians 1:18-19a

1. Paul prays for the Believer's Peering Heart (18a).
2. Paul prays for the Believer's Purposeful Hope (18b)
3. Paul prays for the Believer's Position as Heir (18c)
4. Paul prays for the Believer's Powerful Honor (19a)

*Dr. William Taylor, GSST Mentor*

### God Is For You Psalm 46:13

Introduction: v. 9

1. He Delivers my soul.
2. He Directs my steps.
3. He Desires my best.

*Dr. Leon F. Maurer*

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### The Nature and Place of God's Word Heb. 4:12

1. Scripture Is of God
2. Scripture is Living
3. Scripture is Powerful
4. Scripture is Sharp
5. Scripture is Piercing
6. Scripture is Divisive and Offensive
7. Scripture is Discerning

*The Editor*

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*"Ode to Jeremiah" from page 1 . . .*

**5**

One day he preached a sermon with power  
About breaking a potter's clay vessel.  
It pictured Babylon's coming hour,  
When it would descend like a living hell.  
When the response was just indifferent,  
He preached the sermon again more ardent.

**6**

Because of such faithful proclamation,  
God's prophet was beaten and put in stocks.  
His only wages were condemnation,  
A troublemaker for people to mock.  
But in spite of the hate, scorn, and dissent,  
God's man was dedicated and fervent.

**7**

Jeremiah was a man called of God.  
To proclaim the truth whatever the cost.  
While the world thought him bothersome and odd,  
It was they who were rebellious and lost.  
We need more Jeremiahs to be sent,  
Courageous men of truth and discernment.

*The Editor*

## O Come Let Us Worship

### Part 4 of 10

#### Reverence and Fear of God

*yārē'*

At times *shāchāh* is also translated *reverence* (e.g., 2 Sam. 9:6; Esther 3:2, 5). More often, however, it is *yārē'*, which, along with the derivative *yir'āh*, simply means “to fear, be afraid, or stand in awe.”

“The fear of the LORD,” Solomon wrote, “is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7) and “the beginning of wisdom” (9:10). In other words, *true knowledge begins with a fear of God*. If we are to know anything, we must begin with the presupposition of God. How, for example, can an intelligent person believe (and then brag about believing it) that the universe sprang from nothing and then evolved? How can truly brilliant people say something so absurd and irrational? Because they do not start with God. Without Him, we can know nothing.

Such knowledge begins with the **fear of God**. While this has been softened by many to mean simply **reverence**, which *is* part of it, the primary meaning is **fear** and terror. This principle, in fact, is found many times in Scripture, as in Deuteronomy 2:25: “This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee” (cf. Gen. 22:12; Exod. 3:6; 14:31; 20:20; Ezek. 30:13). Likewise, in the NT, lost man is spoken of as having “no fear of God before [his] eyes” (Rom. 3:18).

The greatest evidence, however, is that every time we see someone in Scripture get a glimpse of God, even a believer, they are terrified: Isaiah (Isa. 6:5), Daniel (Dan. 10:8, 9; 8:17), Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; 9:8; 43:3; 44:4), Samson’s father Manoah (Judg. 13:22), and Job (Job 42:5, 6).

In sad contrast, there is among many today a frivolous and nonchalant attitude toward God—He is thought of as our buddy and pal. Many church services are casual and man-centered, where **God** is given lip service but in reality is simply a spectator. We have lost the Truth of God’s holiness and man’s sinfulness. We have lost what people of Scripture knew, namely, that when confronted with the blazing glory of God, *they were terrified in their unworthiness*. We should, therefore, “serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God

is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28, 29). Let us, therefore, be fearful of disobeying God, fearful of disobeying His Word.

*Scriptures for Study:* To what is the **fear of God** tied in Deuteronomy 6:2?

Excerpted from our editor’s upcoming devotional book, *A Hebrew Word for the Day* (AMG Publishers), due for release in April 2010.

### On Reverence

**Spiritual worship is to be performed, though with a delight in God, yet with a deep reverence of God. The gospel, in advancing the spirituality of worship, takes off the terror, but not the reverence of God; which is nothing else in its own nature, but a due and high esteem of the excellency of a thing according to the nature of it. . . . God is clothed with unspeakable majesty; the glory of his face shines brighter than the lights of heaven in their beauty. Before him the angels tremble, and the heavens melt; we ought not therefore to come before him with the sacrifice of fools, nor tender a duty to him, without falling low upon our faces, and bowing the knees of our hearts in token of reverence. Not a slavish fear, like that of devils; but a “godly fear,” like that of saints (Heb. xii. 28). . . . God is terrible from his holy places, in regard of the great things he doth for his Israel (Psalm Ixviii. 35); we should behave ourselves with that inward honor and respect of him, as if he were present to our bodily eyes; the higher apprehensions we have of his majesty, the greater awe will be upon our hearts in his presence, and the greater spirituality in our acts. We should manage our hearts so, as if we had a view of God in his heavenly glory.**

*Stephen Charnock*  
*The Existence and Attributes of God*  
*Vol. 1, pp. 236–237*