

36. Just how evil Christianity happens to be remains to be seen. Just how evil the government happens to be has become obvious and apparently knows no bounds.
37. That Christianity will be under maximum assault and Judaism will be in the Beast-Dictator's crosshairs is evident from prophecy.
38. In the Church Age, the status of Christianity is erratic and plays a major part in the development of historical trends whether they are up or down.
39. The culture of the United States has been in transformation away from a biblically oriented majority by the advance of Progressive ideology.
40. This transformation can be easily tracked by the consistent decline of interest in serious Bible study resulting in blasé attitudes toward biblical teachings concerning right and wrong.
41. It will only take another decade or less for the forces of incessant propaganda and legal legerdemain to convert public opinion away from frustrated tolerance to open hatred for Christianity and those within it that remain loyal to biblical teachings.
42. The current brouhaha over same-sex marriage is the opening salvo in the Long March's assault on the institution of the church.
43. The Barna Group's most recent surveys indicate that only its "evangelical" category still has an overwhelming majority that places Bible study as a top priority in its lives.
44. The issue that now concerns us "evangelicals" is to establish our biblically based position on the subject of same-sex marriage.
45. To clarify Grace Doctrine Church's (GDC) position on this subject, it submits the hypothetical query below followed by responses to each.

**Question:** What is GDC's opinion of same-sex marriage?

**Response:** This is a newly formed institution that has been contrived by legal opinion. Its proponents suggest that homosexuals should have a legal right to enter into an arrangement that allows them access to certain privileges that were previously only possessed by heterosexual couples who are married.

The Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* established the legality of such a union which is now referred to as the “law of the land.” This opinion borrows exclusively from the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This means that since heterosexuals may be married then homosexuals may as well.

GDC has two responses to this decision's application. If homosexuals desire to obtain a marriage license and enter into a marital union, then they now have the legal right to do so. GDC concedes as per Romans 13:1.

Following the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision, some have suggested that it now forces religious organizations—churches, synagogues, and mosques—to conduct wedding ceremonies for homosexuals. GDC rejects.

**Question:** Having confirmed that homosexual marriage is now the “law of the land,” would not GDC's rejection be in opposition to that law and therefore in opposition to established law?

**Response:** Up to this point, GDC still has the right to argue. And to that end, it has a number of legal observations to consider. The first has to do with the legal term, *stare decisis*, which is defined as:

To abide by, or adhere to, decided cases. The doctrine that, when court has once laid down a principle of law as applicable to a certain state of facts, it will adhere to that principle, and apply it to all future cases, where facts are substantially the same.

This definition means that “established law” recognizes the decisions of previously adjudicated cases that address facts substantially the same. Ergo, GDC posits that *stare decisis*—settled law—is applicable to *Obergefell v. Hodges*. To that end it submits the following example: The majority opinion written by Justice Hugo L. Black in *Everson v. Board of Education of the Township of Ewing* (330 U.S. 1) [Decided February 10, 1947]:

The meaning and scope of the First Amendment, preventing establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, in the light of its history and the evils it [p15] was designed forever to suppress, have been several times elaborated by the decisions of this Court prior to the application of the First Amendment to the states by the Fourteenth. The broad meaning given the Amendment by these earlier cases has been accepted by this Court in its decisions concerning an individual's religious freedom rendered since the Fourteenth Amendment was interpreted to make the prohibitions of the First applicable to state action abridging religious freedom.

There is every reason to give the same application and broad interpretation to the "establishment of religion" clause. The interrelation of these complementary clauses was well summarized in a statement of the Court of Appeals of South Carolina, quoted with approval by this Court in *Watson v. Jones*, 13 Wall. 679, 730:

The structure of our government has, for the preservation of civil liberty, rescued the temporal institutions from religious interference. On the other hand, it has secured religious liberty from the invasion of the civil authority.

The "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment means at least this: neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. **No person can be punished for entertaining [p16] or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs,** for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups, and vice versa. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between church and State." *Reynolds v. United States*, supra, at 164.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, Justice Black confirmed the principles contained in the "establishment" clause of the First Amendment and the "free exercise" clause addressed above highlighted in yellow. Further, his confirmation of the "wall of separation between church and state" draws a clear line prohibiting the State from intruding upon a person's "beliefs or disbeliefs." Finally, the *Everson* decision became *stare decisis* with regard to the *Obergefell* decision since both contain subjects that have to do with religious freedom. In light of these facts, no person or church should in any way be affected by the *Obergefell* decision either by the State of Missouri or the Federal Government.

**Question:** In light of the present controversy, how then does GDC plan to balance the *Obergefell* decision with what the Bible teaches?

**Response:** Even though Jefferson's phrase, "the wall of separation between church and state," is simply a quote from his letter to Baptists in Connecticut, it has no legal binding except where Justice Black imputes it into *Everson* where it does express the circumstance that actually exists between believers and rest of humanity, its governments, and its laws.

Believers are left on this earth post salvation as functionaries in the Lord's family. They are commissioned to study His Word, accumulate an inventory of divine ideas, and apply them to life and circumstances. What those in the world do is of little concern to the believer beyond his ability to observe historical trends and strive to avoid decisions or actions that contribute to their downtrends.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/330/1#writing-USSC\\_CR\\_0330\\_0001\\_ZO](https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/330/1#writing-USSC_CR_0330_0001_ZO)

The Bible reveals two major categories of divine instruction: (1) establishment truth and (2) doctrinal truth. GDC is responsible to support the establishment principles that are codified by the national entity in which it functions. When human law imposes on an individual or a church a law, that in the light of biblical revelation is a nonessential, then the Church is bound to respect that law, e.g., homosexuals may marry. On the other hand, if human law demands observation of a law that is a clear violation of essential biblical doctrines, then the Church must decide if it is going to comply with the demands of the State or the mandates of God. If the latter, it must willingly submit to whatever penalties or punishments the world requires. If required to perform a same-sex ceremony, GDC abstains, but does so under reasons outlined in Scripture and confirmed by GDC's Bylaws and Proclamations.

**Question:** What are these Bylaws and Proclamations and are they compliant with biblical principles and requirements?

**Response:** The Bylaws of GDC present the government of its members and the regulation of its affairs. The Forty Proclamations of GDC present formal statements of its doctrinal beliefs and tenets. Both documents are published in *Forty Proclamations: The Theology of Grace Doctrine Church*. The Bylaws and Proclamations are based on biblical guidance and each is supported by biblical references.

**Question:** Do these Bylaws and Proclamations regulate who may attend the church or be a voting member of its congregation?

**Response:** Anyone may attend Grace Doctrine Church. It only requires that he or she maintain a reverent demeanor while hymns are sung, the Eucharist is observed, offerings are collected, public prayer is expressed, and the Bible is taught. The latter requires strict academic discipline which includes restraint from any unnecessary movement that might hinder the concentration of others. Those who purposefully disrupt are escorted out of the auditorium.

Membership requires several essentials based on the biblical definition of a local church. A prospective member must agree to: (1) affirm he or she has expressed personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, (2) acknowledge and accept the authority of the pastor, and (3) subscribe and adhere to the Bylaws, Proclamations, doctrines, and tenets of the Church.

**Question:** Then your church would permit homosexuals and same-sex couples to attend but not be members.

**Response:** To repeat: "Anyone may attend Grace Doctrine Church." Homosexuals may comply with the first two qualifications for membership cited above, but it is doubtful they would agree to comply with all the requirements associated with number three. They would of course be welcome to attend, just not as members.

**Question:** Then in view of your last response, under your Bylaws and Proclamations, GDC would not conduct a same-sex marriage?

**Response:** In light of restrictions stipulated in Scripture, GDC would not be allowed to do so. The pastor would not be allowed to violate biblical commandments in order to comply with human laws.

Further, GDC's wedding ceremony is standard; the only things that change are the names of the couple and the name of the State in which the ceremony is held. To request that it alter the text for one couple as opposed to another would not comply with biblical directives.

Should government at some point establish a legal requirement that religious organizations and its qualified representatives solemnize marriages, GDC would permanently discontinue the service for any and all applicants.

**Question:** What if such a decision resulted in the Federal Government withdrawing tax-exempt status from the Church?

**Response:** Then, so be it. Anyone who contributes to a church for the tax write-off does not have a grace mental attitude for giving anyhow. GDC's viability has always been because of God's grace and His grace alone.

46. The church's "leg to stand on" is loss of tax-exempt status however its pastor may go to jail. I am comforted to know that I may have more students behind bars than those outside them.
47. So Babylon may be defined by many decadent and corrupt nations and organizations, but the central theme is antagonism toward the Word of God and institutions committed to its teachings.
48. It is generally accepted by theologians that in the Book of Revelation, Babylon is a figurative name given to the city of Rome. Justification of this conclusion is supported by these points:
  - (1) The characteristics ascribed to this Babylon apply to Rome rather than any other city of that age: (a) as ruling over the kings of the earth (17:18); (b) as sitting on seven mountains (17:9); (c) as the center of the world's merchandise (18:3, 11-13); (d) as the corrupter of the nations (17:2; 18:3; 19:2); (e) as the persecutor of the saints (17:6).
  - (2) The comparison of Rome to Babylon is common in Jewish apocalyptic literature (see 2 Esdras and Apocalypse of Baruch).

(3) Rome was regarded by both Jews and Christians as being antagonistic to the kingdom of God. And its downfall was confidently expected. This conception is in accordance with the predicted downfall of Babylon (Revelation 14:8; 18:2:10–21). As Babylon had been the oppressor of Israel, it was natural that this new power, which was oppressing the people of God, should be designated as Babylon.<sup>2</sup>

49. The Babylon in Revelation 17–18 speaks of ecumenical Babylon and refers figuratively to Rome. The prophecy that political Babylon will destroy religious Babylon is said to occur during the latter stages of the Great Tribulation.
50. This overthrow is prophesied in Revelation 18:2 and it contains the interesting phrase, “it has become the habitation of fallen angels and is a prison for every unclean spirit.”
51. This indicates that these demons are incarcerated in the specific geographical area of Babylon, or ecumenical Rome.

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<sup>2</sup> A. F. Fortune, “Babylon in the New Testament,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 1:358.