



BEACON

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BEACON

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Aids to Steadfastness

Bruce Stulting

In closing his great chapter on the resurrection, Paul stated:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

At the end of his second epistle, Peter exhorts his readers:

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness (2 Pet. 3:17).

Jesus warned:

And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved (Mat. 10:22).

Furthermore, to the church at Smyrna, John wrote:

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of

you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

The preceding verses demonstrate the importance of steadfastness. Paul's own life demonstrates this fact. As a prisoner in Rome, with is execution eminent, he wrote:

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Paul wrote often on the subject of steadfastness. To the church at Rome, Paul wrote, "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

Hope, patience, and prayer are aids to steadfastness.

Hope Is Essential to Steadfastness

Hope is described as “an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil” (Heb. 6:19). The Christian is able to rejoice in hope because, he (1) has been justified by faith, (2) has obtained peace with God, and (3) has access to God by grace (Rom. 5:1-2). This hope in undergirded by faith which is produced by the study of God’s Word (10:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17). The hope of heaven will aid the Christian to remain steadfast.

Patience In Tribulation Is Essential to Steadfastness

Life is filled with adversity for everyone. Not only does the Christian have to endure the hardship and adversity that is common to man, but must also endure persecution from the world. Jesus never promised the Christian a life free from conflict. Rather, He promised that His disciples would be hated by the world (John 15:18). Paul warned, “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” 2 Tim. 3:12). The hardships of Christian living has caused many to give up their faith. However, through patience one can learn to endure hardship. Paul assured his readers, “For I

reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). Truly, we all “have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36). So, we must, “lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (12:1). Patience is a valuable aide to steadfastness.

Prayer Is Essential to Steadfastness

Prayer must be an important part of the life of every Christian. At their request, Jesus taught His disciples to pray (Luke 11:1-4). The Christian is to “Pray without ceasing” (1 The. 5:17). Through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, the Christian can make his request known to God. In so doing one can overcome anxiety and “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phi. 4:6-7).

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him (1 John 5:14-15).

Pray is a powerful aide to steadfastness.

Hope, Patience, and Prayer Are Available to Every Christian

However, one must possess and practice them to benefit from their aide. Do you rejoice in the hope of eternal life? Are you patient in tribulation? Are you instant in prayer? If so, you possess powerful aids to help with your steadfastness.

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The file you will receive will be a PDF.

Huntsville, TX

Happy New Year

Dub Mowery

Hold Fast

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22).

Assemble

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25).

Pray Everyday

“Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jam. 5:16).

Prepare Your Heart

“Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: *And* because I will do this unto thee, Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12).

Yield Not

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak” (Mat. 26:41).

Neglect Not

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

Exercise Yourself

“But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7).

Work Diligently

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work” (Tit. 3:1).

Yield unto Righteousness

“Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13).

Examine Yourself

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13:5).

Aim at Perfection

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb. 6:1).

Redeem the Time

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:16).

Clarksville, TX



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Some Guidelines for Giving

Daniel Denham

Giving is a vital portion of New Testament worship (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8; 9). Paul describes contribution made concerning the Jerusalem crisis as *koinonia*, the word most commonly rendered as “fellowship” (cf. Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:13, where it is translated “contribution” and “distribution” respectively in the KJV). Some commentators believe that the reference to “fellowship” (*koinonia*) in Acts 2:42 is also a reference to the contribution, though this is disputed by others. That the idea of “joint-participation” in the mutual support of the cause of Christ through evangelism and benevolence is attached to our giving in the New Testament is, however, granted by all on the weight of the textual evidence addressing the subject. The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). The support and furtherance of the truth, God’s Word (John 17:17), depend upon the functioning of God’s people. The contribution is a

means by which this is accomplished. As worship, giving must be offered “in spirit and in truth” (4:24). This demands that the spirit of the giver (i.e., his mind, will, intellect, emotions, et. al) be engaged in the preparation and execution of the act. It also demands that he give in proper compliance to New Testament teaching. Thus, any guidelines that we follow on giving must be drawn from it. Let me suggest a few for consideration.

First, Let Us Give Ourselves

The Macedonian brethren did precisely this. Paul praised them in 2 Corinthians 8 for their liberality that abounded despite their own bitter poverty (8:1-3). They begged Paul to accept their contribution for the Jerusalem problem “with much entreaty,” because they earnestly desired to have part in “the fellowship of the ministering to the saints” (8:4). Now watch the fifth verse: “And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves

to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.” They gave “beyond *their* power” (8:3). Their giving was so stirring that it encouraged Paul to write to the Corinthians to exhort them to follow this noble example by their brethren in Macedonia (8:6)! What the Corinthians had earlier boldly professed a desire to do, the Macedonians had actually done. As the former had stirred the latter by their bold promise, so now Paul hoped that the latter would stir the former by their bolder action (8:6ff). This action was a direct result of the giving by the Macedonians of themselves “first unto the Lord, and unto” Paul and his compatriots involved in the Jerusalem effort.

One must give himself first and foremost to any meaningful work before he will support it materially in a proper way. This kind of person will never falter due to covetousness or greed. He will be no skinflint or miser, but will be a faithful supporter of good works.

Second, a Cheerful, Willing Heart Is Desired

The Bible clearly teaches that “God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7). There must be a “willing mind” involved in our giving (8:12). We need to realize the marvelous privilege that we possess in being the children of God (1 John 3:1-2) and having the opportunity to serve him. Joy, not sorrow, should attend our free will offerings to God. We should be compelled to give not by a cold feeling of duty but by a fervent desire to do what we can to aid the cause of Christ.

Thankfulness would go a long way to developing this disposition. The realization of the wonderful and manifold blessings that God, the Great Giver, has given to us. James 1:17

reminds us, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning.” He gave his only-begotten Son for us (John 3:16), the gift that is beyond measure. He has given unto us “life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). “In him,” Paul says, “we live, and move, and have our being” (17:28). He has also given to us “all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). If you are wrestling in your heart relative to your feelings toward giving, read the first three chapters of Ephesians before you “even commence to begin to start” to give, and see if that does not help!

Third, Giving Should Show the Sincerity of Our Love

Paul called upon the Corinthians to prove the sincerity or genuineness of their love by following through with what they had promised in their giving (2 Cor. 8:6-8). They were not to love in word only, but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18).

One who says he loves God, but who will not support the work of God’s missionary institution, the church, is at best a liar and a hypocrite. Our support of the Gospel through

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our time, talents, and goods is a good demonstration of our real concern for lost souls, for our brethren, and for our love for Him who first loved us (John 14:15; 15:14; 1 John 4:19-20; 5:1-3). It has been said that “one can give without loving, but no one can ever love without giving.”

Fourth, We Must Give as We Have Been Prospered

We are to give “as *God* has prospered” us (1 Cor. 16:2). The Book shows that our contribution “*is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not” (2 Cor. 8:12).

The widow of Luke 21:1-4 and the case of the Macedonians should remind us that all gifts to God, given in loving, faithful compliance to His will, are not to be sniffed at or demeaned by men. Only God fully knows how many congregations have been able to do much due to the contributions and efforts of their widows and the impoverished! God knows the condition of both the heart and life of each giver. When one considers the examples of Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37) and Phoebe (Rom. 16: 1-2—the Greek text indicates that she was a woman of means), he should be careful not to conclude that all rich folk are such because of avarice and the lack of true compassion. While few of those who are rich in worldly goods will be faithful servants of the Lord (Mat. 19:23-24; 1 Tim. 6:9-10), there are those who are able to overcome the temptations of wealth and serve the living God (6:17-19). A. M. Burton, Archie Luper, and George Pepperdine are men who set excellent examples of generous giving for the rich among us in this world!

Fifth, We Must Give as We Have Purposed in Our Heart

Paul states this expressly in 2 Corinthians 9:7: “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” Giving is not to be haphazard or accidental. It is to be planned and purposed. It demands forethought. Faithful evangelistic and benevolence efforts depend upon predictable and consistent support. Elderships need to be able to count on their memberships to plan the work that the congregation is to do, and memberships need elderships that are not only sound in doctrine but also are faithful stewards of what they are entrusted with. Elderships that support unsound works, whether deliberately or through sloth, need to repent and correct their practice. Elderships that see their duty as “hoarding funds till the Lord comes” are in for a rude awakening. All brethren need to learn the simple truth that all of the money, whether given in the contribution or not, is still the Lord’s money! He has been gracious enough to let us borrow some for a while.

Conclusion

We do not worship God by accident. It involves proper preparation, planning, and execution. It recognizes the greatness and goodness of God and seeks to give to him what is rightfully due his majesty.

Let us use the type of diligent, loving care that was demonstrated by the Macedonian brethren and other faithful given in the first century AD. New Testament giving will help cause growth for the New Testament church.

Parrish, FL



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Why He Came

Dub McClish

In spite of the plainness of the singularity of Jesus' purpose in coming to earth, men still misunderstand it. They have variously set forth such purposes as political revolution and healing the sick and ailing. Political liberals/progressives deceitfully invoke some of His words and works to bolster their program of socialism and social reform. All of these crucially miss the mark of the reason He came to this "low ground of sin and sorrow."

None besides the Christ ever lived with a clearer grasp of His aim or purpose: "For the Son of man also came...to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45); "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10); "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Mat. 26:28). Even His Heaven-ordained name, Jesus, identifies why He came: "and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people

from their sins" (1:21).

Motivated by compassion, He indeed healed the sick and miraculously fed multitudes (14:14; 15:32). He proved Himself Master of both the natural and spiritual realms (Mark 4:39-41; Mat. 17:18). However, He could have done all of these things, either Himself or through Heavenly or human agents, without ever leaving Heaven. All of His miracles were for a higher purpose than the momentary benefits they rendered. He indicated this fact at the healing of a palsied man:

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house (Mark 2:10-11).

John clearly stated the true underlying purpose of all of the Lord's signs:

Many other signs therefore did Jesus in

the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name (John 20:30-31).

No wonder Jesus was so concerned for the lost that He worked and taught in every possible way to prove that He was the Savior of mankind—his only hope. His brief earthly life was spent traveling, teaching, healing, and helping—all to this one grand end. Many of His words are direct appeals to the lost and about the lost, including the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son (Luke 15:3-32). He issued His “great invitation” to those who are lost (Mat. 11:28-30). He wept over lost Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44).

All that He said and did was concentrated upon saving man from the curse of sin. Let all who yet remain unconvinced that Jesus’ chief concern was for the lost follow Him as He struggles up the path to Calvary and willingly

lays Himself upon the cross. Ironically, His sacrificial act that procured our redemption was one at which He refused to employ His limitless power.

Men cannot claim to be sincere about serving Christ and not be seriously concerned about lost souls. His never-ending concern caused Him to order His followers to go into the entire world with the Gospel so men might believe it, be baptized, and be saved (Mark 16:15-16). Through Paul He commanded His followers to “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2) and to teach others so they could do the same (2:2).

An active, genuine concern for men and women who are lost in sin is an inescapable part of every Christian’s life. It is not enough merely to observe Jesus’ concern for the lost. We must find some way or ways in which to follow Him in that concern by seeking those good and honest hearts and getting the Gospel to them.

Denton, TX

More Thoughts on the Warning Not to Forsake the Assembling of Ourselves

Johnnie Oxendine

Perhaps nothing has been the bane of any congregation’s existence more than members not attending Bible classes and/or worship services. We look around to see who is here, or not, and why, if we know. Someone is out of town (traveling), or someone else (or family member) is ill and cannot come. The multitude of *reasons* that accompany the explanations are so far reaching and complex (at times) that one almost forgets the question

that had been posed: “We didn’t see you (Sunday, or Wednesday), are you alright? Is there something we can help you with, get for you?”

The Scriptures speak to the need for brethren to maintain fellowship at the highest of levels to enable (“equip”) one another spiritually. The idea of building each other up in the most holy faith (Jude 20), that we might all not only be prepared for the day of the Lord’s coming, but rather, “yearn” for it (2 Pet. 3:12).

This fellowship (and issue of fellowship) has been a focus for several years as the brotherhood has grappled with a large majority of members no longer adhering to the Biblical basis (standard) for fellowship, but now, almost exclusively, adhering to the biases of the flesh (friendships, institutional influence). This meaning, simply that human relationships are more influential than the teaching of the Scriptures on the matter. Jesus, in John 17, speaks “loud and clear” on the subject of fellowship, as does the apostle John in his first epistle (1 John). It is defined/described by many New Testament writers, and we will not rehearse that here, but suggest that one acquaint oneself with the lectureship books that have focused on the topic. The seminal importance of fellowship can be seen, without any obscurity in John 17:8-14 and 1 John 1:3.

This fellowship is spoken of in Acts as it informs us of the actions of those who had just obeyed the Gospel as a result of Peter’s preaching. They “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship” (Acts 2:42), an indicator of what mattered for the earliest members of the church. This is no small or incidental phrase tossed in for effect, rather it

describes something significant that is to be adhered to by the church for all time. The liberal translation of “continued steadfastly” means “they were devoting themselves,” or “they were remaining constantly,” which today gives a better sense of their activities.

Those saved were devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles. The teaching they were receiving was the Gospel of Christ (“the power of God unto salvation...for therein is the righteousness of God revealed”—Rom. 1:16-17). We must also remind ourselves that the apostles were the only teachers at this point, and that to be taught by the apostles (whom they were devoting themselves to) they had to have been assembling together. Coming together to hear the glorious Gospel proclaimed and being nourished by it, they had the opportunity to grow thereby. The new believers unquestionably felt the necessity of becoming more and more firmly established in the truth and in maintaining fellowship with God in Christ, and for this reason they complied so steadfastly (devotedly) to the teaching of the apostles and to a fraternal fellowship (and assembling) with other believers. Not only was there the devotion to the (doctrine), but to the fellowship as well. They were now one spiritual body, individually and collectively one by faith in Christ, faithful to the one doctrine of Christ (“one Lord, one faith, one baptism”—Eph. 4:5) that was taught by the apostles. One faith and one teaching, thus one body in one fellowship. No parties, no schisms, only one in Christ. That is how the church began.

San Mateo, CA

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Sometimes Love Hurts

Bruce Stulting

One of the greatest things that God gave to man is love. It can take man to the highest joy. The number of songs and poems written on the subject demonstrates how important love is in our lives. Someone has gone so far as to say that, “Love is what makes the world go around.”

As great as love is, there is a down side. Sometimes love hurts. If you do not believe me, just ask someone who has been dumped by their first love or a parent who has lost a child to an accident or illness. Those who go through such grief often find it hard to continue living. The reason for such emotional grief is love. Think of the grief of our Heavenly Father, when He “gave his only begotten son” (John 3:16). After all, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). The fact that love can be the source of the greatest joy and the greatest grief is one of the greatest

conundrums of all time.

Another reason that love sometimes hurts is corrective discipline. Most if not all have heard of a father who said, “This is going to hurt me more than it’s going to hurt you.” Furthermore, most if not all have heard a child argue this point. The fact is, the father is talking about emotional pain and the child is talking about physical pain. In this regard, the writer of Hebrews stated:

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (Heb. 12:5-7).

Unfortunately, society (and even some in

the Lord's church) believe that physical punishment of a child is abusive and motivated by hate. The folly of this perversion of love is easily seen in the effect it has had on society (especially in our schools). Those who withhold corrective discipline really do not love their child. In fact, all who are without corrective discipline are considered fatherless and not sons at all. Remember, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: But he that loveth him

chasteneth him betimes" (Pro. 13:24).

Yes, sometimes love hurts. Often that pain is unfortunate, but, at other times it is necessary. Do not avoid corrective discipline because of the pain that it brings. Whether you are on the giving or receiving end, be sure that it is always understood that it is done in love for the greatest good of all.

Huntsville, TX

Gospel and Doctrine

Lester Kamp

For some, the **Gospel** of the New Testament is completely different from the **doctrine** of the New Testament. Because of this supposed difference some have concluded such things as: fellowship is to be based on Gospel but not doctrine; the Gospel is for non-Christians and doctrine is for Christians; preachers are to preach the Gospel, and, therefore, a preacher cannot be hired by a congregation of the church for him to preach in that place regularly; a preacher is to preach the Gospel and "leave everyone else alone" by staying away from doctrines upon which men differ; withdrawing fellowship should not be done because of doctrinal differences, etc. We have all seen these ideas advocated and practiced. Because of the importance of understanding these terms, I want to briefly consider the legitimacy of this distinction.

Gospel

First, the facts and foundation of the Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). These facts must be believed for a person to be saved. Without

believing that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day, man will remain lost because he will die in his sins (John 8:24). But the Gospel is not just those facts. In describing the second coming of Christ (when He comes to judge all humanity), Paul indicated that those who "obey not the gospel" will be lost (2 The. 1:9). The Gospel facts cannot be obeyed, but the commands of the Gospel must be obeyed. The commands to be obeyed in the Gospel are revealed in Romans 6:3-6:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.... Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

The process of a believer repenting of sins

(Acts 17:30) and being baptized for the forgiveness of sins portrays the death and burial of Christ. When that person rises from the watery grave of baptism, the resurrection of Christ is portrayed in symbol. Rising to walk in newness of life indicates continued faithful obedience. The Gospel includes facts, but the Gospel is also something which must be obeyed by man to be saved!

Doctrine

Second, doctrine simply means teaching and is sometimes translated as such. We read of the early Christians continuing steadfastly in the “apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42). The apostles’ doctrine would be a reference to what the apostles taught. The apostles were given their message by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13). During the first century that message (the apostles’ doctrine) was spoken orally; now the New Testament is that same message (the apostles’ doctrine) in written form (Eph. 3:3-5). Christians today must continue in the apostles’ doctrine. We must teach what they taught. What they taught had to do with the obligations of Christians and non-Christians. The apostles’ doctrine is not just about the responsibilities of Christians in remaining faithful, but also about non-Christians and their obligations to be saved. The apostles’ doctrine is the entirety of the New Testament. The New Testament speaks of “sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1). Sound (healthy) doctrine is the New Testament without alterations of any kind.

Gospel and Doctrine

Third, in the New Testament the Gospel is not only directed toward non-Christians and in the New Testament Doctrine is

not exclusively for Christians. The Gospel is preached to Christians according to Romans 1:15-16; the Gospel in Mark 16:15-16 is to be taught to non-Christians. The Christian must obey the Gospel or be lost (2 The. 1:8-9) so must non-Christians. In the New Testament Doctrine is directed toward Christians (Tit. 1:9), and Doctrine is directed toward non-Christians (Acts 5:25; 13:12). The non-Christian will be lost without obeying the Doctrine (Rom. 6:16-17); the Christian who rejects the Doctrine will also be lost (2 John 9-11; Tit. 1:9-11). Christians will be saved by the Doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Clearly, there is no difference in the New Testament between the Gospel of Christ and the Doctrine of Christ! No legitimate distinction can be made. Both terms refer to the same body of teaching. This same body of information is also called the Faith, the Truth, the Way, the Law of Christ, the Word.

It Does Matter

There is only one Gospel that saves (Gal. 1:6-9; Rom. 1:16); it is the same as the Doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). Deviations from that Doctrine (the Gospel) break our fellowship with God. We must not fellowship those who are not in fellowship with God. It does matter what we teach and practice on doctrinal matters! The message of Jesus, the apostles’ doctrine, must be taught to others in its purity (2 Tim. 2:2). We will all ultimately give an account to God of our lives based on the standard of the Gospel, the Word (John 12:48). The doctrine that we believe and practice must be the Doctrine of Christ, the Gospel of Christ!

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Every Sunday

Ladies' Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

January 27

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

January 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner on the Grounds; singing and a devotional service after the meal.

February 1

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

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“Keeping the Faith”

Brad Green

Near the end of the apostle Paul’s life, he states:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Notice that, as Paul reminisces, he does not simply acknowledge that he has faith, but rather he has “kept the faith.” The word translated *kept* is a compound Greek word meaning to watch or guard “by keeping the eye upon”; to detain or to keep in custody (Strong’s). Paul could look forward to life after death because he had done much more than just believe; he guarded and kept a close watch upon the revelation of Truth given to him by God.

Jude exhorts that we “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the

saints” (Jude 3). The *faith* spoken of by both Jude and Paul is a reference to the system of faith, revealed in God’s Word, by which one can be reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10) and be saved. Quoting Scripture, Paul says, “the just shall live by faith” (1:17) and explains in verse 16 that this just way of living (“by faith”) is found in the Gospel of Christ. To *keep* the faith, therefore, one must be obedient to God’s Word. In the parable of the sower, Jesus says, “the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, **keep** it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). Jesus also says, “blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and **keep** it.” (11:28).

God’s Word is precious and valuable. The wise man Solomon extols, “buy the truth, and sell *it* not” (Pro. 23:23). Its value is far above any earthly possession. It is by God’s Word that one can find salvation (Rom. 1:16). For

this reason, God’s Word must be “kept” exactly as it is written, adding nothing and subtracting nothing (Rev. 22:18-19). When Noah was commanded to build an ark, he “kept” God’s Word. He added nothing and subtracted nothing—“according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22).

After the death of Moses, Joshua was entrusted with the responsibility of leading

God’s people into the Land of Promise. God told Joshua:

Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest **observe to do according to all the law**, which Moses my servant commanded thee: **turn not from it to the right hand or to the left**, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest (Jos. 1:6-7).

To be obedient to God, Joshua and the children of Israel had to “keep” God’s Word.

Knowing that some had “erred concerning the faith” (i.e., they no longer were keeping the faith by ceasing to be obedient to God’s Word), Paul encourages Timothy to “keep that which is committed to thy trust” (1 Tim. 6:20-21). In Paul’s second letter to Timothy, Paul exhorts:

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us (2 Tim. 1:13-14).

“That good thing” Timothy was to “keep” (i.e., guard, protect, watch over, obey) was God’s Word. In being faithful to God’s Word, and thus “keeping” the faith, Timothy would be saved and help save others. Paul again commands, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16). Paul’s definition of “keeping” the faith is here expressed as taking heed and continuing in obedience to doctrine (God’s Word).

Something is Wrong

Something is wrong with the “Child of God” who refuses to attend Bible classes. If such a person is too sick to go, something is wrong with his health. If he thinks he does not need to go, something is wrong with his education—he does not know enough to understand his needs. If he sleeps too late, he is too lazy. If he does not have enough interest to go, something is wrong with his attitude; indifference was the great sin of the Laodicean church (Rev. 3:14-22). If he lets company keep him away, something is wrong with his courage and perception; he is trying to serve two masters. If he is too busy to go, something is wrong with his schedule—the person that is too busy to serve God here is too busy to go to Heaven.

Seriously, just why shouldn’t all children of God want to be in Bible classes?

Why shouldn’t we want our children to be there? If we don’t something is wrong. A checkup on ourselves is needed.

Author Unknown

Let us take heed to protect and guard God's Word as it has been given to us in the New Testament—adding or subtracting nothing. Let us take heed to be obedient to the Gospel of Christ, which “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). Let us live a life in harmony with “the

faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3—ASV) so that we, like Paul, will be able to proclaim, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7).

Lenoir City, TN

Analysis of Faith

Paul Vaughn

There are many different ideas about faith in God. It seems as if everyone has an opinion but very few actually consider what God has to say about it. *Faith* is defined as “primarily, ‘firm persuasion,’ a conviction based upon hearing” (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*). Paul said, “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Faith is not a leap in the dark as many in society defines it because faith is established by hearing, trusting, and obeying the Word of God.

There are no exceptions, to please God one must have faith in God. It is written:

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that *cometh* to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6).

Faith is not destroyed by trials of life or the passing of time. One can learn from the examples of the faithful in Hebrews 11, that true faith requires obedience to God. It is written:

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went

(11:8).

Faith is described as active. This is the type of faith Noah exhibited in building the ark.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith (11:7).

God commanded Noah to build and Noah trusted God by getting his carpentry tools out and began to build.

Faith is described as comforting. Paul said, “Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith” (1 The. 3:7). He received great comfort because of the faith of the church of the Thesalonians. They were trusting God by following His Word.

The Scriptures teach that there is only “one faith” (Eph. 4:5). It is the only one that can produce spiritual life. It is the one you can read about in the Bible. How is your faith? Is it based on Scripture or the emotions of men? There is only one acceptable to God and it does not come from man.

Centerville, TN

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Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Cary Parks in the death of his brother-in-law, Roy Webster, on January 25, 2016. Please keep Cary and his family in your prayers.

Please Remember

Every Sunday

Ladies' Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

February 14

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

February 16

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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A Universal Proclamation

Bruce Stulting

Psalm 100 is a universal proclamation to worship and serve the Lord. It is interesting to note that this Hebrew psalm is universal in application. It addresses all men of every nation and calls upon them to do certain things.

All men everywhere are called upon to “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD” (100:1). Some equate “a joyful noise” with singing. However, since singing is mentioned later, it really means much more. While the thought may include singing, the meaning here has reference to all of man’s speech. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29). One’s speech should always give honor and glory to God.

All men everywhere are called upon to “Serve the LORD with gladness: (Psa. 100:2a). Everything that one does in life ought to be in service to the Lord and to His glory. This

was the meaning of Jesus when He said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:16).

All men everywhere are called upon to “Come before his presence with singing” (Psa. 100:2b). Singing has always been a part of man’s devotion to the Lord. “Is any merry? let him sing psalms” (Jam. 5:13). Paul commanded, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” and “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Since Christians teach and admonish when they sing, the songs must be Scriptural in their content. Also, since songs, hymns and spiritual songs are directed toward the Lord, they must be reverent.

All men everywhere are called upon to “Enter into his gates and courts with thanksgiving, and...praise” (Psa. 100:4a). The psalmist here has in mind Old Testament temple worship. In that time they literally entered the gates and came into the courts. However, today, all Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:9) and have a right to approach God. With Jesus as our High Priest, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

All men everywhere are called upon to “Be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name” (Psa. 100:4b). The thanksgiving and praise is not limited to worship. One should have an attitude of gratitude all the time and bless the Lord in every situation. Revelation pictures those around the Lord’s throne, “Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 7:12).

Huntsville, TX

“We Make Him a Liar”

Charles Pogue

Among others, the following facts are presented us in 1 John 1:6-10: (1) God is light. (2) If we walk in the light we have fellowship one with another. (3) If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves. (4) If we confess our sins He will forgive us. (5) If we say we have no sin we make Him a liar. How, one asks, does one make God a liar by claiming to have no sin? It is God, His very nature, and His law that determines what is sin. If one does a thing that is contrary to God’s nature and His law, yet claims he has not sinned, he is asserting that what God has said is sin is not sin, therefore accusing God of being a liar. That cannot be, because it is impossible for God to lie (Tit. 1:2).

Why, then, would one (particularly a child of God) who has committed sin, deny that he has sinned? John clearly expresses one reason in the above context: the Word of God is not in him. It goes without saying, if one asserts sin is not sin when the Word of God

says it is, clearly God’s Word is not in him. Another reason is found in a prerequisite to confession—humility. Amidst a world that focuses on self-esteem, claims truth is subjective, and promotes the idea of you are okay, I am okay, humility is becoming an increasingly rare commodity. As part of the new man, we are to put on humility (Col. 3:12). One who rises up against God, by claiming he has not sinned, has cast forth part of his spiritual clothing, and stands before God exposed as arrogant and full of pride.

God said of Israel of old:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (2 Chr. 7:14).

In order for God’s children to receive forgiveness of sin, they must humble themselves, which calls for admitting that sin is

sin, turning from it, and praying. Watch out for old Mr. Pride! Here he comes planting the thoughts of “I didn’t do it,” or “Yes, I did it, but there is nothing wrong with it.” Pride may even turn the guilty one into a liar who claims he did not do it at all when he did.

Whatever happened to humility? Did some lose it when backed into a corner by their guilt and they chose to defend their actions, only later to find themselves even farther from God and denying other sin is sin, and embracing that too? Did they, for the sake of friends or acquaintances, deny sin is sin or deny it has been committed, and thus not only fail to receive God’s forgiveness for themselves, but also, stand in the way of humility and forgiveness on the part of another? Sin is serious business, so is the humility required to confess it, bend the knee in prostration, and lift the pleading voice to the Almighty on high.

Though Jesus did no sin nor was guile in His mouth (1 Pet. 2:22), yet He remains the ultimate example of humility. He did not count equality with God a thing to be so held on to that He would not take upon Himself humanity and live among us (Phi. 2:7). That humility led Him to the cross in obedience where He sacrificed Himself for us (2:8). But just before Jesus faced the mob, the illegal trials, and the humiliation of dying as the lowest of thieves, He set a supreme and timeless example of humility by washing the apostles’ feet (John 13:5). If Jesus, who knew no sin, could humble Himself to the extent of doing the task of a servant, when He was really Lord of all, why do brethren deny or defend the wrong they commit rather than humbling themselves before God and seeking His forgiveness? Pride

is a robber and thief, depriving men of humbleness of mind, the forgiveness of God, and ultimately a mansion among mansions, while filling the pitiful void of character with the arrogance of conceit.

One other reason men will deny their sin, thus having it remain, is standing. “If I admit I’ve done wrong, I’ll lose my standing among brethren.” My friend, there is old Mr. Pride rearing his ugly head once again. Hopefully, we can have higher regard for our brethren than that! If you have sinned, and your brethren are what they ought to be, they will fellowship in the joy of heaven over the sinner who has repented, not think less of you. Who has the respect of his fellows, the man who denies he has sinned when his loved ones know he has, or the man who confesses his wrong under the same circumstances? It is the one who shows the strength of character and the lowliness of mind to confess his wrong and seek God’s mercy.

Who is a weak man, the one who admits it when he has sinned, or the one who denies it? Who is the humble man, the one who confesses his sin, or the one who accuses God of being a liar by denying sin is sin? Oh, that those who have lifted themselves up with pride after the semblance of the Prince of Tyrus, falsely painting themselves in the frame of perfect beauty, portraying their position as invincible when they are the mere antithesis of invincibility, would bow the knee to God, and mourn for sin that separates them from God and fractures the blessed fellowship with those who care for nothing else but the salvation of men’s souls.

Stilwell, OK

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Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Karen Diamond in the death of her mother, Marie Underwood, on February 3, 2016. Please keep Karen, Dallas, and their family in your prayers.

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Ladies' Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

February 14

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

February 16

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“Christ Is the Joy of My Life”

(Philippians 2:1-3)

David P. Brown

In the midst of persecution and hardship the Lord’s church came into existence in the Roman colonial city of Philippi (Acts 16:9-40). It is this church that Paul declares to be his “brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown.” Hence, the rest of the statement: “so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved” (Phi. 4:1—ASV).

The joy of Paul’s life was Christ. From the beginning, the church knew by Paul’s example what Jesus meant when He taught:

Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Mat. 5:11-12).

From his prison cell Paul now exhorts the Philippians to remember his exemplary life.

They were in the same conflict as Paul. As citizens of the kingdom of heaven, Paul, the Philippians, and all Christians were given the privilege of suffering for the cause of Christ (Phi. 1:29-30). The same mind and spirit of the Christ should characterize the church in Philippi, as it characterized Paul (1:21). As the inspired Peter declared:

Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf [“in this name”—ASV] (1 Pet. 4:16).

We would do well to ask ourselves if we would rejoice upon hearing of the persecution of brethren that was brought about because said brethren would not compromise the truth of the Gospel. Today, too many in the Lord’s church just do not believe 2 Timothy 3:12 means what it says!

As Christ went to the Cross to redeem

mankind, the Scripture declares that “joy... was set before him” whereby he “endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2). Because our Lord could see in His death on the cross the eternal benefits for all mankind *chara* (joy, gladness, delight) He under-girded His resolve to bear it all that we might live.

Today, most people think of joy as something that comes because one is free from hardship, pain, and anguish. But, the joy that Christ offers does not dissolve when one is persecuted for serving God. Such persecution actually enhances, broadens, and deepens the Christian’s gladness or joy. Luke records of the apostles:

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name (Acts 5:41).

James declared:

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire,

wanting nothing (Jam. 1:2-4).

Realizing that man’s faith in the Christ is formed and sustained by the Word of God, we should realize that without faith there can be no true joy. Paul wrote to the Romans:

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost (Rom. 15:13).

Hence, where there is no faith in the Christ, there can be no joy. It should be noted that this faith is a living, active, obedient faith. The joy and gladness that the Lord gives comes when one is obedient (1 Cor. 15:58; Phi. 2:12).

Hope is another requisite for joy in the Christian. Paul said that Christians were to rejoice “in hope” (Rom. 12:12). Hope, the expectation of heaven coupled with the earnest desire to receive our promised inheritance, keeps the Christian’s “eye of faith” sharp and constant as he searches “for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God” (Heb. 11:10).

Joy is also strengthened by others of like precious faith. The letter to the Philippians radiates with this principle (Phi. 1:3; 2:2, 17-18, 28; 4:4-5, 10). What John said to the elect lady concerning her children should characterize us as we know of brethren standing fast in the faith (2 John 4). The sympathetic spirit among brethren is a significant part of faithfulness among the saints (Rom. 12:15-16). The text of this article is further proof of this significant point.

Of course all of the aforementioned principles that cultivate joy are based on and undergirded by God himself. God alone is the

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The site offers a vast amount of resources for your personal edification. Past issues of *Defender* and *Beacon*, written sermon outlines presented by Michael Hatcher, as well as Ira Y. Rice’s Basic Bible course are available. Videos of lectureships, sermons, and Gospel meetings can be viewed. Why not check it out at:

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source of all joy. The psalmist declared that God was his “exceeding joy” (Psa. 43:4). Paul said that “we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Rom. 5:11). One would,

therefore, expect Paul to write to the Philip-
pians that they along with all Christians are
to: “Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say,
Rejoice” (Phi. 4:4).

Spring, TX

A Notable Obituary

The following interesting (and sadly true) obituary reportedly appeared in *The London Times*:

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as knowing when to come in out of the rain, why the early bird gets the worm, life isn't always fair, and maybe it was my fault. Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate, teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch, and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student only worsened the condition of our late friend.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined

even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student, but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as churches became businesses and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense took a beating when he learned he couldn't defend himself from a burglar in his own home and the burglar could sue him for assault [he was briefly encouraged when the “castle laws” were passed]. Common Sense finally lost the will to live after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot, spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement from the coffee-seller.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents: Truth and Trust, by his wife: Discretion, by his daughter: Responsibility, and by his son: Reason. He is survived by his four stepbrothers: I Know My Right, I Want It Now, Don't Blame Me, and I'm a Victim. Not many attended the memorial service for Common Sense because so few realized he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.

Author Unknown

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February 21

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February 24

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41st Annual Bellview Lectures *Typology*

June 10 – 14, 2016

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Minister: Michael Hatcher

Deacons: Henry Born, Elward Brantley,
Bill Busch

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The Confused Ramblings of Men on Baptism

Charles Pogue

When our wives find a new recipe they would like to try out on us husbands, they do not just find the name of a dish in a cookbook, close it, and make up their own list of ingredients and cooking directions; they follow the recipe as it appears in the cookbook. To follow the other path would not result in the dish listed in the book. Her own concoction might be better, it might be uneatable, but it would not be the same. All of us understand this in the realm of cooking, but not all men seem to grasp it in the matter of Biblical Truth.

Recently, we heard two televangelists on the same day, preach on baptism. Amazingly, their messages were an attempt to present the subject of baptism in a positive way, but they committed the same egregious error that our freelance wives would if they took the title of a recipe from the cookbook, made up their own ingredients and cooking directions, and

then told us they made the dish found in the book. My wife or yours might improve on a recipe in a book, but no man can improve on any Biblical doctrine. If doctrine is changed, it is no longer truth that saves, but error that condemns.

The feeble attempts of the two aforementioned T.V. Performers showed just how confusing man can be when he attempts to take a Bible subject, create his own recipe, and tries to pass it off as what the Bible teaches. Both of the aforementioned men told the truth when they said only those who repent are candidates for baptism, and that only immersion is baptism. With these two facts stated correctly, things went downhill from there, because they dared not touch such Scriptures as Acts 2:38, 22:16, or 1 Peter 3:21. Their rejection of the essentialness of baptism for salvation made much of their performances so confusing that those hearing them must either have

been baffled, or if they thought about correctly, recognized that neither of these two men had even a hint of knowing what they were talking about.

Repentance, both affirmed is necessary before baptism, but salvation comes before baptism. That means they were saying one is saved before he repents. That cannot be when Jesus said, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5).

One of the two men said that in baptism a person leaves behind the old man and puts on the new—an obvious, although selective and subjective illusion to Romans 6. He followed that statement with the immediate reinforcement of his error that one is saved before baptism. If he wanted to keep his following, it was foolish for him to mention that fact, but then, maybe that is why he did not give the Scripture reference for it. Let us help out his blind

followers here. Paul reminds the Romans that they were baptized into Christ’s death when they were baptized. It was not until they came forth from the watery grave that they were new creatures. Anyone can figure out that the claim that one can be saved and then later shed the old man of sin and put on the new man is an absolute hoax, and as backwards as claiming winter follows the spring.

Regarding the matter of immersion, one of the televangelists said that neither sprinkling nor pouring are baptism, and then he said, if, however, you were sprinkled or had water poured on you at some previous time, “I applaud you.” I immediately wondered, what for? Of course, he did not elaborate; he had already said something he could not explain. To say more would have dug an even deeper hole for him.

He then said, “We don’t baptize infants here at Fellowship Christian.” But then he again assured the audience that if they had had water sprinkled or poured on them when they were babies, he applauded them, too. How typical it is of man to applaud error that it makes him totally discreditable in what little he says that is true. But then, maybe that is the design—to confuse people so much he can keep them believing the popular lie, “It is all on Him. There is nothing you can do to be saved.” With that lie firmly entrenched in their minds, he can proceed to tell them that they can come together for worship when it is really entertainment, instead of reverent scriptural worship. They will keep coming back for more, and not only will they continue to return for the entertainment, they will bring others with them to be entertained, and the numbers of

Christ and His Church

C. R. Nichol

It is a detestable spirit which professes reverence for Christ and hisses at His church or speaks lightly of it. Such reveals a lack of proper regard for sacred things, and shows ignorance of the relation between Christ and His church. When Paul was persecuting the church, he was persecuting Christ (Acts 22:7). To speak lightly of the church is to treat Christ with contempt, for the church is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18-24). You cannot reverence Christ and hold His body in contempt.

Deceased

the lost who think they are saved, will continue to swell. All the while, prospects willing to obey the Gospel in truth, and worship God according to His pattern, are getting harder and harder to find. That is most likely why one of these men, who was backed up by a full orchestra and a very large choir defended the act of applauding in worship, say for instance, when

someone is baptized.

Wives, you know when you follow a recipe, what you end up with is what is recorded in the book, but if you just take the title and make up your own recipe, it is not the same. Would that men could understand that in important Bible doctrines such as baptism!

Stilwell, OK

“Sorry, Preacher, I Can’t Be There Sunday”

Recently I read an article in a bulletin that came to my office. It was a letter written to a preacher by a “faithful member.” I will quote this letter for your reading:

Dear Preacher, you often stress attendance at worship is important. But I think a fellow has a right to miss now and then. I think I should be excused for the following reasons: Christmas (it comes only once a year)—1; New Year’s (I need to start off rested)—1; July Fourth (national holiday)—1 labor Day (the Bible commands one day of rest)—1; Memorial Day (a state holiday)—1 school closing (kids need a break at the beach)—1; school begins (last chance of summer)—1; family reunions (1 for my family, 1 for my wife’s)—2; out-of-town games (we support the team)—5; tournaments (high school, college, tennis and golf, 1 each)—4; anniversary (our second honeymoon)—1; sickness (1 for each family member)—5; business (a fellow must make a living)—3; vacation (only two weeks, but 3 weekends)—3; bad weather (rain, ice, hail, etc.)—5; Royals and Chiefs games—4; unexpected company (can’t walk out, they didn’t bring church clothes)—2; alarm didn’t go off (not my fault)—2; house

and car repairs (who can afford a plumber and mechanic anymore?)—3; specials on TV (continuing education)—2. Add the numbers up and they come to 50. So, preacher, that leaves only two Sundays per year. We’ll see you on Easter, for sure, and the third Sunday in August, unless providentially hindered.

(Signed)

Faithful Member

Though this letter is extreme (it **is** extreme, is it not?), we readily get the point. It takes commitment and concentration to really support the work of the Lord in the local body. The fellowship and encouragement by our participation in the Bible classes and in the worship, is a very important part of body life. The edification that is to come from this kind of activity is what keeps the church alive and vibrant. We are to be built up by the continued teaching of the Word and the encouragement that comes from fellowship. But if our attendance is sporadic, our faith will not grow in the Lord. The body life is so important to the welfare of the individual member. Without the continued fellowship the body is not growing. If the body is not growing, it begins to die.

Author Unknown

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Ed Podgurski (Bill & Peggy Crowe's son-in-law)	
Doug Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother-in-law)	

Please Remember

Every Sunday

Ladies' Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

February 24

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

March 7

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



41st Annual Bellview Lectures

Typology

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Prison Necessities

Lee Moses

If you were stuck in a cold prison, what would you ask your friends to bring you? A good coat, along with some sweatshirts and blankets, seems fairly obvious. Some good food might be the next request—maybe a good steak dinner with a loaded baked potato and salad. After this, a prisoner would want some mindless way to while away the time; perhaps with a television set, a video game console, computer with an Internet connection, or some pop fiction books. Cigarettes serve as currency in prison, so while a Christian would not want to deal in cigarettes, he might ask a friend to bring something he could use as barter—perhaps a tin of homemade cookies or a box of Ho Hos could help.

The apostle Paul, advanced in age and likely waning in health, found himself in a cold prison with winter approaching (2 Tim. 1:8, 16; 2:9; 4:21). He indeed requested that his dear friend and son in the faith, Timothy,

bring him a cloak. But his other requests may come as a surprise, at least to those who do not know Paul: “The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments” (4:13). In addition to his cloak to provide protection against the cold and dampness, Paul saw the “books” and “especially the parchments” as necessities in a cold prison.

What exactly were the “books” and “parchments”? The word for *books (biblia)* was often used as a solemn expression in reference to the books of the Old Testament (Gottlob 1:617). This usage and this word is where the term, *the Bible*—literally, “the Book,” originated. *Parchments (membrana)* refers to costly animal skins, which were used for writing, and these may have contained the Old Testament in the Greek language, or possibly some of the Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), or to his own inspired New Testament

writings, or possibly to several or all of the above.

Regardless of what exactly the books and parchments were, Paul showed determination to follow himself the same instruction that he gave to young Timothy. “Till I come, give attendance to reading” (1 Tim. 4:13). Even in prison, Paul was determined to keep his mind sharp and his spirit nurtured. Even as he knew that death lay shortly ahead for him (2 Tim. 4:6), he wanted to apply himself to his books. This is all the more remarkable when one considers of whom this is said:

Even an apostle must read.... He is inspired, and yet he wants books! He has been preaching at least for thirty years, and yet he wants books! He had seen the Lord, and yet he wants books! He had had a wider experience than most men, and

yet he wants books! He had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it was unlawful for a man to utter, yet he wants books! (Spurgeon).

If an inspired apostle had need of books—and if even in his final days and in a prison he had need of books—how much more do we have that need; especially of the Book of books, the Bible? If it is a necessity in a cold prison, it is a necessity every day of our lives.

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Union City, TN

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Who Sets Your Standards?

Ken Chumbley

A student at a private school has been suspended for attending the Prom at a public high school. Some are outraged by the decision of the Heritage Christian School in Findlay, Ohio, a fundamental Baptist school. Being ignored in all of this is the fact that the school has a contract that the students and parents sign that forbids such activities. Further, the

school, being aware that the student planned to attend, advised him ahead of time that he would be suspended for attending and further, he was advised that if he engaged in other activities that they specified, he would be expelled.

In expressing opposition to the action of the school, it has been expressed that such

action shows how “out of touch Christianity is with modern realities” and this is the reason why Christianity is losing ground. It was further suggested that Christians need to get a “P.R.” person to promote Christianity.

Today, we find that with political parties, when one party loses support that the opposing party is free with advice telling the losing party that if they are ever going to win, they need to become more like them. How could that be a winning strategy, except for the one giving the advice? Then there are ones within the losing party that echo the same strategy. How can they think it will win them elections?

With the situation that has arisen over this prom we see, from what we stated earlier, there are those in the world who are seeking to tell Christians how they need to change to be “in touch with modern realities.” Being interpreted, that means that Christians should loosen up their standards to attract more people. However, even worse, there are “quislings” in the church who have espoused the same philosophy and seek to work from within to loosen up not only moral but doctrinal standards to attract people from the world and from denominationalism. We see examples of this when Biblical standards of morality are discarded because the world does not follow these standards, and we see it in changes to the worship (adding instrumental music, drama, etc.) and opening the doors of fellowship to those who are not in fellowship with God.

Christians are commanded:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of

God (Rom. 12:2).

One paraphrase reads, “don’t let the world squeeze you into its own mold.” When we allow the world, or worldly Christians, to entice us to change or drop Biblical standards, we are allowing them to squeeze us into their own mold, to conform to worldly standards and not Biblical ones.

Christians are also taught:

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you (2 Cor. 6:17)

and

But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Pet. 2:9).

How can Christians be separate from the world when they follow worldly standards? How can Christians be a “peculiar people” (or special people for that is the meaning of the word) when they allow worldly standards to be those they use to justify their words and actions?

Let us not be fooled, let us never allow the world or worldly Christians define the standard of morality that we follow, but let us follow biblical standards. Let us not be fooled, let us never allow the world or compromising brethren to define the standards of doctrine relative to worship, fellowship, or in any other way but to stand firm for the doctrine of Christ and “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

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Please Remember

Every Sunday

Ladies' Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

March 7

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

March 13

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.



41st Annual Bellview Lectures

Typology

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“Easter”

Brad Green

Easter (Acts 12:4) is only used one time in the King James translation of the Bible and is never used in at least seven other translations I searched. The word translated, *easter*, is the Greek word for “Passover,” and as the context proves, it is the Jewish feast of Passover which is being addressed—“Then were the days of unleavened bread” (12:3). The feast of Passover was so termed because “It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses” (Exo. 12:27). It is also referred to as the feast of unleavened bread because God told the Jews who escaped Egyptian bondage, “Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt” (23:15). It is important also to note that Passover was just one of

three feasts God commanded for the Jews including—“the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, *which is* in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field” (23:16). Do those who claim to celebrate Easter, also celebrate “the feast of harvest” and “the feast of ingathering?” If not, “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all” (Jam. 2:10).

The Passover was a memorial for the Jewish system—“this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations... And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever” (Exo. 12:14, 24). This feast was to be observed “throughout [the Jews’] generations.” When the Old Law (i.e., the Jewish system) was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), this observance was no longer

commanded by God—the generations of the Jews had ceased. Under the New Law (i.e., the Law of Christ), “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). The apostle Paul also explains:

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us* [Jew and Gentile]; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances [the Old Testament]; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph. 2:13-16).

The “one body,” in which all who have been saved and reconciled by Jesus’ blood abide, is the Church for which Jesus died—“[Jesus] is the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18).

The church for which Jesus died is never commanded to observe the feast of Passover (or any other Jewish ordinance). The New Testament serves as the Law for Jesus’ church. Included in the New Law is a command from God to observe a memorial in remembrance of the death of God’s Son upon the cross—

the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

The memorial which God commands for Christians is the Lord’s supper. It is for the purpose of remembering Jesus’ death until He returns. This memorial is commanded to be observed “upon the first *day* of the week” (Acts 20:7). Since every week has a first day, then this memorial is to be observed every Sunday.

The Passover (that to which *Easter* applies) was a feast for the Jews amenable to the Old Testament; it was never a feast intended for New Testament Christians. The Jews, by observing the Passover, were commanded to remember the day God saved them from Egyptian bondage; Christians, in partaking of the Lord’s supper, are to remember the day God “gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Let us remember that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). But let us also remember that today, we are commanded to abide “in the doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9), not the ordinances of the Old Testament.

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Lenoir City, TN

Controlled or Uncontrolled

Bill Jackson

The child of God is a controlled being. He lives a controlled life. Dying to the life of sin (Rom. 6:1-7), he lives now unto God (6:10). In obeying the will of God, so submissive is he that he works at “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). His thoughts are to be channeled into the areas of the true, the honest, the just, the pure, the lovely, and those things of good report (Phi. 4:8). Thus, he is called a “disciple”—a disciplined one; yea, one who lives his life in keeping with a discipline over him, the Word of God!

With that thought before us, let us be reminded that the one not a child of God, and thus not living that controlled life, then lives an uncontrolled life—pictured in the Bible as the life of lust, human desire, excess—**sin!** Paul reminded the Ephesians that when they were “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.

2:1), they walked according to the course of this world, in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind (2:2-3). Uncontrolled! The difference is seen, again, in Romans 6:16 where the point is made that one will yield himself to, and be a servant of, either sin or righteousness. More, the apostle goes on to say, that the “yielding” is through the use of our “members”—members of our bodies (6:19).

Then, the non-Christian may yield his members to commit fornication, but the child of God is a controlled being, and he cannot do so (1 Cor. 6:13)! The non-Christian may yield his members to steal from his fellow man, but the Christian is a controlled being, and he cannot do so (Eph. 4:28)! The non-Christian may give himself to the most intense feelings of hatred toward another, but the Christian is a controlled being, and cannot do so (1 John 2:10-11)! Controlled or uncontrolled! On that point, one’s obedience or decision to remain in disobedience often centers. Some really do not want to be that submissive, that obedient, that sacrificial, and thus reject the Gospel. In obedience, we are stating that we will live the disciplined, controlled life. Every failing and shortcoming the child of God has amounts to a breaking out of that controlled mold.

In the examination demanded in 2 Corinthians 13:5, we need always to ask, “Am I really in God’s control...Am I really submissive... Do I expend all effort to put the Lord and his will and kingdom, first” (Mat. 6:33)?

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The site offers a vast amount of resources for your personal edification. Past issues of *Defender* and *Beacon*, written sermon outlines presented by Michael Hatcher, as well as Ira Y. Rice’s Basic Bible course are available. Videos of lectureships, sermons, and Gospel meetings can be viewed. Why not check it out at:

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Ed Podgurski (Bill & Peggy Crowe's
son-in-law)
Doug Johnson (Joyce Johnson's
brother-in-law)

Prayers Requested

Dale Cunningham requested prayers on his behalf. Please keep Dale in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Please Remember

March 13

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

March 20

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

March 21

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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A “Young” Universe

Roelf L. Ruffner

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psa. 8:3-4).

All my life I have heard *scientists* pontificate on the presumed ancientness of the Earth and the universe. Figures like “billions of years” roll off of these unbeliever’s tongues like the proverbial promises of politicians. They need a large number (4-5 billion years) to justify their materialistic evolutionary view that life “evolved” from rocks and dirt. The public often swallows these assumptions whole because they either are ignorant of the “young earth” creationist **or** Biblical view or anything deemed *science* is like a religion to them, to be uncritically accepted by faith as *fact*. The truth-be-told **none** of these pontificators were eye witnesses to any of their wild assumptions. It reminds me of the holy judgment

the apostle Paul proclaimed against the unbelievers in God of his own day: “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20).

A case in point is the recent discoveries made by the NASA spacecraft New Horizons on its flyby of the dwarf planet Pluto. Scientists had long proclaimed that Pluto was essentially a “dead world” because of its distance from the Sun. They expected it to be pockmarked by impact craters with few geological features because it was assumed to be “billions” of years old. They were found to be incredibly wrong!

After nine years and millions of miles of travel New Horizons found Pluto a geologically active and colorful world; a relatively “young” planet. They found few craters,

hardly what one would expect from “billions of years” of meteoric impact. Especially noticeable were two tall “ice volcanoes” nearly four miles high and glaciers of ice. Pluto’s moons also indicated a young, violent past. All this shook up the scientific community. Jim Green, director of planetary science at NASA’s Washington headquarters exclaimed, “The New Horizon’s mission has taken what we thought we knew about Pluto and turned it upside down.”

These scientists should have consulted the Holy Bible. If they had they would have discovered that Pluto and the other celestial bodies in the universe were created or spoken into existence (Psa. 33:9) on the fourth day (24 hours) of Creation. They are not “billions of years old” but thousands. Only a celestial body created a few thousands of years ago would be geologically active like the Earth and Pluto.

And God said, Let there be lights in the

firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was good* (Gen. 1:14-18).

Work Cited

Haley, Garrett. “‘The Heavens Declare’: Discovery of ‘Baffling’ Features on Pluto’s Surface Defies Evolutionary Models.” *Christian News*. Mar. 8, 2016. <<http://christiannews.net/2015/11/16/the-heavens-declare-discovery-of-baffling-features-on-plutos-surface-defies-evolutionary-models/>>.

Columbia, TN

“I Am God and I Approve This Message”

Brad Green

- I ordained governments to be My ministers to carry out and execute justice in accordance with My will (Rom. 13:1-7).
- I have blessed the people of the United States, age 18 years of age or older, with the right and privilege to vote for and elect those who would represent them (Amendment 26 of the United States Constitution).
- I require that all government leaders govern in accordance with My will (Deu. 17:18-20; 2 Kin. 22:1-23:25; Dan. 5:18ff).
- Since I have blessed the citizens of the United States with the right and privilege to vote and elect their government leaders, thereby making them an integral part of the governing process in a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, I require that the citizens of the United States vote for and elect (to the best of their ability) government leaders who will govern in accordance with My will.

We have heard many messages promoted by means of campaign commercials which

are preceded or followed by the candidates saying, "I approve this message." Sadly, the message above has long been abandoned or ignored. Many people are "offended," at the very mention of the name of God during a political campaign (unless it is evoked by their chosen candidate). The ACLU **jeers** at any attempt to promote or give any glory to God during a campaign, but **cheers** loudly when the candidate they have supported takes the oath of office on January 20th and repeats the words, "So help me God." When Pilate asked:

knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin (John 19:10-11).

Today, man would have no power at all to elect their governing leaders "except it were given thee from above." Christians should, to the best of their ability, vote for candidates

who will uphold the precepts set forth in the Word of God.

The following is taken directly from the 2008 Democratic Party Platform approved by the DNC on Monday, August 25, 2008.

The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports *Roe v. Wade* and a woman's right to choose a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay, and we oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right.

We support the full inclusion of all families, including same-sex couples, in the life of our nation, and support equal responsibility, benefits, and protections. We will enact a comprehensive bipartisan employment non-discrimination act. We oppose the Defense of Marriage Act and all attempts to use this issue to divide us.

Is this a message that God would approve of? God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). God considered the unborn child in the womb to be a precious life and God hates "hands that shed innocent blood" (Pro. 6:17). Further, God proclaims homosexuality to be unclean, dishonorable, "vile," "against nature," "unseemly," or shameful, and "error" (Rom. 1:24-27).

As we participate in the process revered and envied by the rest of the world, let us be a shining light by demanding that our leaders respect morality and truth. Let us take our "one vote," and courteously and humbly do that which is pleasing in the sight of God.

Lenoir City, TN

41st Annual Bellview Lectures

Typology

June 10 – 14, 2016

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Henry Hignite	Cary Parks
Aleacia Godwin	
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)	
Regina Bonal (Terri Myrick's daughter)	
Ed Podgurski (Bill & Peggy Crowe's son-in-law)	
Doug Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother-in-law)	

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Nancy Travis in the death of her niece, Alicia James, on March 13. Please keep Nancy and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

Every Sunday

Ladies' Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

March 20

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

March 21

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., at Bill & Pam Busch's home.

March 23

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



BEACON

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March 21, 2016

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Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

43 = 59,000,000

Dub McClish

The Pharaoh of Moses' time ordered that every male Hebrew was to be slain at birth (Exo. 1:16, 22). He is remembered in Scripture (and by all right-thinking men) as an unspeakably cruel, immoral, and evil man (Acts 7:19). The ancient Greek pagans "exposed" their unwanted and helpless infants to wild animals and the elements to dispose of them, and most moderns call their behavior "barbaric" and "inhumane." Herod the Great murdered all of the male infants living in and around Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth (Mat. 2:16). Even those who are irreligious justly recoil at his jealous blood thirst.

More Recent "Civilized" Murderers

History remembers the German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, as a homicidal maniac on a grand scale for his destruction of 6,000,000 Jews in the 1930s and 1940s. Premier Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union murdered far more than this number of his own people.

Chairman Mao of China, slaughtered even more than Stalin. The perpetrators and advocates of legalized, casual abortion in our "civilized" nation are on par with these consummately evil tyrants. In the **forty-three years** since the US Supreme Court issued the infamous Roe v. Wade decision (January 22, 1973), between 1,200,000 and 1,500,000 totally innocent, defenseless baby **human beings** have been murdered by abortion **every year**, either in the womb or in the process of being born.

The justices rendered their verdict on a social/emotional basis, rather than a legal one, finding a "right" in the Constitution that did/does not exist. It was as unconstitutional as it was evil and inhumane. The total number of victims of infanticide on this anniversary has reached over **59,000,000** (<http://www.numberofabortions.com>). By far—and without question—the vast majority of these killings

have taken and continue to take place for the convenience of the mothers-to-be—a sordid (and intrinsically selfish) after-the-fact means of birth control. The seven black-robed justices (2 of the 9 dissented) who handed down this decision from Washington, DC, will learn that they were not the “Supreme Court” after all when they face the Judgment of the Creator of life with the blood of these millions of innocents on their hands (Pro. 6:17; 2 Cor. 5:10).

The same court (though not the same justices) that ruled in 1973 **that it is not** “cruel and unusual punishment” to kill the most helpless and innocent of their own kind later ruled (June 2008) that it **indeed is** “cruel and unusual punishment” to execute a child rapist. The awful irony of these two morally reprehensible rulings demonstrates the irrational and wicked nonsense of our God-despising, morally topsy-turvy times.

When Does Life Begin?

What about abortion? Is it infanticide or is it merely the removal of “expendable tissue”? For abortion to be “murder,” the unborn child must be a living person, temporarily dependent upon, but distinct from its mother. To the pro-death advocates of abortion, the unborn **is** merely a “piece of tissue,” comparable to a wart, a mole, or even a tumor, and therefore utterly expendable (merely an impersonal “fetus”). This leads to the question, *When does life begin?* It does not take a Solomon to see that this is the vital question of the entire discussion of abortion.

The abortion advocate answers, “At birth,” but the Bible answers, “At conception.” God said to Jeremiah, “Before I formed thee in

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the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5). **Before** he began to take form (i.e., skeletal or muscular—at conception), while in the womb, God recognized Jeremiah as a living person. This is the consistent Biblical teaching (see Job 3:16; 10:11; Psa. 51:5; 139:12-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:5; etc.).

Medical science generally places the beginning of life at conception. In 1984 a statement titled, “The Utmost Respect for Human Life,” was signed by 61 physicians, two of whom were former presidents of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. It said in part:

We urge all those engaged in the abortion debate to recognize that a central issue in the discourse must include acceptance of the **fact** that induced abortion causes the death of a **living human** (*Abortion: Where Have All The Babies Gone?* American Tract Society, Garland, TX—emphasis added).

Dr. Jim Clark, a gynecologist who served as an elder in the church for many years, states that from a medical and scientific perspective the embryo is alive from the time of fertilization (when the sperm unites with the egg). Thus a separate, distinct human life (different from both father and mother in genetic

composition) begins at the moment of conception **rather than at the moment of birth**. Admittedly, some doctors disagree (**many of whom operate high-profit abortion clinics**, incidentally). Significantly, however, some doctors who at first favored abortion have changed their position after conducting several abortions.

“Common sense” argues that life begins at conception. Some abortion advocates recommend singing or playing music to the unborn so as to influence them. How strange. Do they really expect to influence a “wart” or a “mole”? Pro-abortionists recognize life in the unborn in other forms of animal life. Those who will gather by the thousands to champion the brutal *right* to slay their own kind in the womb will go on a hunger strike to protect the life of the unborn eagle (yes, they know it is an eagle, not merely a “fetus,” **while it is still in the egg**). Ironically, some who will almost become violent in opposition to the state’s right to end the murderer’s life, will staunchly demand the “right” to slay their own offspring in their most innocent and defenseless state.

If life, humanness, and personhood do not begin at conception, when do they begin—one day, one week, one month, or three months after the sperm fertilizes the egg? Upon what basis will this all-important question be determined, except ideology and/or fickle subjectivism? While there are many other crucial matters involved in this issue upon which abortion should most certainly be opposed, the determination of the beginning point of life is the very heart of it.

If life begins at conception (as certainly it does), abortion just as certainly constitutes

murder—legalized murder, but no less murder—on the grandest scale every known. **A Christian cannot favor this practice and be faithful to God. Neither can a Christian be guiltless who votes for a politician or political party that favors this atrocity.**

Solutions

What can concerned people do?

1. Pray fervently that in the providence of God this ruling will soon be reversed (the current Supreme Court has already mitigated a portion of the 1973 decision and there is hope that it may eventually be overturned completely).
2. Let your representatives at both the state and federal levels know your abhorrence of abortion.
3. Vote for candidates at every level who oppose abortion and who will work to correct this tragedy (Note: One major party has a strong pro-abortion, pro-death plank in its platform, while the other party has an **anti-abortion, pro-life** plank.)
4. Write a “letter to the editor” for inclusion in your local newspaper, opposing abortion.
5. Encourage anyone considering an abortion not to consider it at all.
6. Elders and preachers should see that the local congregations they serve are made (and kept) aware of this tragedy through sermons, bulletin articles, and tracts.

Let us courageously oppose this monstrous “work of darkness” (Eph. 5:11), confident that God will bless our efforts.

Denton, TX

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March 30

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



41st Annual Bellview Lectures

Typology

June 10 – 14, 2016

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BEACON

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Why Do We Preach the Gospel?

Benard Ooko Kagaga

There are so many things we cannot separate for God has joined them together. One of these is preaching and salvation of man. God commanded us to “go” (Mark 16:15-16) out preaching the soul-saving Gospel of our Lord to whoever will obey His power to save (Rom. 1:16-17). The question is: Why do we preach the Gospel? This is asked because many folks have missed the focus for this.

We preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus to declare the Good News as the apostle Paul said, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (10:15). That is, declaring the plan of salvation to mankind and creating the hope of being with God in heaven one time when the Lord will come for His kingdom.

Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put

down all rule and all authority and power (1 Cor. 15:24).

Also, as we go out preaching the Gospel, we need to declare the Lord as John did when he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). It was “good news” Christ died for you (Heb. 4:15). It was “good news” He died, was buried, and was resurrected (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

We preach the Gospel to present the truth. It is sad to see denominational bodies saying they are preaching the truth to men. It cannot be true for it is only the church of Christ having the right to preach the Gospel that saved a sinner. Like Paul said, “the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). So the creator has loosed the method of preaching and has bound the message—**Truth** (John 8:31-32). What is the **Truth** that we preach? God’s “word is truth” (John 17:17).

We preach the Gospel to inform the listeners of salvation. The Word of Truth must be preached (Rom. 10:15). The Word of Truth must be heard as Paul said, “how shall they hear without a preacher?” (10:14). The Word of Truth must be heeded (Jam. 1:18-25).

We preach to show the consequence of sin and that a sinner must be convicted of his sins (Acts 2:37; 4:2; 7:54) for sin separates man from God (Isa. 59:1-2). They must see the ugliness of their separation from the presence of God and know assuredly that no man will change the truth (Eze. 18:4; Rom. 6:23) and no sin will go unnoticed and punished (Rev. 21:27). So the way is to repent (Acts 17:30).

We preach the Gospel of our Lord to produce faith as the apostle Paul said in his letter

to the Romans, “faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). No men’s stories. Therefore, man needs the Word of God to produce faith (Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:17). In this everyone is to be taught by God (John 6:45-46) for without God’s Word there is no true faith (Rom. 10:13-17).

We preach the Gospel to condemn error and rebuke the erring. Sin should not be tolerated (Gal. 2:5) for there is no security in sin after hearing a sermon preached (Acts 2:37). Repentance comes after rebuke of God’s Word (1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 2:15; Eph. 5:10-11).

God designed preaching as a means of reaching the lost world. Do you preach the sound words of Christ?

Kenya

Some Accident!

Terry Hightower

The atheist says there is no God. All wonders around us are accidental. No mighty hand made the thousand-billion stars. They made themselves. The earth spins itself to keep the oceans from falling off. Infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt. Faith is the crutch for the ignorant, the opium of the masses.

- Has the atheist examined the evidence? Whose faith is based on fact? Which makes more sense?
- How does the sugar thermometer in the pancreas know the proper blood sugar level to keep us from falling into a coma and dying?
- How does the human heart beat for years without faltering? It rests between beats!

It pumps 800 million times in a normal life span, pushing enough blood to fill a string of tank cars that would stretch from New York to Boston.

- The pattern of a person’s fingerprints never changes and no two persons’ are identical. What was “evolution’s” purpose in keeping these so?
- Kidneys filter poison from the blood and leave those components that are useful. How does the kidney know one from another?
- A brain weighs less than three pounds but directs all thoughts, feelings, and actions. Each cell “dials” messages to other cells in billions of different combinations. A cubic half-inch of brain cells contains a

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Typology

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lifetime of memories.

- Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words, and a brain to understand them, but denied it to the brute animals?
- Who showed a womb how to keep splitting a tiny ovum until a baby had the proper number of fingers, eyes, and ears in the right place—and then release it

into the world when it is strong enough to live?

Certainly God exists! **We** are evidence of it. “For every house is built by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God” (Heb. 3:4). Let us join David in exclaiming to God, “For every house is built by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God” (Psa. 139:14).

Paul told the Athenians about the “unknown God” (Acts 17:23) in whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (17:28). Our secular society is forgetting that it is God who gives all the blessings we enjoy (Jam. 1:17). May we magnify His name—the true God of Heaven and Earth.

“Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: *It is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves” (Psa. 100:3).

Amarillo, TX

Song Leader Help

Tim Smith

What can I do to help my song leader?

Most song leaders are not paid by the congregation for which they lead singing, and indeed, most congregations of the Lord’s people have more than one man who will lead. While they are performing their duties to the Lord by using their talents in His service and to His glory, we still should appreciate the service they provide Him and us enough to wish to help them in every way we can. Let us notice a few of the ways in which we can help him.

First, I can sing! Silence is not singing. When the song is being led, participate fully! Raise your voice to God’s glory and to the edification of those around you (Eph. 5:19; Col.

3:16). You need not worry about tone or tune, the primary concern in congregational singing is the message. Read the book and sing the words.

Second, I can follow the leader! The leader is the man standing before the crowd—follow him. When he starts, you start. When he speeds up, you speed up. When he slows down, you slow down. Follow him.

Third, I can encourage him! Tell him of his good work. Tell him that you appreciate him and his efforts. Even though not everyone is perfect in tone and tune, those who are willing to lead are worthy of our encouragement.

Deceased

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March 30

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April 4

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BEACON

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Collective Action Does Not Fulfil Individual Responsibility

Charles Pogue

A common response of people when they are asked to contribute to a cause is, “I gave at the office.” Maybe they did give at the office, but maybe they did not. What they may mean instead is, “My office gave, therefore I have no further individual responsibility.” Collective action does not fulfil individual responsibility.

Some people have been known to claim involvement in a personal evangelism program the congregation is engaged in when they are not participating in it at all. Somehow, they assume because the congregation is doing it, that they are a part of it whether they are active in it or not. They have the attitude of, “The office gave, so I did too.” Collective action does not relieve individual responsibility. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “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). Those faithful men in that verse are those who actually do the teaching. One cannot say, because the congregation is doing it, I am doing it. Collective action does not fulfil individual responsibility.

In one way, the same principle would be true in benevolence. While it is true that if one gives as he should, and the congregation as a whole commits an act of benevolence, that person is involved in it, but that does not necessarily relieve him of additional personal support of someone in need. John wrote, “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:17). **John is writing that to individuals not to congregations.** If the congregation helps someone in need, but

I still have the ability to help on an individual basis, I ought to do it. Collective action does not fulfil individual responsibility.

Some might be known to brag, “The congregation where I attend is to be commended because the attendance is very good for

all of the service times,” while he himself attends only on Sunday morning. It does not matter if every single member except for me attends ever service of the church, their attendance does not do me any good. Hebrews 10:25 has both a collective and an individual

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Typology

June 10 – 14, 2016

Friday, June 10

- 7:00 pm Nature of a Type
Terry Hightower
- 8:00 pm Interpretation of Types
David P. Brown

Saturday, June 11

- 9:00 am Prophet Michael Hatcher
- 10:00 am Priest Doug Post
- 11:00 am King Wayne Blake
- Lunch Break*

- 1:00 pm Old Testament Sacrifices
Terry Hightower

- 2:00 pm Passover Harrell Davidson

- 3:00 pm Open Forum

Dinner Break

- 7:00 pm Abraham Jerry Brewer

- 8:00 pm Typical Places Jess Whitlock

Sunday, June 12

- 9:00 am Jonah Daniel Denham

- 10:00 am Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac
Paul Vaughn

Lunch and Dinner Break

- 1:00 pm Noah's Ark Wayne Blake

- 2:00 pm Melchizedek Lee Moses

Monday, June 13

- 9:00 am Wilderness Wanderings
Paul Vaughn
- 10:00 am Moses Geoff Litke
- 11:00 am Hosea Doug Post

Lunch Break

- 1:00 pm David Gene Hill

- 2:00 pm Adam John West

- 3:00 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

- 7:00 pm Sabbath Daniel Denham

- 8:00 pm Types of Baptism
Harrell Davidson

Tuesday, June 14

- 9:00 am The Serpent in the Wilderness
Jerry Brewer

- 10:00 am Joshua John West

- 11:00 am Cities of Refuge David P. Brown

Lunch Break

- 1:00 pm Restoration Jess Whitlock

- 2:00 pm The Court Gene Hill

- 3:00 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

- 7:00 pm The Holy Place Geoff Litke

- 8:00 pm The Holy of Holies Lee Moses

application. Collective action does not fulfil Individual responsibility.

Paul wrote to the congregation at Corinth, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13:5). There is an individual examination that each one of us must do. One can examine the congregation all day long and come to the conclusion that it is faithful in all matters, but unless one can examine himself and come to the same conclusion about his person, he has wasted his time. Collective action does not fulfil individual responsibility.

Stilwell, OK

The Daily Cross

Charge not yourself with the weight of a year,

Child of the Master, faithful and dear;
Choose not the cross for the coming week,
For that is more than He bids you seek.

Bend not your arms for tomorrow's load;
You may leave that to your gracious God.

“Daily” only He says to thee,
“Take up your cross and follow Me.”

Author Unknown

Bellview Lectures Information

Housing

The Red Roof Inn (2591 Wilde Lake Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32526) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$59.99—one Queen size bed and \$69.99—two Full size beds. Their phone number is 850.941.0908.

Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations. If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Books

The lectureship book, *Typology*, will be available for purchase. The price has not yet been determined. The book will contain 27 chapters and will be a spiral-bound book. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2016) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD is \$37.75. The CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2015), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2015), and other material. The 2016 CD will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

Meals

The ladies of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

View Lectures Live on the Internet

If you cannot attend the lectureship in person, please view them live on the Internet:

www.bellviewcoc.com

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BEACON

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Bishops: Paul Brantley, Michael Hatcher

Minister: Michael Hatcher

Deacons: Henry Born, Elward Brantley,
Bill Busch

Sunday Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Back to the Bible

Danny Douglas

Over twenty years ago while I was in a Gospel Meeting, a young father and husband came up to me and explained how that he became a member of the Lord's church. He said that when he was a boy, his father would send him down to his grandmother's house about bedtime to check on her. Often, he would find her on the back porch reading her Bible or having gone to sleep with the grand old Book in her lap. Years later, after he was grown, he was a member of a well-known denomination and began to wake to things that they were doing which he knew to be wrong. As he began his search for the right religious body, he remembered his grandmother's love for the Word of God and how that she was a member of the church of Christ. Upon further investigation, he obeyed the Gospel and was added by the Lord to the body of Christ. This is a good example of how a dedication to the Bible will influence our children and

grandchildren, and many other souls.

Friends, the Lord's Cause in many congregations and communities is weakening, waning, and withering! Why? People have lost their love for the Holy Bible! It is not "fashionable" in many pulpits to quote the Bible or to emphasize the Scriptures, although Jesus often did (Mat. 4:4, 7; 10). "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). However, gone are the days among many brethren when training preachers to simply live, know, and "preach the word" is the most important thing! (1 Tim. 4:12, 16; 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:1-2).

Pleasing platitudes and flowery speeches will never be a proper substitute for the mighty Word of God (Heb. 4:12). The Word of God is that which is able to soothe the weeping soul and give hope to the hopeless! God's Word is that which will again fill the heart with the joy and that peace that only God can provide.

The Holy Bible is the only Book which will guide our youth in the right, make marriages joyful, and brighten the home. The Scriptures are that which are able to bring light into this dark, sinful, and dreadful world. Let us go back to the Bible that we might once again experience true spiritual growth, and the love

and unity for which man yearns!

As our great nation has departed from the precepts of the Lord, many blessings have been lost and the void has been filled with hatred, violence, lust, lying, cheating, and misery. Yet, God's great Book convicts man of sin, tells him of the Savior, and instructs him

41st Annual Bellview Lectures

Typology

June 10 – 14, 2016

Friday, June 10

- 7:00 pm Nature of a Type
Terry Hightower
- 8:00 pm Interpretation of Types
David P. Brown

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- 9:00 am Prophet Michael Hatcher
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how to come home to God. It teaches him the right way and what to do to be saved. No other plan or book can do that. Only the Word is “able to save your souls” (Jam. 1:21). It is able to put man back on the right path again.

Let us go back to the Bible, in earnest study and obedience, that we may experience the revival for which the Psalmist prayed: “Wilt thou not revive us again: That thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Psa. 85:6). My friend, have you obeyed the Gospel of Christ? It is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe it, with an obedient faith (Rom. 1:16; 10:16-17). It must be obeyed, because those who do not obey it will be lost for all eternity (2 The. 1:7-9). We read of Christ, “And being

made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). Let us go to the Word of God to find the very purpose for which we have been put on this earth, and to fulfill that purpose. “Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105).

Mt. Pleasant, TN

Defender and Beacon
Available Via E-Mail
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Debbie Dawson	Nancy Travis
Henry Hignite	Cary Parks
Aleacia Godwin	
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)	
Regina Bonal (Terri Myrick's daughter)	
Doug Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother-in-law)	

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April 16

Door Knocking at 9:30 a.m. Meet in the zone room.

April 17

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

April 18

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

Web Site

Past issues of *Defender* and *Beacon*, written sermon outlines presented by Michael Hatcher, and the Basic Bible course by Ira Y. Rice, Jr. are available. Videos of lectureships, sermons, and Gospel meetings can be viewed.

Check it out at:

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The Narrow Way

Dub Mowery

One criticism often leveled at the church of Christ is that “the church of Christ is too narrow-minded.” Of course, those who so criticize are using the term *narrow-minded* in a derogatory way. The opposite of being “narrow-minded” is to be “broad-minded.” By using “broad-minded,” the world really means toleration of all views without condemning any.

Tolerance is the name of the game in today’s society. If being tolerant is politically correct, then our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was not politically correct. He exhorted:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

Strait means a narrow, restricted passage.

God has always required man to strictly abide by His commandments, but a permissive society has the tendency to resist any restrictions. At the time Joshua succeeded Moses as Israel’s leader, the Lord said unto him:

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success (Jos. 1:7-8).

Notice that the Lord demanded Joshua and the children of Israel to observe all of His law given to them by Moses. They were not to

Defender and Beacon

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deviate from it to the right or to the left.

Likewise, the Lord requires of us who live in the Christian Dispensation to adhere strictly to the New Testament (Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19). The apostle Paul declared:

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is one*

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body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all (Eph. 4:3-6).

Within those verses, *one* appears seven times. *One* is an adjective used to qualify the number of each of the seven spiritual entities which it modifies. Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the truth that there is only one God? Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one-Lord? Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one Spirit? Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one hope of our

calling? Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one faith? Is it being “narrow-minded” to contend for the one baptism? Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one body?

The Scripture plainly teaches that there is **only** one of each of these seven spiritual entities. If that is what being “narrow-minded” means, then I acknowledge that I am indeed “narrow-minded.” However, those who use *narrow-minded* in a derogatory way are being judgmental and do not appreciate our efforts to abide by a “thus saith the Lord.”

Clarksville, TX

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Aleacia Godwin	
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)	
Regina Bonal (Terri Myrick's daughter)	

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathies are extended to Joyce Johnson in the death of her brother-in-law, Doug Johnson, who passed away on April 15, 2016. Please keep Joyce and her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

Every Sunday

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April 27

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



For Today Only

Today, I will make the greatest difference in my life. Today, I will control my thoughts. Today, I will produce fruit of spirituality. Today, I will be happy and hopeful. Today, I will refuse to be victimized by circumstances. Today, I will be an optimist. Yes, today! There is no other day—only today!

Delbert Goins



BEACON

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Abused Scripture

Dub McClish

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (Rom. 10:9).

These words from the apostle Paul may be among the most frequently abused and misused in Scripture. The abuse occurs when one uses this passage as if it were the only statement of Scripture on the subject of salvation. Other passages state other/additional conditions of salvation, however.

Those who advocate the **faith-only** doctrine relating to salvation (i.e., that God forgives and saves one the moment he believes in Jesus as God's Son) often quote Paul's statement above as their "proof text." However, this very passage refutes their **faith-only** doctrine. Note that it requires not only the heart-action of belief, but also the mouth-action of confession of that faith (thus not "faith alone"). The New Testament contains not a

single statement to the effect that salvation occurs the moment one merely believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The one passage in which **faith only** appears (Jam. 2:24), declares that one cannot be justified/saved thereby. Rather, the New Testament makes many statements to the contrary.

One would obviously be in grave error to deny that sinners are saved by faith. Many verses of Scripture thus affirm (e.g., John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 5:1; etc.), but not one of them has *only* or *alone* in connection with faith. The **faith alone-for-salvation** doctrine is too recent—by several centuries—to be inspired or apostolic. It came out of the 16th-century attempts of Martin Luther to reform the Roman Catholic Church. In his Scriptural (and thus correct) rejection of the Roman church's system of seeking salvation through a maze of human works devised by men, Luther swung to the opposite, equally damnable,

extreme. Each time he read in the New Testament that salvation is “by faith,” he interpreted “by faith alone”; his doctrine wears the Latin name of *sola fide*—solely by faith.

Those who promote Romans 10:9 (or any other single verse) as the totality of teaching on the terms of pardon create contradictions

between the inspired men, including with the Lord. A principal rule of Biblical hermeneutics (i.e., interpretation) is that any interpretation of a passage that contradicts other passages cannot be correct. To state it another way, the Scriptures must be so interpreted as to harmonize throughout. One has a very

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low opinion of the Bible if he is not concerned that his view of passage *A* directly contradicts passage *B*. If Paul taught salvation by faith alone in Romans 10:9 (or anywhere else), he contradicted:

- Ananias, who baptized him (Acts 22:12-16)
- Himself (Acts 17:30; Rom. 6:3-4, 17-19; Gal. 3:27)
- Peter (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21)
- The Son of God (Mat. 7:21-23; 10:32; Luke 13:3; Mark 16:16)

A synopsis of these passages (plus the detailed accounts of conversions in Acts) reveals that an oral confession of faith in the Christ, repentance of sins, and baptism are all

conditions of Divine pardon. The Scriptures no more teach “faith-only” salvation than they do “repentance-only” or “baptism-only” salvation.

Denton, TX

Bellview Church of Christ Web Site

The site offers a vast amount of resources for your personal edification. Past issues of *Defender* and *Beacon*, written sermon outlines presented by Michael Hatcher, as well as Ira Y. Rice’s Basic Bible course are available. Videos of lectureships, sermons, and Gospel meetings can be viewed. Why not check it out at: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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Shannon Barlow (Pam Busch's niece)	

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May 2

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May 8

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.



“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us” (R. W. Emerson). You are not what you were, what you did or where you've been. You are not what you will be, what you'll do or where you'll go. You are who you are: your character, your heart, the truth that is at the core of your being. Just be true to that and you'll be true to the Lord and thus the best possible you! God bless!

Tim Smith



BEACON

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No Escape

Jerry Brewer

Our daily lives are filled with constant decisions, and sometimes life's demands become so great that we seek escape from those decisions. Fortunately for all of us, there are some things which we can escape in this life and avoid. However, the Bible reveals certain things about our lives which we can never escape.

Our Influence

Every one of us wields some kind of influence by the life we live, the things we do, and the words we speak. That is the meaning of Paul's words in Romans 14:7: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." The influence we have on others may be good or it may be bad, but we cannot escape influencing others. Whatever we do influences others to some degree.

Personal Accountability

In Romans 14:12, Paul wrote, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to

God." The fact that we cannot escape personal accountability for our actions is something that most people do not understand in this age of irresponsibility.

Like Adam, many people want to shift the blame for their own actions to someone else. When Adam sinned, he told God, "The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12). In that statement, Adam became the first man in history not only to blame his wife for his own actions, but also to blame his Father, who was God.

The fact remains that each of us is personally accountable to God. I cannot serve God for my family and neither can they serve Him for me.

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous

shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him (Eze. 18:20).

Sin's Consequences

Sin has always had consequences and the ultimate consequence of sin is eternal death. Paul said, "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). What most people do not realize is that even sin which has been forgiven may have consequences. One may ruin his health by drunkenness or by drugs and later repent and become a Christian. When he obeys the Lord, his sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38), but the consequences of his actions will linger in his body that has been

dissipated by drugs and alcohol. The greatest consequence of all is the eternal loss of one's soul if his sins are not forgiven.

Conclusion

Regardless of the sins we have committed, God has promised to forgive us when we obey the Gospel of Christ. If one is willing to believe in Jesus as the Son of God (John 8:24), repent of his sins (Luke 13:3), confess his faith in the Son of God (Acts 8:37), and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of his sins (2:38), his sins are forgiven by God. Anyone can escape the eternal consequences of sin by doing these things and by living faithfully thereafter (1 Cor. 15:58).

Elk City, OK

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Open Forum Questions

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June 10 – 14, 2016

Friday, June 10

- 7:00 pm Nature of a Type
Terry Hightower
- 8:00 pm Interpretation of Types
David P. Brown

Saturday, June 11

- 9:00 am Prophet Michael Hatcher
- 10:00 am Priest Doug Post
- 11:00 am King Wayne Blake
- Lunch Break*
- 1:00 pm Old Testament Sacrifices
Terry Hightower
- 2:00 pm Passover Harrell Davidson
- 3:00 pm Open Forum
Dinner Break
- 7:00 pm Abraham Jerry Brewer
- 8:00 pm Typical Places Jess Whitlock

Sunday, June 12

- 9:00 am Jonah Daniel Denham
- 10:00 am Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac
Paul Vaughn
- Lunch and Dinner Break*
- 1:00 pm Noah's Ark Wayne Blake
- 2:00 pm Melchizedek Lee Moses

Monday, June 13

- 9:00 am Wilderness Wanderings
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Aleacia Godwin	
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)	
Regina Bonal (Terri Myrick's daughter)	
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Please Remember

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May 8

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

May 15

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

May 16

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

May 25

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May 29

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BEACON

Vol. XLV / No. 19

May 9, 2016

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

It Is That Simple

Johnny Oxendine

Look at 1 Corinthians 10:13, which simply tells every Christian in no uncertain terms that God is faithful to provide us a means (way) of escape from any (all) temptations we might face as human beings. Paul says that none (not any) of these temptations we face are more than we can bear. So, what does this mean? It means that this verse should provide us with tremendous encouragement. It should serve to strengthen our resolve to serve God more faithfully. What does it say? There will never be any temptation, but such as is “common.” All temptation is common to man (*anthropinos*). The word means a human temptation that falls to the lot of man. This is an amazing promise. Think about it. No temptation is superhuman or unique, or beyond our capacity to overcome it. Whatever we are faced with will never be more than we can handle. We also see that God will help us to “flee” by providing an escape route.

It does not say that we will never sin, nor does it say that we will never make bad decisions. What this verse does is put those into perspective so we might see the vanity of any excuses we try to use when we (or friends, family, et al.) do not make the right decisions in and with our lives. As Paul says, we are “without excuse” (Rom. 1:20). Armed with this verse, we can now face daily life boldly, knowing we can defeat every effort to undermine our Christian resolve (that is, if we really want to). Situational justification is not available. People who do not put God first are usually tormented by this verse. It eliminates all of our excuses for not being faithful. It creates anxiety because we cannot blame someone or something for our failure to look for ways to escape or deal with (fight off) temptation. How often have we heard someone say, “I couldn’t help it,” or “I don’t have any choice,” or “God knows my heart,” or any number of

“reasons” for either doing something that one should not do or not doing something one should do. God knows what we can bear and how much we can bear; therefore, He limits every single temptation within our ability to overcome it. God is faithful. No matter how we try to explain it away, this verse continues

to come back.

We should also realize that some people like the situations they are in. People involved in adultery will rarely see clearly what is before them. Think of some of the Old Testament characters who did not see a way of escape until it was too late: David (Bathsheba)

41st Annual Bellview Lectures

Typology

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and Samson (Delilah) come to mind. Surely David felt that no one could have been tempted more than he; and the same might be said of Samson. Each of these men failed to understand how easily things would have been different if they had just looked for a means of escape. Then, of course, there is Joseph. He was in the clutches of temptation, but managed to pull himself away. He was not willing to allow anyone or any thing to prevent him from being faithful to God (as God had been faithful to him). Joseph could have made any number of *excuses* in an attempt to justify his behavior had he given in: “She’s my boss’s wife!” “She made me do it.” “She was pulling my clothes off.” “She’s a woman, and

I’m a man; what did you think would happen?” Yet, none of those thoughts (excuses) prevailed in Joseph’s mind.

As we read this verse, let us see how all that God has provided for us should encourage us in our battle against sin. He has given all of us a way to say “no” to sin and “yes” to Him.

San Mateo, CA

Defender and Beacon

Available Via E-Mail

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bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Bellview Lectures Information

Housing

The Red Roof Inn (2591 Wilde Lake Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32526) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$59.99—one Queen size bed and \$69.99—two Full size beds. Their phone number is 850.941.0908. **Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.** If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Books

The lectureship book, *Typology*, will be available for purchase. The price has not yet been determined. The book will contain 27 chapters and will be a spiral-bound book. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2016) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD is \$37.75. The CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2015), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2015), and other material. The 2016 CD will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

Meals

The ladies of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

View Lectures Live on the Internet

If you cannot attend the lectureship in person, please view them live on the Internet:

www.bellviewcoc.com

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BEACON

Vol. XLV / No. 20

May 16, 2016

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Crooked Rivers

Paul Vaughn

The language of the Mohawk people had a special word for crooked river it is *Cuyahoga*. As a boy I would camp along the Ohio River. It gives me great pleasure to remember those days of youth. A lazy summer day watching the river meander downstream and enjoying the stories about river life, fishing until the sun goes down, and camping listening to the sound of summer are only shadows of time that need to be revisited as one grows in age. Boyhood memories do indeed bring joy. There are many lessons that can be ascertained from a study of crooked rivers.

Why are rivers crooked? They follow the path of least resistance. Generally, crooked rivers flow aimlessly without purpose or goal. They follow the easiest course and the result is just drifting in a downward direction. Often men follow the path of least resistance traveling on a crooked river. Drifting is so easy and void of courage and commitment, all one has

to do is nothing or take the easy direction. Lot chose the easy and selfish direction in choosing the plain of the Jordan (Gen. 13:8-13). “Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched *his* tent even as far as Sodom” (13:12). When Lot “pitched *his* tent” in Sodom, he began a downward direction that would directly affect himself and his family. Lot, offering his daughters to the wicked men of Sodom, was a direct result of him taking the easiest path, Lot’s wife becoming “a pillar of salt” was the next result of his foolish decision of pitching his tent in Sodom. Lot embarked on a direction toward evil and entered the current of a crooked river leading to destruction.

There are extremely strong currents in the world that will cause one to drift along on the crooked river of apathy and compromise. The preacher seeking to please men and not God’s will, will lead into dangerous waters of the

Open Forum Questions

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mhatcher@gmail.com

or call 850.455.7595

crooked river. His determination to leave the old paths of God's Word will affect his soul and souls of every person he influences, all as a result of him embarking on a crooked river.

Parents who leave their children to the world to educate them, have set sail on a crooked river that will only end in tragedy. Free access to

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inappropriate information in movies, on television, and the internet have their influence leading as many as they can away from God. One of the greatest tragedies parents can do is to bring a child into the world and not prepare that child to leave this world. Parenting takes a father and mother who know God's Word and love their child enough to say no to the allurements of the world!!

There is always the danger of drifting on a crooked river and we must be determined to stay the course that leads to God.

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him* (Heb. 2:1-3).

Remember one cannot go to Heaven on a crooked river!

Centerville, TN

Bellview Lectures Books Order Form

Make checks or money orders out to Bellview Church of Christ.

Please send the following:	Date: _____	Total Price
_____ copies of <i>Typology</i> (2016) (spiral-bound) @ \$5.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>Refuting Realized Eschatology</i> (2015) @ \$25.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>Understanding The Will Of The Lord</i> (2014) @ \$11.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>What The Bible Says About:</i> (2012) @ \$11.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>Back To The Bible</i> (2010) @ \$4.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>Preaching From The Major Prophets</i> (2008) @ \$16.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>A Time To Build</i> (2007) @ \$5.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>The Blight Of Liberalism</i> (2005) @ \$5.00		_____
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_____ copies of <i>Beatitudes</i> (2002) @ \$5.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>Encouraging Statements Of The Bible</i> (2001) @ \$5.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>Sad Statements Of The Bible</i> (2000) @ \$5.00		_____
_____ copies of <i>Preaching God Demands</i> (1996) @ \$5.00		_____
	Postage/Handling (\$3.75 per Book):	_____
_____ Books-on-CD (1988-2016) (PDF format) @ \$37.75		_____
	(includes postage/handling)—call for upgrade price	_____
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Web Site

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Check it out at:

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BEACON

Vol. XLV / No. 21

May 23, 2016

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Memorial Day

Brad Green

Monday, May 30, 2016, is the day assigned by the Federal Government as a day of remembering all those who have died in military service. Memorial Day was originally observed on May 30 of each year shortly after the Civil War as a memorial to Union soldiers who had died in that war. After World War I, the observance was expanded to remember all who died in any war or military action. In 1971, Congress passed the law that set Memorial Day as the last Monday in May to create the very popular three-day holiday weekend. It is extremely important that we honor all men and women who have loyally served this great country in military service and it is equally important to remember those who died that we can enjoy our freedom. Saturday, May 24, 2008, during his weekly Presidential radio address, President Bush stated:

No words are adequate to console those who have lost a loved one serving our

Nation. We can only offer our prayers and join in their grief. We grieve for the mother who hears the sound of her child's 21-gun salute. We grieve for the husband or wife who receives a folded flag. We grieve for a young son or daughter who only knows dad from a photograph. One holiday is not enough to commemorate all of the sacrifices that have been made by America's men and women in uniform. No group has ever done more to defend liberty than the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. Their bravery has done more than simply win battles. It has done more than win wars. It has secured a way of life for our entire country. These heroes and their families should be in our thoughts and prayers on a daily basis, and they should receive our loving thanks at every possible opportunity (<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/>

news/releases/2008/05/20080524.html).

God saw the need and importance of memorials. After God delivered Israel from underneath the enslaving hands of the Egyptians, He established the annual Passover Feast by which Israel could remember their salvation from bondage.

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever (Exo. 12:14).

Forty years later, after Joshua successfully led Israel across the Jordan River, God commanded that a memorial of that event be built using stones gathered from the midst of the river (Jos. 4:5-11).

God also established a memorial for Christians.

That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

There is no greater memorial than this—to remember the death of the sinless “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). This memorial day was assigned by God to be observed “upon the first *day* of the week” (Acts 20:7). Since every week has a first day, then it is obvious that the Lord's Supper is to be partaken every first day of every

week. Many ignore this command and disgrace the memory of Jesus' death by offering unleavened bread and grape juice at weddings, other man-made celebrations, and on any day other than the one God authorized—Sunday. Many dishonor the memorial feast when they refuse to partake it upon every first day of the week and choose rather to do so only during National holidays such as Easter and Christmas.

Sadly, Americans have forgotten the memorial for which Memorial Day was established. Most only recognize the last Monday in May as the third day of a three-day weekend. Even sadder is the fact that Christians have forgotten the importance of the Lord's Supper and, along with many others in the religious world, violate God's commands thus dishonoring the only sacrifice that can save man from sin. The only way to truly honor the most High God is to be obedient to Him. By obeying God's plan of salvation: faith (Heb. 11:6), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession (Rom. 10:9-10), and baptism (Acts 2:38), one gives honor to God. By remaining obedient to God's commands,

Bellview Church of Christ Web Site

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turning not to the left nor to the right (Jos. 1:7; Rev. 22:18), one honors God. The apostle Peter wrote:

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds **by way of remembrance**: That ye may **be mindful of the words** which were

spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour (2 Pet. 3:1-2).

Let us honor God by loving Him, remembering His words, and obeying His commandments (John 14:15).

Lenoir City, TN

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May 29

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June 5

Pre-lectureship meeting after the afternoon service, in the auditorium. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

June 10-14

41st Annual Bellview Lectures:
Theme – *Typology*



Defender and Beacon

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BEACON

Vol. XLV / No. 22

May 30, 2016

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Purity

David P Brown

Jesus pronounced a blessing on “the pure in heart” (Mat. 5:8). He said they would see God! *Pure* translates the Greek word *katharos*. It is an adjective meaning “pure, as being cleansed.” The implication is that where a state of uncleanness or filthiness existed, now a process has worked to bring about the opposite state: that of cleanliness, that is, purity. What is the process that God has chosen to create a pure or clean heart in man? This is the most important question we could ever ask. Why! Because **only** “the pure in **heart**” shall see God!

In answering our question, we must first understand **what** this heart is that has been cleansed or made pure. Originally *kardia*, the Greek word translated *heart*, meant, in most places, “the muscle that pumped blood through the human body.” It came, however, to symbolize the **inner man** (1 Pet. 3:4): the **intellect** (Mat. 9:3; Isa. 32:4; Pro. 14:10;

Mark 2:6), the **emotions** (Mat. 22:37; Neh. 2:2; Dan. 7:15), the **will** (2 Cor. 9:7; Rom. 6:17; Col. 3:15), and the **conscience** (Acts 2:37; 1 John 3:20).

Now we are better able to understand why the translators also rendered *psuche*, meaning the **soul** or **life**, into our English word, *heart*. The heart is representative of the complete mental and moral activity of man. We may conclude that heart represents the real person. For this present age, it is tabernacle in the flesh (2 Cor. 5:1). With this explanation of the heart in mind, we are better able to comprehend what has been made pure.

We may now note the process by which the Lord makes clean or pure the heart (intellect, emotions, will, and conscience). Jesus said that the apostles were made “clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3). In the parable of the soils in Luke 8, the only soil receptive to “the seed”

or Word (8:11) was the “honest and good heart.” This *soil* heard and kept the Word and brought “forth fruit with patience” (8:15). May we conclude that not only is this the way the apostles were made clean through the Word, but the way any person’s heart is made clean through the Word?

Without the evidence found only in the Word, there can be no faith or belief created within the heart (Heb. 4:12; Rom. 10:10, 17), and “without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing *unto him* [God]” (Heb. 11:6).

Spring, TX

41st Annual Bellview Lectures

Typology

June 10 – 14, 2016

Friday, June 10

7:00 pm Nature of a Type
Terry Hightower
8:00 pm Interpretation of Types
David P. Brown

Saturday, June 11

9:00 am Prophet Michael Hatcher
10:00 am Priest Doug Post
11:00 am King Wayne Blake

Lunch Break

1:00 pm Old Testament Sacrifices
Terry Hightower
2:00 pm Passover Harrell Davidson

3:00 pm Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Abraham Jerry Brewer
8:00 pm Typical Places Jess Whitlock

Sunday, June 12

9:00 am Jonah Daniel Denham
10:00 am Abraham’s Sacrifice of Isaac
Paul Vaughn

Lunch and Dinner Break

1:00 pm Noah’s Ark Wayne Blake
2:00 pm Melchizedek Lee Moses

Monday, June 13

9:00 am Wilderness Wanderings
Paul Vaughn
10:00 am Moses Geoff Litke
11:00 am Hosea Doug Post

Lunch Break

1:00 pm David Gene Hill
2:00 pm Adam John West

3:00 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Sabbath Daniel Denham
8:00 pm Types of Baptism
Harrell Davidson

Tuesday, June 14

9:00 am The Serpent in the Wilderness
Jerry Brewer
10:00 am Joshua John West
11:00 am Cities of Refuge David P. Brown

Lunch Break

1:00 pm Restoration Jess Whitlock
2:00 pm The Court Gene Hill

3:00 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 pm The Holy Place Geoff Litke
8:00 pm The Holy of Holies Lee Moses

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Robbie Cravey (The Haven)	
Regina Bonal (Terri Myrick's daughter)	
Shannon Barlow (Pam Busch's niece)	
Brenda Loy (Nancy Loy's sister-in-law)	

Please Remember

June 5

Pre-lectureship meeting after the afternoon service, in the auditorium. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

June 10-14

41st Annual Bellview Lectures:
Theme – *Typology*

June 19

Lectureship critique after the afternoon service, in the auditorium. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

June 22

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

June 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



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BEACON

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June 6, 2016

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Getting Along with Others

Bruce Stulting

We are living in a world filled with selfish people. Everyone seems to be out for “number one.” They are trying to claw their way to the top and think nothing of the people that they step on to get there. A line from an old song by the O’Jays states, “They smile in your face, all the time they want to take your place, the back stabbers.” This seems to be the attitude of many who have come to the conclusion that its “a dog eat dog world” and only the strong will survive. Those who possess this attitude are prone to be mistrustful and suspicious of those around them (friend and foe alike). They also suffer from stress and worry.

Paul offers a simple solution to this attitude and the subsequent problems that result from it:

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but

every man also on the things of others (Phi. 2:3-4).

Notice that humility is the key to getting along with others. When we highly value others and put their needs first, relationships will prosper. This is true with friends, family, society, and business. Remember, Paul warned, “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:15).

To assure that you put others first you must develop the mind of Christ (Phi. 2:5ff). Jesus did not seek to promote Himself, but rather “made himself of no reputation” (2:7a). Furthermore, He “took upon him the form of a servant” (2:7b). Jesus was “highly exalted” because He humbly obeyed God—even to the point of dying on the cross (2:9).

On one occasion, the apostles were arguing over who among them was greatest. “If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be

last of all, and servant of all” (Mark 9:35). A life of service will assure that you keep your self-worth in proper perspective. Paul warned that every man is “not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think” (Rom. 12:3).

Getting along with others does not mean

that you have to compromise truth. It does require humble servitude. “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (12:18). Are you doing your part to get along with others?

Huntsville, TX

41st Annual Bellview Lectures

Typology

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- 8:00 pm Interpretation of Types
David P. Brown

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Repentance and Restitution

Lester Kamp

Repentance means “a change of mind.” It is a change of mind that results in a change in behavior. Repentance is the result of godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10). Godly sorrow is the quality being so grieved by the wrongs committed in the past that there is a determination to turn away from those kinds of actions combined with a determination to do only that which is right in the eyes of God. This sorrow (godly sorrow) is not the sorrow of being caught, but sorrow that is characterized by a broken, contrite heart. Jude tells us that such a one hates even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 23). Repentance was described by Jonah when it was said that the Ninevites “turned from their evil way” (Jon. 3:10). When Jesus spoke of the same situation, He stated that they “repented at the preaching of Jonah” (Mat. 12:39-41).

All sin is against God and must be forgiven by God. King David recognized that though

his sins involved others, those sins were against God. He exclaimed, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned” (Psa. 51:4). God is not obligated to forgive. Forgiveness is the result of God’s mercy and grace. Forgiveness is through the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7). Paul, in that passage, also referred to the “riches” of God’s grace. God’s grace is sufficient to forgive all of the sins of all of mankind. There is no inadequacy in the blood of Christ. No matter how awful our sin is, no matter how many those sins are, we can be forgiven by God. If we are alien sinners (not Christians), we must do those things that God requires to receive the remission (forgiveness) of our sins. We must obey the Gospel to be saved from our sins. That Gospel stipulates that we must believe in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of man (John 8:24), repent of our sins (Luke 13:3, 5), confess our faith in Christ before men (Mat. 10:32), and be baptized by the authority of

Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). If we are already members of the church, we must follow God's second plan of pardon to be forgiven. We must repent of our sins (Acts 8:22) and confess those sins to God in prayer (1 John 1:9; Acts 8:22). The blood of Jesus can thus cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In either case (alien sinner, fallen child of God), the common act required for forgiveness is **repentance**. It is, therefore, imperative that we understand what is meant by repentance and all that is involved in this act.

Repentance involves restitution. Restitution is restoring to another that which we have unjustly taken in our sins. If we have deprived others of some material thing, then we must restore to that person the thing taken or the value of that thing. If that cannot be done, then reasonable satisfaction must be given. If what is taken is intangible, then every effort must be made to remove the effects of the wrong. In simple terms, this means that if we have stolen an automobile, we must return it if we have repented. We cannot keep riding

around in the car if we have genuinely repented. I believe we all have the ability to understand this. This illustration has been used effectively many times. It clearly illustrates the idea of restitution involved in repentance.

If emotions were not so heavily involved in other similar situations, I believe we could see the parallel and apply this idea of restitution consistently with success. However, when "marriage" is the sin, many do not see as clearly as they would otherwise. If a person is in an unscriptural *marriage* (a *marriage* not authorized by God), then many want to suggest that a person can repent without giving up that which is not rightfully his or hers. Repentance requires restitution where possible. Baptism, in the case of the alien sinner becoming a Christian, does not sanctify an unscriptural relationship. The sin of adultery can be forgiven, but only when repentance occurs which means turning away from the practice of adultery. A person cannot continue in the sinful practice and have God's approval or forgiveness. A person must stop the practice of whatever sin to be forgiven.

Perhaps this additional illustration will help. Suppose a practicing homosexual learned the Truth and wanted forgiveness. It is impossible to have that forgiveness and have a right relationship with God while continuing to practice homosexuality. That sinful practice must stop if forgiveness is to be obtained! Baptism will not sanctify such a relationship that is sinful no more than baptism will sanctify an adulterous relationship. If forgiveness is to be obtained, then the sinful practice must stop. That is part of what repentance requires!

Denver, CO

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Babylonian gods

Anu, king of heaven, was the chief of the Babylonian gods. His son, Enlil, ruled over the earth's surface, and was treated as the king of the gods. Enki, or Ea, has charge of the fresh waters that gave life. Each had a wife and family. Ishtar was the wife of Anu; she was in charge of war and love. Enki was given a son—Marduk—who became the patron god of Babylon. His worship began to grow as Babylon's power increased during the period 2000-1000 BC. As time passed, he was elevated to be king of all the gods (Nelson's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Bible 64).



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Only a Step

Brad Green

In the beautiful song, “Only A Step,” we sing the wonderful message that with one step, an individual can change his life forever. It has been stated, in many ways, “you can do anything that you want, if you only put your mind to doing it.” Paul, by inspiration, states, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phi. 4:13). Nehemiah was saddened by the fact that Jerusalem lie in waste. He received permission from the king to travel to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall around the city. Nehemiah addressed his brethren:

Ye see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king’s words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise

up and build. So they strengthened their hands for *this* good *work* (Neh. 2:17-18).

With a little encouragement, the people made preparations to take on this mighty task and they accomplished this goal because “the people had a mind to work” (4:6).

With “only a step,” a sinner can respond to the Lord’s invitation, obey God’s plan of salvation, and put on Christ in water baptism (cf. Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Rev. 2:10). With “only a step,” an unfaithful Christian can be forgiven of his sin(s) and be welcomed back into fellowship with God (1 John 1:6-9). With “only a step,” a Christian can plant the seed that leads a friend, co-worker, or neighbor to obey the Gospel (Luke 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:6). Sadly, many refuse to take that first step. There are many snares that stand in the way of individuals taking that most important first step. Here are a few.

Fear

Fear is a very powerful motivator. Proper fear (that is reverence for God and His Laws) will lead man to salvation.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man (Ecc. 12:13).

However, unscriptural fear will lead many to reject God and His Word. A man blind from his birth was healed by Jesus (9:2, 7). The Pharisees, despising Jesus and His power, refused to believe that the man had been blind and then given his sight. For evidence, they turned to the man's parents, two people who would surely proclaim the truth about their son. When asked:

His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These *words* spake his parents, **because they feared the Jews**: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue (John 9:20-22).

Some individuals fear and show more respect towards men than they do for God (cf. Acts 5:29).

Pride

Some individuals detest God-given authority. They cannot stand the idea of having to submit to anyone but themselves. They only respect that with which they agree and shun any attempts which seek to correct their wrongs. "Pride *goeth* before destruction, And an haughty spirit before a fall" (Pro. 16:18).

When Moses came to Pharaoh and proclaimed God's command to let the people of Israel go: And Pharaoh said, Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go (Exo. 5:2).

Ambivalence

Some will not take the steps they need because they simply do not care. Many non-Christians fail to give proper consideration to the truth of God's Word and see no need to act in any way other than how they please. Sadly, some Christians believe that their work is done as soon as they rise from the watery grave of baptism. Jesus teaches:

Who then is a **faithful and wise servant**, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so **doing** (Mat. 24:45-46).

God requires that His children use their abilities to His glory. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **good works, and glorify your Father** which is in heaven" (5:16).

Many times, all it takes is one step to get us started. Let us always be guided by the light of God's Word (Psa. 119:105) so we may travel down that strait and narrow way which leads to eternal life (Mat. 7:13-14).

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June 22

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m.,
in the auditorium.

June 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
p.m., in the auditorium.



“Keep a good heart. That’s the most important thing in life. It’s not how much money you make or what you can acquire. The art of it is to keep a good heart.” (Joni Mitchell). To keep a good heart: 1. Be honest—no matter the price. 2. Be compassionate—feel their pain. 3. Be merciful—no one is perfect. 4. Be considerate. 5. Be helpful. In short, be the person Grandma always told you to be. May God ever bless you.

Tim Smith



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The Pourhouse

Roelf L. Ruffner

Be not among winebibbers; Among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: And drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags (Pro. 23:20-21).

On the northeastern edge of the city of Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee, on County Road 243 is located a small strip mall which contains an establishment known as “The Pourhouse Bar & Grill.” Coincidentally it is located next to the James K. Polk Memorial Gardens Cemetery. A search of the Internet finds a lot of “Pourhouse” Bar & Grills. “Pourhouse” I assume refers to a place of intoxication where booze and beer are poured freely, for a price. The Bible and experience teaches us that that price is poverty both physical and spiritual.

Ethyl alcohol is the drug of choice for millions of Americans. I read somewhere that **70-80%** of the U.S. population has drunk or drinks alcoholic beverages. Use of this drug is

also the source of untold misery and suffering: domestic violence, crime, cirrhosis of the liver, heart disease, stroke, certain kinds of cancer, Alcohol Fetal Syndrome, mental illness, etc.

Solomon and the Holy Spirit rightly caution us to avoid being a “winebibber” or a drunkard. Yet, most people believe a “drunkard” is the wife beater, the bar room brawler, and the alcoholic. However, a rule concerning alcohol to remember is **one drink makes a drunk**. One drink removes inhibition and does a number on your brain. The frontal lobe of the brain, the reason and self-control center, is affected by as little as 0.01%–0.10 % alcohol or the equivalent of one shot of whiskey. The first thing to be inhibited is the power of restraint or self-control (Jeffcoat). One drink makes you what you were not before you consumed it—a drunk. Just read about “just Lot” (2 Pet. 2:7) who committed incest while drunk (Gen. 19:30-38). While inebriated,

men gamble away their paychecks, taking the very bread out of their children's mouths. Economically "drowsiness" caused by alcohol induced hangovers (Even one drink!) leads to lose of production, shoddy workmanship, absenteeism, higher health care costs, insurance expenditures, traffic accidents, and fire losses among businesses. Intoxicated politicians agree to support ungodly laws and compromise any principles they had, undermining our nation and society. "And drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags" (Pro. 23:21). All this begins with just one drink. Still the "moderate" drunkard says, "I'm not hurting anyone by my drinking."

I could rattle off a ton statistics, facts, and figures to prove my point. But for the child of God, the warning of the Scriptures should be enough. "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: And whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (20:1).

Drinking of alcohol also leads to the spiritual poorhouse of sin. "Drunkenness" and its

sinful twin "revellings" are both "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-22) which causes the Christian to miss Heaven and hit Hell (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Yet, Christians who know better will attend cocktail parties, Christmas Eve toasts, have a night cap, and partake in "one for the road." They may not get "rip roarin' drunk" as the world defines it but it is still sin. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin" (Jam. 4:17). Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2). Failing to repent of sin can lead to worldliness, falling away, and produces spiritual poverty.

For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world (1 John 2:16).

Considering how emphatically the Bible warns against the drinking of alcohol, the Christian is left with only one course of action—total abstinence from alcoholic beverages. Avoid the *pourhouse*. Not an easy thing to do considering how much the use of this drug has pervaded all levels of our society. Any other course (even *responsible* drinking.) is fellowshipping Satan's domain—this world (2 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 5:11). "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (5:18).

Work Cited

Jeffcoat, W. D. *The Bible and "Social" Drinking*.
Corinth, MS: Robinson Typesetting, 1987.

Columbia, TN

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Little Word—Big Meaning

Dub McClish

Jesus once said, “We must work the works of him that sent me” (John 9:4). *Must* refers to that which is necessary, indispensable, required, obligatory. What are some things we **must** do?

We *Must* Believe in God

“And without faith it is **impossible** to be well-pleasing *unto him*; for he that cometh to God **must** believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that seek after him” (Heb. 11:6). Belief is the necessary beginning point in anyone’s relationship with God. This belief implies belief in His Word and in His Son. The context of this passage indicates that the belief God requires is one that is active in obedience to His will (cf. Jam. 2:14-26).

We *Must* Be Born Again

“Ye **must** be born anew” (John 3:7b). Jesus had earlier stated of this second birth. “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (3:5).

Birth of water refers to baptism in water, in which act one is cleansed of his sins by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5). *Birth of the Spirit* refers to the spiritual begetting by the Holy Spirit through His Word. One is “begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23). The new birth simply refers to one’s hearing and believing the Gospel, resulting in baptism (Mark 16:16). Salvation is not possible apart from this new birth.

We *Must* Worship in Spirit and Truth

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). *Worship in spirit* means our spirits-hearts-minds must be involved, sincerely engaged. *Worship in truth* means in harmony with, according to the Truth of God’s Word, particularly the New Testament (the authority of the Old Testament perished with Jesus on the cross—Col. 2:14; Heb. 9:15-17; 10:9-10).

God does not accept whatever men choose to offer Him in worship (Gen. 4:4-5; Heb. 11:4). He accepts only those acts of homage He has authorized; all else is “vain worship” (Mat. 15:9; Col. 3:17).

We *Must* Be Judged by the Son of God

“For we **must** all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things *done* in the body,

according to what he hath done, whether *it be good or bad*” (2 Cor. 5:10). None shall escape or avoid the Judgment; it is an appointment we shall all keep (Heb. 9:27). The standard of judgment for all who have lived since the cross will be the New Testament of Christ (John 12:48). Those who are wise will prepare for, rather than ignore this Great Day.

Denton, TX

What Was Included in the Public Worship Services of the First Century Church?

Dub Mowery

Or, is everything that we do worship? While serving as the local preacher at Clayton, Oklahoma in 1962 or 1963, another young preacher and his family of the Independent Christian Church came by and visited my family and me on a Sunday afternoon and evening. In our discussion that afternoon he presented the concept that everything that we do in life

is worship. I said, “Do you mean that when I am washing my car that that is worship?” He said, “Yes!” I did not believe that concept then and I sure do not believe it now! If everything that we do is worship, then such passages at Genesis 22:5 would not make sense. That passage states:

Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

Their worship was one thing and their traveling to and from worship was something else. Also, words of Jesus recorded in John 4:24 stress that when we worship God there is an essential manner and way to do so. Here is what the verse says: “God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.” Two implications of that passage are as follows: first, not everyone worships God; and second, some who do so do not worship acceptably. The basic conditions of acceptable worship, which are stated in this

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context, are that we **must** worship God in spirit and in truth. That is, it must come from the heart and it must be in Truth. The Truth in consideration is that taught in God's Word pertaining to worship (John 17:17).

Since we are not living in the Old Testament era, then we do not offer animal sacrifice or pattern our worship as they did under that period of time (Gal. 5:4). Nor are we to go beyond the pages of the New Testament to find ways to worship God (2 John 9). Within the New Testament we learn how we are to worship God in a way and manner that is pleasing

unto Him. The five acts of public worship are: Singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); partaking of the Lord's Supper upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-29); prayer (1 The. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:1-4); giving upon the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7); the study and meditating of the inspired Word of God (Acts 20:7; 1 The. 5:27). These are the **only** acts of public worship! To add any other acts of worship is to do so without authority, and is being presumptuous (Psa. 19:13).

Clarksville, TX

The Importance of a Single Sermon

Brad Green

The Bible teaches that "faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Since it is the case that "without faith *it is* impossible to please *him* [God]" (Heb. 11:6), then it is the case that without hearing God's Word, one cannot please God. Some people believe that once they have heard "enough" sermons, that they really have no more need for them. Just as the doctrine of "once saved; always saved" is false, so is the doctrine of "once heard; always heard." The apostle Paul told the church at Corinth:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

Paul told Timothy:

If thou put the brethren in remembrance

of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine (1 Tim. 4:6).

To be a "good minister" one must remind brethren of God's Word. To be "nourished" in faith, one must hear "good doctrine." The apostle Peter warns that any Christian who does not have their minds stirred "by way of remembrance" (2 Pet. 3:1) will be vulnerable to the teachings of "scoffers" (3:3) and false teachers who "with feigned words make merchandise of you" (2:3).

Let us appreciate every opportunity that we have to hear God's Word preached. Let us make hearing God's Word a top priority and enjoy the blessings and nourishment which it alone can offer. Let us "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2).

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Dottie Bousquet (Dot Dodd's friend)
Tim Cozad (cataract surgery
scheduled)

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Heeding What God Says

Jimmie Z. Gribble

And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men (Mark 8:31-33).

Jesus came for the “hour” that He spoke of in this passage. The prophets spoke in times past of this. Jesus spoke of it when He said:

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again (John

12:27-28).

At the Passover, Jesus knew His “hour” was near:

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end (13:1).

Jesus said that this “hour” was the hour for the religious leaders:

Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness (Luke 22:52-53).

Jesus made mention of His “hour” in His prayer to the Father:

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee (John 17:1).

Even though Jesus spoke these words, Peter rebuked the Lord. Matthew records, “Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee” (Matthew 16:22). It was at this point the Lord rebuked Peter. The Lord tells us the reason for His rebuke of Peter, “for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (16:23).

Beloved, when God speaks, we must be careful to hear, heed, and accept what God says. We can surmise why Peter said what he did—he did not want the Lord to suffer and

die; yet, this was the hour for which He came. We must have the attitude of Samuel in the long ago, when Eli told him what to do. It was written:

Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth (1 Sam. 3:9-10).

God knows best—hear Him in everything that He speaks!

Beloved, listen to all of God’s Word, God will do thee good!

Portsmouth, VA

Minister or Preacher?

Lee Moses

Question: Should one refrain from using the term *The Minister* or *The Preacher* when speaking of the preacher of a particular congregation? Could one use the term, though explaining that he is using it as an expedient way of saying that “this brother regularly preaches

at...”? I know what one could not say that one is “the elder” or “the deacon” of a congregation, so that is one reason I ask the above question.

Answer: I do not know that I would say the use of the terms like *the minister* and *the preacher* are parallel. A problem with referring to the regular preacher as “the minister” is that **all** of the members are to be ministers (Mat. 20:26; Luke 8:3; John 12:26; Rom. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1). Also, such usage derives from popular denominational usage rather than from Biblical usage. To refer to the man who regularly serves in the pulpit preaching capacity as “the preacher” is not in the same class. Although there is a sense in which all Christians are to “preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15); yet, most congregations employ one man specifically to serve

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in the public preaching capacity. Paul wrote that the Lord only gave **some** to be evangelists (Eph. 4:11). While that is clearly in a miraculous context, there are some Christians who can more accurately be called evangelists (“Gospel preachers”) than others. I usually refer to myself as “the regular preacher” at the Berea congregation to indicate that there are others capable of serving in that capacity, and who do serve in that capacity at this congregation from time to time. As an added thought,

we certainly want to avoid anything that could fall under the category of a religious title (cf. Mat. 23:8-10).

Also, to call someone “the elder” or “the deacon” is not in the same class, because there are multiple men holding those offices. But most congregations do not have more than one man regularly preaching from the pulpit. As such, it is neither inaccurate nor improper to refer to him as “the preacher.”

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Anthony Polnitz	Tim Busch
Debbie Dawson	Nancy Travis
Henry Hignite	Cary Parks
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)	
Regina Bonal (Terri Myrick's daughter)	
Shannon Barlow (Pam Busch's niece)	
Brenda Loy (Nancy Loy's sister-in-law)	
Sonya Chavez (Joyce Johnson's friend)	
Deliah Nantz (Dot Dodd's niece)	
Dottie Bousquet (Dot Dodd's friend)	
Tim Cozad (cataract surgery scheduled)	

Please Remember

July 17

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

July 25

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

July 27

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

July 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner on the Grounds; singing and a devotional service after the meal.



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Handling Evidence

Terry M. Hightower

If six people receive the same (uninspired) letter from a friend, the basic elements involved in interpreting the letter would be: (1) the letter itself and (2) the handling of the content of the letter. Similarly, before anyone can be a good student of the Bible (i.e., an accurate interpreter of the message God has for man), he must understand that the basic elements involved in Biblical interpretation are: (1) the total evidence and (2) the handling of that evidence.

Though God, through Scripture, was only giving one message (cf. Acts 17:11) to everyone (just as the “friend” in his letter to the six meant to do), failure on either of these two basic elements may (and very likely will) result in conflicting Bible interpretations by different people. Since most of us use texts of the Bible that are alike, this practically eliminates the problem of our receiving a “different letter” as being the primary cause of

contradictory interpretations and divisive doctrines. So what is left to claim responsibility for such is the *handling* of the content—either logically or illogically.

The Evidence Itself

The phrase, *the evidence* (as it pertains to the Bible) is synonymous with the expression, *the total context*, and refers to the combination of three things: (1) the specific statement of the Bible under consideration, (2) the immediate context of that statement, and (3) the remote context of that statement. It is important to understand the meaning of these expressions.

Handling the Evidence

The mere reading (or even memorization) of the Bible text is not sufficient to guarantee that one will understand what the Bible actually teaches. One must surely know what the Bible says, that is, he must know the actual (explicit) statements making up Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Additionally,

one must also learn the way the various statements, paragraphs, chapters, and books relate to one another.

Rational or Irrational?

Basically, there are only two alternatives as to how one will react to evidence: (1) he can choose to be rational, or (2) he can choose to be irrational. Since the religious world has available for its use exactly the same totality of Bible statements or evidence, it should be

perfectly clear to us all that it is not enough merely to know what the evidence consists of—one must properly **interpret** that evidence! One can learn what the Bible means only by correctly reasoning about what the Bible says. In short, one must correctly apply the principles and rules of logic to the totality of statements making up the entire Bible.

Amarillo, TX

Preachers—Then and Now

Jerry C. Brewer

When the foundation of the temple was laid in Ezra 3, the younger folks shouted for joy, while the older ones (who remembered Solomon's temple) wept. Those who were "ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes" (Ezra 3:12) and they knew something was different.

As I look back across six decades at the church, I think I know how they felt. There was a time in Western Oklahoma when a preacher could be asked to preach on any given Sunday and he was there with Bible in hand. Our country out here was filled with lots of young men who had a desire to preach the Gospel, and, because of that, W. R. Craig began the Elk City School of Preaching in 1968.

No church in this surrounding area had to be without a preacher. Brother Craig's "boys" "went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4) and they drove more than 100 miles to school each Saturday to spend the day in classes. In that day, there were dozens of young men who had a desire to give themselves to

preaching the Gospel and they prepared for that task. That does not seem to be the case around here any more. That lack of interest in preaching may be the case where you live, as well. Are many young men clamoring to preach the Gospel, or are they just caught up in "church work," "camps," "youth rallies," "teen centers," and such like? There is a dearth of sound preachers in our part of the world and even those who are sound sometimes do not have the fire in their bones to grasp each opportunity to preach. I cannot recall the last time that I heard a young man express the desire to give himself to preaching the Gospel, but I know it has been a lot of years.

I know there are bigger preaching schools today who are turning out a lot of preachers. But to what end? I have personally found that many young preachers coming out of preaching schools today are focusing on works where they are paid handsomely, with benefits, and who seemingly look upon Gospel preaching as a profession and themselves as "clergy."

That is a far cry from the men's and boys'

training class in a small congregation where I was first introduced to preaching. I fear local churches have shirked their responsibility in this matter and now look to “preaching schools” to turn out preachers. In fact, one of the elders at Phillips Street in Dyersburg, Tennessee, once said, “If it wasn’t for Memphis, where would we get our preachers?” When churches absolve themselves of the responsibility to train young men to preach and turn that task over to “preaching schools,” they are traveling a dangerous path. That is what churches once did in the 20th century, relying on colleges to furnish preachers. There is not a sound college among us today and in the last century those very colleges furnished churches

their liberal preachers who headed up the apostasy that now engulfs us. The same thing will happen with today’s schools of preaching who have compromised the Lord’s teaching on fellowship.

I grieve for the lack of dedicated churches, elders, men, and boys who will see to it that the Gospel is “committed to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” I weep as did those “ancient men” who beheld the restored temple foundation and remembered the glory of the former. The church today is still the one Jesus built, but as this “ancient man” beholds it, he remembers “the former house.”

Elk City, OK

She Invited a Friend

This is the “true story” of a four-year-old girl! Each Sunday morning and Wednesday night a little girl named Becky would skip out of her front door and over to the next door with a tender knock. Becky’s question was simply, “Can Mary come to church with us today?” Most of the time the answer was, “Yes.” The invitations continued. The visits continued. One day something was different. Becky made her Sunday morning journey next door, but the answer was, “No.” However, the words that followed were music to her ears. “No,” the father answered, “Mary will be going with us this morning. We will see you at worship, Miss Becky.” The family visited, studies followed, and Mary’s mother and father were baptized into Christ! What is the magic, the mystery, the awe? There is none! Just an invitation given over and over. Some things we make too hard. Some of the easiest things in

life we conjure up into difficult messes. Some want sophisticated mail-outs to do it for us. Some believe that carefully designed programs will do it for us. Some want others to do it for us. Some, sadly enough, do not care. Please understand: the benefits of mail-outs, programs, and other avenues are wonderful when used wisely. However, nothing dismisses our personal responsibility to invite folks. Who? My neighbor, postman, doctor, mechanic, coach, teacher, friend, parent, child, uncle, aunt, co-worker, partner, boss, banker, on and on. Jesus freed the man who had legions of evil spirits. He was changed and grateful and wanted to go with Jesus. Jesus refused to let him go saying, “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee” (Mark 5:19).

Author Unknown

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August 1

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Web Site

Past issues of *Defender* and *Beacon*,
written sermon outlines presented by
Michael Hatcher, and the Basic Bible
course by Ira Y. Rice, Jr. are available.
Videos of lectureships, sermons, and
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The Answer to the World's Problems

Gary W. Summers

The most effective way to change people is from the inside out. Jesus came to this world when it was full of corruption. He did not gather an army of saints to fight the ungodly Romans. He did not lead a protest march against the local taverns. He did not circulate petitions against capital punishment. What He did do was to call people's attention to the distinction between sin and righteousness. He condemned the former as corruption (Mat. 15:18-20) and promoted the latter as something that man can attain (6:33). He taught about things that would make people happy (the beatitudes). He taught the Gospel (salvation from sin) and the principles of the kingdom. He defined sin as something more than the actual committing of an act; He taught that the source of the problem begins in the heart (5:21-22). Likewise, although adultery is wrong, the Lord identified it as something that begins with lust in the heart (5:27-28).

He taught the truth about marriage (5:31-32; 19:3-9). He taught that patience should be exercised even against one's enemies (5:38-48). Furthermore, Jesus taught that a person's religion should be genuine—not for show, not to impress others (6:1-18).

Followers of God must exercise true faith in Him (7:7-11) and **live** by Christian principles (7:12)—not just talk about them. Living by faith does not mean just having an appearance of righteousness, bestowing generous gifts to God or to the poor, or even doing many wonderful works (7:21-23). Those who would please God must consistently do His will in all phases of life (at home, among others at work or school, in the community, and in recreation).

In other words, there is no part of a Christian's life where God can be left out, ignored, or forgotten. All who call Jesus Lord must submit to Him in every aspect of their lives.

This is the only way to stand on a solid foundation (7:24-27). What is the answer to the world's problems? The obvious answer is Jesus, but how can we, the disciples and followers of Christ, change the world?

(1) It begins with making certain that we, as individual Christians are pure in heart, righteous, and totally devoted to pleasing God. How can we have any effect on others if we are obviously flawed? Christians cannot be light and at the same time dabble in darkness. If we are to have the proper impact on the world, we need to be above reproach. It is difficult to pull someone up to a higher level if we are standing on the same spot. Jesus offered salvation from the sins that enslave mankind. The Christian then, must know the Word to be able to live it and communicate it to others (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).

(2) Christians must realize that our task is not to talk people into being more moral or to create a better world. No adequate foundation has been laid if we begin there. Our goal is to

save souls from sin, which results in people being more moral. God was so concerned about sin and its effects on people that He sent Jesus to die for those sins, thus making salvation available to all (John 3:16). Sin is a spiritual problem, and it has a spiritual solution. We must show people that their sins have condemned them before God (Rom. 6:23). When people understand that their sins can be forgiven, that fellowship with God can be restored, that He will care for them and provide for them, that Jesus will be their good shepherd, and that He will grant to the faithful eternal life, then they may be willing to give up the temporary pleasures of sin for an abundant life here and the eternal joys of heaven.

(3) In other words, Christians must be evangelistic, as our brethren in the first century were. Even when scattered throughout the world because of persecution, members of the church "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Why did they have such conviction? They were taught by the apostles (2:42);

Bellview Church of Christ Web Site Has a New Design!

The website has been re-designed to make it responsive for viewing on multiple devices (i.e., smartphones, tablets, and computers). The website still offers a vast amount of resources for your personal edification. Past issues of *Defender* and *Beacon*, written sermon outlines presented by Michael Hatcher, as well as Ira Y. Rice's Basic Bible course are available. Videos of lectureships, sermons, and Gospel meetings can be viewed.

If you encounter a problem with the website please let us know. If you have any comments about the website we would like to know about those as well.

Why not check it out at:

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

they knew Christian doctrine and were sound in the faith. They were convinced that only those who were Christians could be saved and that everyone who was not a Christian was lost. Does today's church have that same perception? It is still true.

(4) We must pray for the non-Christian—that he will not be blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:3-4) but rather be receptive to the truth (2 The. 2:10).

(5) We must be patient. People must be persuaded with love, kindness, and truth. They must know us well enough to know that we ourselves are convicted and that we genuinely care about their spiritual condition.

When Christians are submissive in their attitude toward God (Eph. 5:23) and evangelistic in their outlook, more who are lost in sin will desire salvation. When people obey the Gospel and live the Christian life, the world

becomes a better place. The more Christians there are, the more positive influence there is in the world and the easier it is to obtain support for public morality. We cannot start by pursuing the desired end. The world will not be changed by a direct appeal made to it to be moral. Why should it? People are infatuated by sin. Only by enabling people to see the consequences of sin can we lead them to salvation. Attempted shortcuts do not work. We must reach people with the Gospel one at a time. The more people who are reached, the better the world will become. As with the pursuit of happiness, the desired result only comes by doing what God commanded in the first place. We all need to learn this invaluable lesson. Trust God and obey Him; seek His will, and the other things will take care of themselves.

Winter Park, FL

We Drank...for Nothing

We drank for happiness, and became unhappy.

We drank for joy, and became miserable.

We drank for sociability and became argumentative.

We drank for friendship and made enemies.

We drank for sleep and awakened without rest.

We drank for strength and fell weak.

We drank for "medicinally" and acquired health problems.

We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.

We drank for bravery and became doubtful.

We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.

We drank to forget and were forever haunted.

We drank for freedom and became slaves.

We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.

We drank to cope with life and invited death.

Author Unknown

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Please Remember

July 27

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m.,
in the auditorium.

July 31

Fifth Sunday Dinner on the
Grounds; singing and a devotional
service after the meal.

August 8

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00
p.m., in the zone room.

August 14

Deacons' meeting will be held prior
to the afternoon service, in room 1.

August 15

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00
p.m., in the zone room.

August 21

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be
held after the afternoon service, in
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August 1, 2016

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On Trees and Apples

Andy McClish

Responsible parents are naturally concerned about the way their children are measuring up in the competitive environment of school. They will make sure that their children view school as a high priority, and will encourage proper attention to all the required assignments, homework, and tests. In support of these aims, parents will also insist that their children attend all classes, permitting absences only with good reason (e.g., illness). In addition—in the interest of a well-rounded experience—good parents will encourage their children to develop a network of friends and to become involved in various extra-curricular activities.

With these things in mind, I offer the following “True/False” test for the consideration of all parents (for simplicity’s sake, *children* will refer to one or more):

T/F Schools are important, and have a high priority in my family.

T/F The secular education of my children is important and has a high priority in my family.

T/F I consider it essential, if at all possible, that my children are in school “every time the doors are open” for study.

T/F The development of my children as good, productive, loyal citizens of this country is important.

T/F The church (the Body of Christ for which He died) is important, and has a high priority in my family.

T/F The spiritual education of my children is important, and has a high priority in my family.

T/F I consider it essential, if at all possible, that my children are at the church building “every time the doors are open” for study and/or worship.

T/F The development of my children as good, productive, loyal citizens of God’s

kingdom is important.

T/F School is a higher priority than the church in my family.

T/F The church is a higher priority than school in my family.

T/F In view of eternity, the secular education of my children is more important than their spiritual education.

T/F In view of eternity, the spiritual education of my children is more important than their secular education.

T/F In view of eternity, the development of my children as good, productive, loyal citizens of this country is more important than their development as good, productive, loyal citizens of God's kingdom.

T/F In view of eternity, the development of my children as good, productive, loyal citizens of God's kingdom is more important than their development as good, productive, loyal citizens of this country.

T/F The social development of my children (building close friendships/quality relationships at school, among non-Christians) is important.

T/F The spiritual development of my children (building close friendships/quality relationships at school, among Christians) is important.

T/F The social development of my children is more important than their spiritual development.

T/F The spiritual development of my children is more important than their social development.

T/F I will consider it a tragedy (and wonder if I might be responsible) if my

children—once grown—forget all of the fundamental truths they were taught in school.

T/F I will consider it a tragedy (and wonder if I might be responsible) if my children—once grown—forget all of the fundamental truths they were taught in Bible classes.

T/F I will consider it a greater tragedy if my children forget all of the lessons of school than if they forget all of the lessons of Bible classes.

T/F I will consider it a greater tragedy if my children forget all of the lessons of Bible classes than if they forget all of the lessons of school.

T/F I will feel a personal sense of failure if I do not do everything within my power to teach my children the importance of giving their best at school.

T/F I will feel a personal sense of failure if I do not do everything within my power to teach my children the importance of giving their best to the church.

T/F I can effectively (i.e., with lasting results) teach my children to do what I am clearly unwilling to do myself.

T/F My behavior consistently demonstrates to my children that the church (the Body of Christ, for which He died) is the highest priority in my life.

T/F If the church is not the highest priority in my life, it is unlikely to be the highest priority in the lives of my children.

Marietta, GA

Righteousness

Bruce Stulting

Righteousness is translated from the Greek word *dikaiosime* which denoted “the character or quality of being right or just” (*Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*). At one time the Greek word was translated as “rightwiseness” which more clearly shows the meaning. Righteousness is used to denote a characteristic of God in Romans 3:5. In Romans 3:25-26, Paul states that the righteousness of God is demonstrated in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This demonstrates the quality of holiness in God that will not allow Him to tolerate sin but rather condemn it.

Since righteousness is a state of being right, we must then determine how one is to attain this state. Peter stated in Acts 10:34-35: “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” *Righteousness* then is a state in which one is in a right relationship with God. In Psalm 119:172 we learn that all God’s “commandments *are* righteousness.” It is stated in 1 John 2:29 that “every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.” We see then that those who are considered righteous are those who do right and that the proper standard of conduct is God’s Word.

To be righteous, one must do right. It is clear then that righteousness is a state or condition wherein one is approved of God. To

continue in God’s approval we must continue to do right, by keeping His commandments. For this cause, Jesus stated in Matthew 5:6: “Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Jesus also commanded us to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (6:33). To attain and maintain a state of righteousness should be our primary purpose in life.

We must remember that we cannot have a right relationship with God while we have sin in our lives. To attain righteousness we must obey the Gospel. This includes hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10:17), believing God’s Word (Mark 16:16), repenting of our sins (Acts 2:38), confessing Christ before men (Mat. 10:32), and have ones sins washed away in baptism (Acts 22:16). Only in this manner is it possible to attain unto righteousness. To maintain this righteousness, we must continue to do that which is right and remain faithful unto death (Mat. 10:33) If one fails to continue to do right and falls away, they are commanded to repent and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22). Maintaining a right relationship with God was summed up by John when he said: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Huntsville, TX

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August 14

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August 24

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August 31

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



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You Do Not Have to Go to Heaven

Nathan Brewer

No one can make you go to heaven. You will not be dragged into heaven against your will, kicking and screaming. No matter how hard people try to get you to go, God will not let it happen if you do not want to.

Many of you would rather sleep an extra hour or two on Sunday morning than worship God. You are an adult. No one can make you acknowledge God's existence against your will. So, if you would rather not get involved in spiritual matters—if you would rather not worship your Creator—God will not make you. If you would rather ignore the sacrifice that Jesus made for you when He died for your sins, you can. No one is stopping you.

If you are one of those who likes to drink alcohol, or have sexual relations outside of marriage, God is not going to force you to stop. He will let you behave the way you want to while you are alive on earth. Maybe you had to live by your parents' strict rules when you

were younger, but not now. No one can make you stop living a sinful life.

That is the thing about serving God—it is completely up to us. It is a choice we are allowed to make. We do not have to do it. God does not force anyone to serve Him. In fact, God does not force anyone to do **anything**. He gave humans free will. He allows us to choose what to do with our lives. So, if you like cussing, God will let you do it. If you like telling dirty jokes and ripping out vulgar words, God will not stop you from doing it, even though He hates filthy speech.

Your mother may have tried to teach you the Bible when you were young, but you do not have to listen to her any more. Maybe a preacher has talked to you about your soul, but now that you are grown, you can ignore him. Besides, you probably think it is none of his business what you do with your life. Maybe your spouse has begged you to attend Bible

study and worship, or to give up sinful activities. But, hey, you are your own person now. No one can tell **you** what to do.

Now, I know what you might be thinking. You think, “Well, maybe I do some of those things, but I’ll make it to heaven.” First of all, if you do not want to worship God, if you do not care much for Bible study, and if you like dabbling in sin, why would you **want** to go to heaven? Heaven is a spiritual place with spiritual activities. Those who go to heaven will spend time praising God, and that sounds a lot like worship. There certainly will not be any alcohol, womanizing, or carousing in heaven. No filthy language will be allowed. That does not sound like your kind of place.

Second, you cannot have your cake and eat it too. God lets you choose the way you want to live in this life, and He lets you choose to spend eternity in hell. How you live while you are on earth determines your soul’s destiny. God demands total devotion to Him in this life if we want to spend the next life **with**

Him. In Luke 9:23, Jesus says anyone who follows Him must deny himself every day. That means we have to suppress fleshly desires that keep us from doing what He says. It means we have to follow Him completely—not when it is convenient, or when we feel like it. It means we cannot pick and choose which parts of His Word to obey. It means total devotion.

In Luke 9:24, Jesus sums it up. He says that if we follow our own desires, we will lose our soul; but if we live completely for Him in this life, we will gain eternal life. The choice is up to you. The way of salvation has been revealed. Now we have to decide whether we will live for Him in this life, or if we will live for ourselves. No one can make you serve God, and no one can make you go to heaven. However, on Judgment Day, will those who tried to get you to live right enter into eternal rest and joy while you descend into everlasting torment and sorrow? Do not let that happen. Choose to serve God now.

Copied

Why Young Men Do Not Become Ministers

From time to time I hear people ask, “Why aren’t more of our young men becoming preachers?” This is usually followed by a couple of slams at our youth program. If a solution is offered, it usually has to do with: “The young men should be in front of the congregation more: leading songs, saying prayers, reading Scriptures, and making talks.”

To this I say. “Wrong!” Public speaking does not produce ministers. Training in public speaking produces better public speakers. Parents and congregations produce Gospel

preachers!

It does not matter how many times a boy stands behind a pulpit, if parents do not encourage him, he will not be a minister. Specifically it has to do with the definition of success his parents teach him. They may pat James on the back and say, “We’re proud of you,” but who do they respect most: the doctor, dentist, attorney, self-made millionaire, corporate president, or preacher? Do they define success in terms of four-bedroom homes, three cars, a pool, country club, and cabin on the lake? If

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Shannon Barlow (Pam Busch's niece)
Brenda Loy (Nancy Loy's sister-in-law)
Sonya Chavez (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Deliah Nantz (Dot Dodd's niece)
Dottie Bousquet (Dot Dodd's friend)
Aaron Cadel (Heather Stark's
son-in-law)

Please Remember

August 14

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

August 15

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

August 21

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

August 24

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

August 31

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



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August 15, 2016

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Deacons: Henry Born, Elward Brantley,
Bill Busch

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Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Worship versus Service and the Object of Worship

Lester Kamp

The first reference Jesus made to worship is found in the course of the temptations in the wilderness immediately after His baptism by John. Our attention is focused on the third of these temptations. Satan took Jesus to “an exceeding high mountain” and showed Him “all the kingdoms of the world” (Mat. 4:8). Jesus was then told that He could have all of these kingdoms if He would simply fall down and worship Satan. The subject of the proper object of worship is involved in this temptation. There are certainly other things which are also involved. For example, the possibility of Jesus’ obtaining the kingdoms of the world without going to the cross is part of the “snare” of this temptation. Now, carefully notice the response of Jesus. He said, “for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (4:10).

First, it is worthy of notice that there is an obvious difference between worship and

service in this Scriptural response (a reference to Deu. 6:13). There are some brethren today who make the mistake of equating these terms and conclude that all of life is worship. All of life is to be given in service to God, but all of life is not worship. Service is a broader term than worship.

Some confuse worship and service. Worship is service to God, and it is right to say that we go to worship services, but all service is not worship: plowing, guitar playing, eating hamburgers, etc. Some apparently have been misled by some new translations that have removed the word *service* from Romans 12:1, and have inserted the word *worship* (RSV, NASV, NIV). It is true that in certain contexts the Greek word in Romans 12:1 (*latreuo*) is properly rendered as worship (as in 9:4). But in itself, the word only means serve, whether the service is toward God or men (cf. *Latris*, a hired servant; *latron*, hire, pay). Sometimes

the word refers to a lifetime of service to God (Acts 24:14; Heb. 12:28), and the context of Romans 12:1 shows one's offering his body as a living sacrifice is a lifetime of service, not of meditation (which is what worship is).

All worship is, therefore, service; but not all service is worship. We should notice here that worship does not occur accidentally without the realization of the participant and that worship is not continuous.

Abraham climbed a mountain to worship on its summit, and then, after worship, returned to his base camp at the foot of the mountain (Gen. 22:1-5). When David learned that his baby had died, he bathed, changed clothes, and went into the house of Jehovah, "and worshiped" (2 Sam. 12:20). When he had worshiped, he returned home and ate a meal. Worship is not all that one does. It is punctuated by stop and go. The Ethiopian

had been to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 8); worship was not then nor is it now all of life.

Second, Jesus tells us clearly in this statement of Matthew 4:10 that the only one worthy of worship is God (the Godhead). Worship is to be offered to no other. Worship should not be offered to the pope, to Mary (the Lord's earthly mother), to special people who are highly regarded, etc. Worship is to be directed to the God of the universe, the Creator of man and of all the good things that are in the world in which we live.

Aurora, CO

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Religious Indifference

J. A. McNutt

The problem of religious indifference seems to have been a very ancient affliction among the Lord's people. Six hundred years before Christ, Jeremiah was lamenting the utter lack of concern upon the part of Israel (Lam. 1:1-12). Jerusalem had been deserted, the elders of the city sat on the ground clothed in sackcloth, the roads leading to the city were deserted, the gates of the city were desolate, and the sacred feasts had been forsaken. Jeremiah's heart was filled with sorrow and his eyes were wet with tears, but very few shared the prophet's grief. The weeping prophet wept alone.

The multitudes hurried along absorbed

with their own affairs and wholly unconcerned over the plight of their city, their temple, their nation, and the worship of God. These were the dark days of Israel's apostasy and we see the sad state of a nation that had forsaken God, as we hear Jeremiah sadly saying, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?"

The greatest danger to the church today, the greatest hindrance to personal evangelism, is not opposition from without, but the soul-chilling indifference within. Our greatest peril is that we fail to recognize the subtle changes that are taking place in our attitude until our love was become lukewarm, and then finally

cold and dead. A change in attitude does not occur overnight. A man who truly loves his wife does not turn from fervent love to complete indifference in a day. If changes in affection take place, they will be gradual and scarcely perceptible in the beginning as love wears thin under the pressure of petty frustrations and differences that are magnified by constant repetition.

It was said that the great church in Ephesus, long known for her works, labor, patience, and opposition to false teachers, finally “left its first love” (Rev. 2:2-4). One version says, “You no longer love me as you did in the beginning.” It is hard to fight battles with false teachers, and expose false doctrine, without losing some of the love and tenderness that the true Christian should possess. Error must be exposed and defeated, but love must not be allowed to die.

A man is called selfish, not for pursuing his own good, but for neglecting his neighbors. The selfish person is never really interested in the salvation of others. One can never be a successful soul winner unless he is genuinely interested in others. Someone has said, “People do not care how much we know unless they know we care.” Too many of us are basically selfish at heart and have to fight this tendency all of our lives if we really want to serve God and our fellow men. Any person who tries to go to heaven alone will never enter the portals of glory.

“And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father” (1 Kin. 11:6). God is not interested in partial obedience or half-hearted service. We hear a great deal today about

“total commitment,” but there is too much lip service and not enough examples of complete dedication to the will of God.

Elton Trueblood did not invent the “company of the committed” because our Lord has had a few such servants in all ages. It was Job who said, “And unto God would I commit my cause” (Job 5:8). Paul, the apostle, spoke with great conviction when he said:

for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (2 Tim. 1:12).

Hosea, the prophet, spoke of Israel in these words:

Israel *is* an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself...Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: He shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images (Hos. 10:1-2).

The church of the Lord today needs more personal workers who have decided to render full and complete service.

We are all aware that Jesus warned of the dangers that are inherent in the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, together with the love of earthly pleasures (Luke 8:14). One can become absorbed in an endless quest of pleasure seeking, money grabbing, and be overwhelmed by the cares and concerns of this life. We live in a materialistic age, in a fool’s paradise, in a nation that is fast forgetting God. The faith of our fathers is being ridiculed and rejected. In this atheistic, materialistic society, it is very difficult for the Christian to stem the tide of worldliness and maintain his zeal and devotion in the work of the Lord.

Deceased

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Website

The website offers a vast amount of resources for your personal edification. Past issues of *Defender* and *Beacon*, written sermon outlines presented by Michael Hatcher, and the Basic Bible course by Ira Y. Rice, Jr. are available. Videos of lectureships, sermons, and Gospel meetings can be viewed. Check it out at:

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com>



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The All Sufficiency of the Bible

John West

Is the Bible sufficient for our salvation? Do we need anything else to aid us in salvation? The denominational world teaches us that we do. The Mormons believe the Book of Mormon is needed in addition to the Bible. The Methodists rely on the Methodist Discipline for their answer. Other denominations use their creed books to decide the rule of faith. Do we need these creed books written by man to find the answers for salvation? Absolutely not! The Bible gives us the answer for everything spiritually. Notice these observations about the Bible.

The Bible Is Inspired of God

No other book in the world can claim inspiration. Joseph Smith “said” that the Book of Mormon is inspired, but it has been found full of errors and contradictions. The Bible, however, has been proven to be genuine. Paul states in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Since the Word of God completely furnishes man, he does not need anything in addition to the Bible.

The Bible Supplies Our Needs

Peter writes:

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue (2 Pet. 1:3).

God’s “divine power” is His Word (Rom. 1:16) and it gives us all things for life and godliness. This covers the entire scope of our lives. Do we need something in addition to the Word of God? Absolutely not! Creed books cannot supply these needs, only God’s Word can.

The Bible Is Pure

Psalm 119:140 records, “The word *is* very pure, Therefore thy servant loveth it.” The word *pure* means, “free from defilement, uncontaminated.” In Proverbs 30:5-6, Solomon writes:

Every word of God *is* pure: He *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Those that add unto the pure Word of God will be reprov'd (Rev. 22:18-19). Creed books are not pure because they contain many things contrary to the Word of God and they also contradict themselves.

The Bible Is Right

The Psalmist affirmed this in Psalm 33:4 when he wrote, “For the word of the LORD *is* right; And all his works *are done* in truth.” Since the Word of the Lord is right, there is no reason to follow a “creed” of man.

The Bible Is Able to Save

In 1 Peter 1:22-23, Peter wrote: Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed,

but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

A person is saved by obeying the truth by being born again through faith in the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), repenting of his sins (Luke 13:3), confessing his faith (Rom. 10:10), and being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38, 47; 1 Pet. 3:21). No creed book can substantiate such a claim. The Baptist manual contradicts itself by saying that salvation is “wholly of grace” (Hiscox 61) and “solely through faith” (Hiscox 62). Is it “grace only” or “faith only”? Neither! A person is saved by grace through the act of faith in obedience to God’s Word (Eph. 2:8). Other creed books have similar errors concerning salvation.

The Bible Is Sufficient for All Our Needs

We do not need a manual, discipline, catechism, or any other creed for salvation. The Bible completely satisfies God’s requirement for salvation.

Work Cited

Hiscox, Edward T. *The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*. Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1903.

Montgomery, TX

The Exalted Position of Jesus

Ben Franklin

This glorious person is the soul of the Bible, the center of the whole spiritual system, the attraction for all nations, the ruler, not only among the saints on Earth, but also the armies of Heaven. God gave Him honor and glory, the apostle says, when He proclaimed Him His Son in the holy mountain.

He walks at the head of the army of God, the true Israel, and among the inhabitants of the earth, proclaiming with all authority both in Heaven and on Earth: “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me,” “I am the resurrection and the Life”—“I am he who was dead and am

alive, and behold I live forever and ever”—“I am he who was dead and am alive, and behold I live forever and ever”—“I have the keys of hell and of death; I can open, and no man can shut; I can shut and no man can open”—“I am the bright and the morning star, the root and the offspring of David”—“I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me.” “If any man would be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me.”

Such are a few of the many expressions setting forth the exalted position of the Christian’s

King and the Christian’s Lord. When He was coroneted in Heaven, crowned Lord of all, the Almighty Father swore that He should reign till all His enemies should be put under His feet—that to Him every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess. Lift up your hearts, all you saints, and behold your King! He is the head of the church. Set your affections on Him, follow Him, and consecrate yourselves to Him forever more.

19th century Gospel preacher

Realized Eschatology Debate

Howard Daniel Denham & Holger Neubauer

September 13-16, 2016

Baymont Inn Conference Center

South Haven, Michigan

7:00 pm each evening

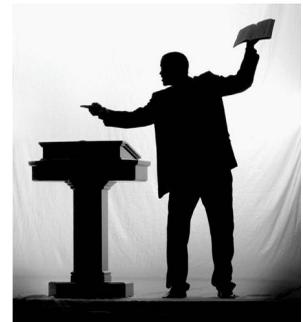
The propositions will be:

Howard Daniel Denham will affirm:

Resolved: **The Scriptures teach that the general resurrection of the dead is yet future and is a bodily resurrection.**

Holger Neubauer will affirm:

Resolved: **The Scriptures teach that the general resurrection is a bodily resurrection and is not still future.**



The debate will be broadcast live at: www.bellviewcoc.com

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Travis Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's son)	
Jennifer Taylor (Phyllis Brantley's friend)	

Please Remember

August 24

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m.,
in the auditorium.

August 31

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
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September 11

Deacons' meeting will be held prior
to the afternoon service, in room 1.

September 12

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00
p.m., in the zone room.

Placed Membership

Jason DuLaney placed membership
with the Bellview congregation on Au-
gust 21. His address is: 613 Ripsaw
Lane; Pensacola, FL 32506. The tele-
phone number is: 662-364-0544. Please
welcome Jason and his wife Elaine.



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Human Footprints Which Are Not Really Human?

Roelf L. Ruffner

I read an article online which confused me, “1.5-Million-Year-Old Footprints Reveal Human Ancestor Walked Like Us.” The story is of a finding of several preserved footprints found in rock in Ilert, Kenya in 2009. The picture revealed what I have seen many times in my life—a fairly distinct set of footprints in mud showing toes and a heel. Anybody would correctly assume at first glance that they were human in origin. However, modern *science* knows better, or do they? That comatose, shriveled up woman in the nursing home bed looks human to me but modern medicine increasingly wants to classify that individual as of no “value to society.” She is just taking up space and should be euthanized. That unborn child inside his mother’s womb also looks human in the sonogram but the abortionist says, “Oh, no! ‘It’ is just an unwanted parasite in a woman’s body.”

God made humanity in the beginning “in

his *own* image, in the image of God created he him” (Gen. 1:27). There are no sub-humans, half-humans, almost-humans, or even more-than-humans in God’s sight. Yet, evolutionists never cease trying to make man in the image of their flawed, atheistic, doubting view of humanity—a groveling, bipedal animal. It is a picture based on faulty reasoning and flawed assumptions.

The author of this article claimed that the footprints are not from *Homo sapiens* (modern humans) but a supposed ancestor of human beings, *Homo erectus*. Modern humans did not “appear” until 200,000 years ago, they say, while these footprints are at least 1.5 million years old. But wait a cotton-pickin’ minute! How do they **know** they are 1.5 million years old footprints? How do they **know** that the footprints are from *Homo erectus*? They certainly were not witnesses of what happened. All they have are human-like footprints

(complete with toes and a heel) in inorganic rock. The article does not claim how they came to the conclusion that the rock was that old. The carbon-dating technique could not be used on something like this because it is organic (or containing the element carbon). My guess is that they guessed on its age based on a presumption of the age of surrounding rocks. It may be old but how old? 4,000 years is as credible a date as 1.5 million years.

Another assumption in the article is that the theoretical *Homo erectus* **must** have walked the same way humans do today. “When modern humans walk, they put most of the pressure on the inner ball of the foot and ‘toe-off’ through the big toe and second toe. This motion leaves a distinct trace in footprints.” These scientists also admitted that this is a guess because “scant” remains have been found of *Homo erectus* foot bones.

My friends this is how the evolutionary paradigm or mindset works. If the evidence

they find does not match their pet theory, they force the facts and contort them to match their man-made religion of evolutionary thought. “Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:2). “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof *are* the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12). Is it so hard to image the following scenario? A group of men long ago were walking barefoot along a riverbank and had to work their way through a muddy patch. The mud hardened in the sun and set up, preserving for us the imprints of ancient men as evidence of their existence. Not as farfetched as the evolutionary tale in this article. But truth never is!

Work Cited

Gannon, Megan. “1.5-Million-Year-Old Footprints Reveal Human Ancestor Walked Like Us.” *Live Science*. Jul. 29, 2016. <<http://www.livescience.com/55388-homo-erectus-walked-like-humans.html>>.

Columbia, TN

Bible Preaching

James Burton Coffman

The message of John the Baptist, when he came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, was not, “Smile, God loves you!” It was, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Mat. 3:7).

The prophet Jeremiah was not cast into the miry pit for preaching, “I’m OK: You’re OK!” He suffered the wrath of his contemporaries for crying out against their adultery, idolatry, violence, injustice, and shameful indifference to God’s commandments.

Noah’s message from the steps of the ark was not, “Something good is going to happen to you!” He condemned the world and was called by the Holy Spirit, “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5).

Jesus Christ was not crucified for saying: “Consider the lilies, how they grow.” He went to the cross for demanding of all the dwellers in Jerusalem:

Except ye repent...Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!...child of hell...

blind guides...fools...Ye are of *your* father the devil (Luke 13:3; Mat. 23:14-17; John 8:44).

Paul was not commissioned to write almost half the New Testament because he taught that men are "saved by faith only." He taught: vengeance on them that know not God, and that **obey not the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ...wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness...**do not obey the truth**, but obey unrighteousness, indignation

and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil (2 The. 1:8; Rom. 1:18; 2:8-9).

There is no record of Jesus Christ trying to help men find out "who they were." When they went up into the mountain, Jesus did not ask, "Peter, who are you?" The Lord never directed any follower to try to identify himself, but He did demand, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" (Mat. 22:42). It is not, who I am, but **who He is!**

Deceased

Realized Eschatology Debate

Howard Daniel Denham & Holger Neubauer

September 13-16, 2016

Baymont Inn Conference Center

South Haven, Michigan

7:00 pm each evening

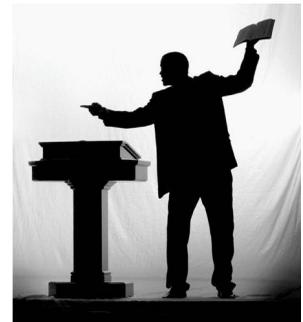
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September 12

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

New Address

Dot Dodd's new address is: 8572 Westview Lane; Pensacola, FL 32514. Her telephone number is: 418-2944. Please update your directory.


Gospel Meeting
with
Jerry Brewer

October 2 – 7, 2016
Make plans now to attend!



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Why Many are Lost

Jerry C. Brewer

Since the fall of man in Eden, there has never been a time in the history of the world when the majority of people were God-fearing. Jesus said there will be more people lost than will be saved (Mat. 7:13-14). However, this is not God's fault. Peter said that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Nor is it the desire of Christ that anyone should be lost (Heb. 2:9). It follows, then, that the reason so many will be eternally lost is the fault of man himself. Why is that so?

Many people do not think they are lost. They give lip service to righteousness, but deep down they believe in universal salvation. They think they are just too good to be lost and the man who believes that will make no effort to get to safety.

Many folks are trusting in salvation by "faith only." They think that just because they believe Jesus is the Son of God, they are

saved. Their faith, apart from works, is dead (Jam. 2:24). Noah's salvation came about because his faith was obedient (Heb. 11:7; cf. Gen. 6:22). One cannot be saved apart from an obedient faith. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21). Christ is the author of salvation "unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).

The love of sin will keep multitudes from heaven. Jesus said men love darkness more than light (John 3:19), and Paul said men would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:1-5). He who would be saved must shun the things of the world (1 John 2:15-17).

Many are lost because they are trusting in moral goodness to save them. If morality alone can save, men could be saved apart from the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7),

and then man does not even need a Savior (Mat. 1:21). There was moral goodness in the world before Christ came, while He was here, and after He ascended back to heaven. If morality could save, He was foolish to die for our sins.

Many are lost because they are trusting in the doctrines of men. Jesus said that to do so renders one's worship (and thus his service to God) vain (15:8-9). Men trust more in reciting a so-called "Sinner's Prayer" than in obeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ and those

Gospel Meeting
with
Jerry Brewer
October 2-7, 2016

"Fundamentals of Salvation"

Sunday, 9 a.m. The Deception and Growth of Sin
Sunday, 10 a.m. Remove Not the Ancient Landmarks
Sunday, 1:00 p.m. The Form of Sound Words Regarding Salvation
Monday, 7:30 p.m. God's Two Kinds of Laws
Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. What The Church Is and What It's For
Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. The Lost Christ
Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Baptism: What It Is and What It Does
Friday, 7:30 p.m. Salvation by Grace Through Faith

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who teach such nonsense are sending men to eternal torment.

Many are lost because of their own biases. They have loved and believed religious lies for so long that they have closed their eyes to the Truth and are self-deceived (2 The. 1:10-12). In that condition, they are prejudiced against the Truth and those who preach it.

Although more people will be lost than saved, you do not have to be among that

number. God has revealed the plan of salvation in His Word and if we follow that, He will save us. He says men must believe in Him and in Jesus Christ (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24), repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38), confess Christ before men (Mat. 10:32; Acts 8:37), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

The decision is yours.

Elk City, OK

Realized Eschatology Debate

Howard Daniel Denham & Holger Neubauer

September 13-16, 2016

Baymont Inn Conference Center

South Haven, Michigan

7:00 pm each evening

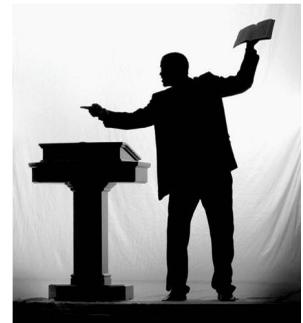
The propositions will be:

Howard Daniel Denham will affirm:

Resolved: **The Scriptures teach that the general resurrection of the dead is yet future and is a bodily resurrection.**

Holger Neubauer will affirm:

Resolved: **The Scriptures teach that the general resurrection is a bodily resurrection and is not still future.**



The debate will be broadcast live at: www.bellviewcoc.com

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Jennifer Taylor (Phyllis Brantley's friend)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)

Please Remember

September 11

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

September 12

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

September 18

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

September 19

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

September 28

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



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September 12, 2016

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

The Baptism of Saul of Tarsus

Jerry C. Brewer

One of the most devoutly religious men in all of the New Testament was Saul of Tarsus, who later became an apostle of Jesus Christ named Paul. Before he became an apostle, he persecuted the church of Christ, placing men and women in prison and causing many of them to be put to death for their faith. One of those who died with his approval was Stephen in Acts 7. Of this act, and others in which he tried to eradicate Christianity, Paul later said, “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (26:9). His conscience did not condemn him for these acts because he **thought** he was doing God’s will, and told the Jews that, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (23:1).

Many people today believe that conscience is the correct guide in religion. If that is true, then Paul did not need to be converted. His conscience was clear—even while he was

putting Christians to death. God’s Word—not man’s conscience—is the only correct guide for man in all religious matters.

Soon after Stephen’s death, Saul obtained letters from the high priest in Jerusalem granting him authority to arrest Christians in other cities (9:1-2). With this authority in hand, he departed for Damascus with a company of men to arrest Christians in that city and bring them to Jerusalem for punishment.

On his way to Damascus, as he drew near to the city:

suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest (9:3-5).

Saul could have said, “Why charge me with persecuting you? I never saw you before in my

life.” However, he must have understood that to persecute Christians was to inflict the same upon Christ Himself.

The next question Saul asked was, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (9:6). Jesus did not tell him what to do to be saved.

Instead, He told him to go into Damascus and it would be told him there what he must do. In years past, many people thought they were saved if they “saw a light,” but Saul had seen a light from heaven and was still told to arise and go into the city where it would be

Gospel Meeting

with

Jerry Brewer

October 2-7, 2016

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told him what to do. Why did Jesus not tell Saul he was saved and this light from heaven was proof of his salvation? Because neither Jesus nor His apostles ever taught that salvation comes by seeing a light.

Why then did Jesus appear to him? Jesus answered that question Himself: “I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (26:16). He appeared to Saul of Tarsus not to save him, but to make him an apostle.

Although Saul had seen a light and Jesus had talked with him, he was still told to arise and go into the city and there it would be **told him** what he **must do**. The light had blinded Saul, so he had to be led by the hand into the city. There, he stopped at a house where a man named Ananias would later find him. The Lord appeared to Ananias and told him that Saul was praying at the house of a man named Judas and that Ananias should go to that house (9:10-11).

Saul of Tarsus had seen the Lord and was now praying. Yet, there was something **necessary** to do for him to be saved. What did Ananias tell him to do? He did **not** say, “Pray on, Saul. God will save you in answer to your

prayer.” Instead, he said, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (22:16).

“But,” someone says, “he that calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” That is true and Saul called upon the name—or the authority—of the Lord by obedience to His command to be baptized. “Calling upon the name of the Lord” is appealing to His authority—not praying. Notice that the Lord said Saul would be **told** what he **must** do, yet the only thing Ananias told him was to, “arise and be baptized.” If one must do that, I would hate to tell men they do not have to be baptized to be saved.

Do you think the apostle Paul later went about telling folks that baptism was, “necessary, but not essential to be saved,” as one Baptist “Youth Pastor” once told my son? Did Paul **ever** teach that one should “get saved” then be baptized? No. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16) and Paul declared “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:26). Saul of Tarsus—Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ—was saved when he was baptized into Christ, as all men must do if they are ever saved from sin.

Elk City, OK

God’s Plan of Salvation

Hear	Romans 10:17
Believe	Mark 16:16
Repent.....	Luke 13:3, 5
Confess.....	Romans 10:9-10
Baptism	Acts 2:38
Be Faithful.....	1 Corinthians 15:58



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Please Remember

September 18

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

September 19

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September 28

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



Defender and Beacon

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BEACON

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Will All “Good People” Be Saved?

Jerry C. Brewer

Have you ever heard someone say of a deceased friend, “He was such a good person? If he doesn’t make it to heaven, no one will?” Is that God’s sole requirement for eternal salvation? Will God save all good people?

The idea that all “good people” will be saved is a false and deceptive doctrine that will, in fact, send many souls to eternal torment. The doctrine that “all good people will be saved” is preached every day by religious groups across the land and denies the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. There were good people who lived before Christ came. Those who teach that moral goodness is all that is necessary to be saved, imply that Christ came for nothing and that God was a fool to send His Son to the cross of Calvary. Of Nathanael, Jesus said he was “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile” (John 1:47) and Zacharias and Elizabeth “were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments

and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:5-6). These were living when Christ came into the world and were “good people,” but they were not saved without the shedding of Christ’s blood.

Jesus did not bring a single new moral precept when He came into the world. What was morally right or wrong before He came was morally right or wrong while He was here and remains so today. Jesus did not come to make men morally upright. Jesus came to save men from their sins.

One example of a good, morally upright man who was lost is that of Cornelius in Acts 10 and 11. The Scripture says he was devout, prayed to God always, and gave much alms to the people. One would be hard-pressed to find his equal in our world today, but Cornelius was lost and needed to hear and obey the Gospel to be saved.

As Christians, it is certainly necessary for us

to live honest and morally upright lives, but not all people who do that are saved from sin but are in danger of eternal damnation. Salvation from sin and its consequences is a matter of doing—not being. Of those who do not understand the need to obey Christ to be

saved, Jesus said they will be shocked to learn that in the judgment.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Mat. 7:21).

Gospel Meeting with Jerry Brewer October 2-7, 2016

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Moral goodness is necessary not only for the Christian, but God expects it from everyone. However, moral goodness is not the basis of eternal life. One is saved from sins only by obedience to the Gospel of Christ which requires faith (John 8:24), repentance (Luke 13:3), confession of Christ as the Son of God

(Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37), and baptism for the remission of sins (2:38). Unless you have done those things, you are still in your sins, regardless of how morally good you may be. One ought to be morally good, but moral goodness does not make one a Christian.

Elk City, OK

Not All "Believers" Are Christians

Jerry C. Brewer

Merely believing in Jesus Christ does not make one a Christian. If that were the case, the devils would be Christians (Jam. 2:19).

While it is true that to be a Christian, one must believe in Jesus Christ, mere belief does not make one a Christian. One must be a man to be a husband, but not all men are husbands.

As surely as the Bible is the Word of God, there are millions of people who think they are Christians when they are not. There are multiplied millions who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but they are not saved because they have not obeyed Him (Heb. 5:8-9). Just believing and/or saying that Christ is the Saviour does not make one a Christian.

On the day of Pentecost, the Jews cried out, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). They believed Christ is God's Son

through Peter's preaching, but they were not saved until they did what Christ commanded them through the inspired apostle. He told them to, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (2:38). When 3,000 of them did that in obedience to the divine command, they were added to the church of Christ (2:41, 47).

One cannot be a Christian without believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who came down from the Father (John 8:19-25). One cannot be a Christian by simply believing Jesus was a "good man." To be saved (which is to become a Christian), one must believe that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, repent of his sins, confess his belief that Christ is God's Son, and be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:37; Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Do you believe Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of God? If you do, you are not far from the kingdom. You need only to repent of your sins, confess your faith in Him, and be baptized to become a Christian.

Elk City, OK

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Travis Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's son)	
Jennifer Taylor (Phyllis Brantley's friend)	
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)	

Please Remember

September 28

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m.,
in the auditorium.

October 2

Dinner on the Grounds, afternoon
service at 1:00 p.m.

Sympathies

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Dot Dodd in the death of her niece, Deliah Nantz, on September 11. Please keep Dot and her family in your prayers.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Lee Hammac in the death of his brother, Tom Hammac, on September 12. Please keep Lee and his family in your prayers.



BEACON

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Questions About Baptism

Jerry C. Brewer

One of the most controversial subjects among those who claim to follow Christ is that of baptism. Most of the controversy stems from the denominational world's denial of the plain Bible truth that baptism is necessary to be saved. Our concern in this lesson is what the Bible says about baptism. It makes no difference what I think, or what my brethren, or your preacher, or any man thinks. The important thing is: What does the Bible Say?

The Bible plainly teaches that one must be baptized to be saved, according to Jesus Himself in Mark 16:16. Ask people in the religious world what baptism is, and they will usually say it is pouring or sprinkling water on a person. However, the Bible teaches that baptism is a burial—an immersion—in water. That is what Paul wrote to the church at Rome:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried

with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4).

Then, if this passage is not plain enough, he further wrote, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). As Christ was buried and raised from the dead, so man is buried in baptism and raised to a newness of life.

Additionally that burial in water is for the purpose of salvation. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). It just is not any plainer than that. Baptism is for the purpose of salvation, and one who denies that plain statement contradicts the Son of God. Peter told his hearers the

same thing on Pentecost, when he said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Now, if Peter had been like modern false teachers his reply would have been far different when they cried out, “Men *and*

brethren, what shall we do?” (2:37). If he had been a modern denominational preacher, Peter would have said, “Why there’s nothing you can do!” But as a man inspired of God, he taught the Truth and told them that baptism is in order to the remission of sins.

Gospel Meeting with

Jerry Brewer

October 2 – 7, 2016

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Bible baptism also requires the right subjects. Today's religious industry mocks the Lord's teaching on baptism by sprinkling or pouring water on little babies and calling them "baptized." Since baptism is "for the remission of sins," babies are not fit subjects for baptism. They have no sins to remit. They are not lost, so they do not need baptism for salvation as Jesus taught in Mark 16:16. Neither can babies be taught the Gospel. Jesus said to go into all the world and preach the Gospel (16:15). Then He said those who believe that preaching are to be baptized to be saved. Peter also said those who repent must be baptized for the remission of sins. But babies are

not fit subjects for baptism because they can neither hear and comprehend the Gospel message, nor repent of sins.

Finally, Peter plainly said that baptism saves.

The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3:21).

Is baptism necessary to salvation? If Jesus spoke the truth (and He certainly did that) it is.

Elk City, OK

Judgment Day

Jerry C. Brewer

A Day of Judgment for all mankind is appointed by God (Acts 17:30-31). Contrary to popular belief, it will not be a day of "trial," but a day of judgment assessed by Jesus Christ. Those who have been obedient to His will shall inherit life everlasting and those who have shunned His will shall inherit "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mat. 25:34, 41). The "trial" of men is in this life.

Men may go through life with little thought of God or His will expressed in the New Testament. They may heed the doctrines of men expounded by the denominational industry. They may go through life foolishly insisting, "There is no God" (Psa. 14:1). They may go through life seeking to amass material things, as the rich fool of Luke 12:20 did. Or men may go through life learning of God's will in

the New Testament and obeying it. But for all these things, God shall call us to account (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10). No pleas will be allowed at The Judgment.

Our plea is being made here and now: Do not wait until judgment to plead your case. Make your calling and election sure by obeying the Gospel now in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:37).

Elk City, OK

Realized Eschatology Debate

H. Daniel Denham & Holger Neubauer

The video of the debate can be viewed at:

[https://www.youtube.com/
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friend)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)
Denice Barney (Nancy Travis' niece)
Robert Burks (Nancy Travis'
step-brother)

Please Remember

October 9

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

October 16

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

October 26

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

October 30

Fifth Sunday Dinner on the Grounds; singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.



BEACON

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“Sinner’s Prayer”?

Jerry C. Brewer

In this age of fast food, 15-second sound bites, and instant everything, preachers in the religious industry are proclaiming a *quickie* salvation through what they call “The Sinner’s Prayer.”

What most people do not know is that the “Sinner’s Prayer” cannot be found in the Bible. It is a fabrication of preachers in the denominational industry. The question then arises, “If an alien sinner can’t be saved by praying, for what can a sinner pray?”

He cannot pray for God to love him because John 3:16 says, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Can the alien sinner then pray for God’s grace? No, because Titus 2:11 says, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men.”

What about conversion, then? Should an alien sinner pray for God to convert him?

Again, the answer is, “no,” for Psalms 19:7 says one is converted by the Word of God: “The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul.”

Some people believe they should pray for faith, but Romans 10:17 says “faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Nor is salvation received through prayer. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16) and Peter said baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

That so-called “sinner’s prayer” is an outgrowth of the old Calvinistic doctrine of mourners’ bench salvation in which the sinner was urged to pray and beg God to save him. However, God does not have to be begged to save anyone. He is not willing that anyone should be lost. Peter said, “The Lord is not... willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

The alien sinner need not pray at all. The

Bible does not teach that prayer saves the alien sinner. It is obedience to the will of God that saves. Christ is “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).

The things that God requires of the alien sinner do not include prayer. The one who would be saved must believe that “God...is,

and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). He must then repent of his sins. Jesus said, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). Following this, the alien sinner must confess his faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Mat. 10:32; Acts 8:37) and be baptized into Christ.

Gospel Meeting with

Jerry Brewer

October 2 – 7, 2016

“Fundamentals of Salvation”

Sunday, 9 a.m. The Deception and Growth of Sin
Sunday, 10 a.m. Remove Not the Ancient Landmarks
Sunday, 1:00 p.m. The Form of Sound Words Regarding Salvation
Monday, 7:30 p.m. God’s Two Kinds of Laws
Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. What The Church Is and What It’s For
Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. The Lost Christ
Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Baptism: What It Is and What It Does
Friday, 7:30 p.m. Salvation by Grace Through Faith

The Gospel Meeting will be broadcast live on the Internet at:
<http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

A covered-dish meal will be provided

Monday – Thursday at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

Visitation Group 1 will provide the meal— Monday & Wednesday

Visitation Group 2 will provide the meal—Tuesday & Thursday

Visitors are invited to every meal.

Come and enjoy a good meal and Gospel preaching.

Again, Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

When a Christian sins, he must pray for forgiveness (1 John 1:8-2:1) and that is what Peter told Simon the Sorcerer—an erring Christian—to do (Acts 8:22), but Peter never told alien sinners to pray for forgiveness (2:37-38).

The “sinner’s prayer” is a concoction of men and has no bearing whatsoever on salvation, according to the Word of God. To be

saved, God never required anyone to pray, but to simply obey (Mat. 7:21).

Elk City, OK

Realized Eschatology Debate

H. Daniel Denham & Holger Neubauer

Videos of the debate can be viewed at:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

“Striving to Be...”

Jerry C. Brewer

If you went to the website of a surgeon and it said, “I am striving to be a surgeon as taught in medical school,” would you have much confidence in his ability to perform surgery on you? I would not. I would rather go to a surgeon who says, “I am a graduate of _____ Medical School.”

The statement that, “We are striving to be...” or “Our goal is...” indicates that we are not yet what we are striving to be. Yet, churches use that silly terminology all of the time on their websites. Perhaps that is their way of not “being judgmental.” However, I see it as the liberal philosophy preached by so many college professors that, “Our heritage is the Stone-Campbell Movement.”

I visit a lot of websites of churches of Christ and always cringe when I see things like this from Kingfisher, Oklahoma church: “We are striving to be simply Christians who are following Christ and the Bible in belief and practice.” Or like this from the Southwest church in Ada, Oklahoma: “Our goal is to

leave behind man-made religion and follow the Bible.” Or like this from Southern Oaks in Chickasha, Oklahoma: “**We strive to be the same church described in the New Testament.** It is our purpose to be identified with the Christians of the first century.”

If the church has been restored (and it has) why tiptoe around the Truth? Why not make the plain statement that, “We **are** simply Christians,” instead of, “...**striving** to be?” Why can we not say, “We **have left** man-made religion behind and follow the Bible,” instead of, “**Our goal is...**”? Why can we not say, “We **are** the **same church** described in the New Testament,” instead of, “We **strive to be...**”?

There are so many uncertain sounds among professing “churches of Christ” today that it is nearly impossible for the world to hear the clarion call of New Testament Christianity. We need to emulate Paul and, “use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12). How hard is that?

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Shannon Barlow (Pam Busch's niece)	
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Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)	
Denice Barney (Nancy Travis' niece)	
Robert Burks (Nancy Travis' step-brother)	
Linda Ness (Pam Busch's sister)	

Please Remember

October 9

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

October 16

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

October 26

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Bill Busch

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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

A Nation Gone Mad?

Roelf L. Ruffner

The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save *thee* (Deu. 28:28-29).

The above citation is from the prophet Moses who warned ancient Israel that if they departed from the Law of Moses their nation would descend into social and political chaos. They did so many times in their long history (Jud. 2:11-23). The kingdom of Northern Israel or Samaria is a perfect example of this. After seceding from David's kingdom, they embraced idolatry and materialism. Their political system gradually disintegrated into one palace coup and assassination after another. God began to shear off their territory to the Assyrians (2 Kin. 15:29). In 721 BC their kingdom was conquered by the Assyrian

Empire and many were taken into captivity (17:6-23; 18:10-12). The southern kingdom of Judah followed much the same broad way (Mat. 7:13). They did have a few righteous kings who followed the Law, like Hezekiah and Josiah, who tried to reform the nation. However, Judah gradually became more idolatrous and depraved than their northern cousins. They descended into political anarchy and were conquered by the Neo-Babylonian Empire and taken into seventy years of captivity beginning in 606 BC with Jerusalem destroyed in 586 BC.

My friends, God rules in the affairs of men whether they realize it or not.

And he changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, And knowledge to them that know understanding (Dan. 2:21).

America is not ancient Israel nor has it ever

been a “Christian nation” but it has professed in the past a standard of morality based on the Holy Bible. I am sorry to write that in the last few generations all that has changed. Now, much of America is as Godless as any pagan society. Abortion, profanity, same-sex marriage, genderless bathrooms, sexual immorality, drunkenness, drug abuse, licentiousness gone to seed, rampant covetousness, and unscriptural divorce and remarriage, to name a few of our nation’s sins.

Like ancient Israel, America is, in my opinion, headed toward political chaos. For a generation society has become more polarized and fragmented. Extreme ideologies such as socialism and populism are being accepted by many. This current primary season has descended into provocative rhetoric and personal attacks by candidates. Politically motivated violence has even raised its ugly head for the first time since the 1960s. Many are looking for a “strong leader” to impose order. Are we headed down the path of ancient Israel?

In the election of 1860 our political system began to unravel. Since the 1840s the debate over chattel slavery had grown louder and louder. In 1855 a guerrilla war broke out in Kansas and Missouri between pro-slavery and anti-slavery settlers. Materialism was rampant in society with a dog-eat-dog mentality, especially in business. Americans drank four times as much as they do now and drunkenness was almost universally accepted. While some people feigned religiosity they forgot the Golden Rule and love of one’s neighbor, especially if that neighbor was black. In the Supreme Court’s 1857 Dred Scott decision it was ruled that a black man (freeman or slave)

had no rights in the United States that a white man was bound to respect. Before the election the Democratic Party, which had controlled the Presidency, the Senate, and the Supreme Court for many years, split into two parts (North and South) primarily over slavery. The old Whig Party changed its name and tried to stay neutral. The relatively new Republican Party reluctantly accepted slavery but wanted it contained to the South. After a raucous, hate filled campaign on all sides Abraham Lincoln won with only 39.9% of the vote (virtually none from the South) yet a plurality of the Electoral College. He traveled secretly to his inauguration in Washington, D.C. in March 1861 under death threats. Most Southern states seceded from the Union in the meantime and the first shots of the Civil War were fired on Ft. Sumter in Charleston, SC harbor on April 12, 1861. Our beloved nation had gone mad.

Dear reader, no political party, ideology, or even a demagogue on a white horse can change the confused moral, spiritual, and ethical cesspool of our nation and its disintegrating politics.

Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD (Jer. 17:5).

We must pray on our knees earnestly and daily for our beloved nation and its leaders (2 Tim. 2:1-2). We must reform our own lives to reflect the life of our Savior, getting rid of any “isms” in our way (Tit. 2:11-14). We must concentrate on saving souls, rather than dollars, with the soul cleansing primitive Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:37-38; Rom.

1:16). **Only** the Gospel can save our nation from this madness and the judgment of God (2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:30-31). Our nation and our culture need restoration to God! Are you a part of God's purpose for Christ's kingdom, the church, in this world or a hindrance to it?

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men (Mat. 5:13).

Columbia, TN

Bitterness

To some, bitterness is a way of life. They know nothing but to be stinging, caustic, and cruel. Perhaps the heights of bitterness is expressed by the Psalmist:

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; Happy *shall he be*, that rewardeth thee As thou hast served us. Happy *shall he be*, that taketh And dasheth thy little ones against the stones (137:8-9).

The bitterness which the captive Jews expressed against the Babylonians seems barbaric and yet the very condition of the heart that caused such expressions continues to dominate in the hearts of some people today. Such people usually think that they have a right to be bitter. How wrong they are! Nobody suffered more than did Christ, yet He expressed nothing but love for others.

Bitterness is an outward expression of a deep seeded hatred for certain people. The person who makes bitter remarks about the church actually hates the church. There is little hope for the salvation of one who is guilty. John said, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). It matters not how many times one's tongue denies the existence of hatred. When bitterness abounds, hatred is there. The bitter person is just as guilty of murder as he would be if he

blasted a person's head off with a shotgun.

Perhaps it would not be so bad if one's bitterness could be confined to himself. If that were possible only one soul would be lost. But "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:9). We are urged to look "diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb. 12:15). Bitterness always takes its toll in great numbers instead of remaining in the heart of a single individual.

You may have never considered the magnitude of this sin seriously. If you have not, meditate on these things. Never utter harsh or cruel words about anyone. To do so is to start a fire which you cannot put out. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you" (Eph. 4:31).

Author Unknown

Gospel Meeting
with

Jerry Brewer

Lessons can be viewed at:
<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

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Preparing for Persecution

Dub McClish

I excerpted the quoted material below from the MS I wrote for the seventeenth Annual Denton Lectures (1998), conducted by the old Pearl St. church here in Denton. Please keep this date in mind as you read:

In America the heinous philosophies of Hedonism, Humanism, Atheism, and Liberalism (political, theological, moral) and the climate for persecution of the opposing force of Christianity (in the broadest sense) have increased in parallels in the final quarter of the twentieth century. It seems likely that these trials and tests to our faith will only accelerate as increasingly godless voters elect more and more godless officials after their own kind, who will pass increasingly anti-Christian legislation and appoint additional anti-Christian judges. While there is already some real persecution of the Lord's people in America, except for occasional isolated

incidents, it is not violent, and it is at present perpetrated largely only by God-hating individuals rather than as a matter of government policy.

However, if the new paganism embodied in the philosophies of the New Age and Postmodern movements—and fueled by the aforementioned forces—continues to gain ascendancy, the young generation of saints may well live to see calculated, legislated, government-sponsored, violent testing of their faith as in bygone ages. There are already some government regulations in place that have been applied by some judges so as to limit the discussion of the Gospel with one's co-workers on the job and to proscribe private religious meetings in homes.

The restrictions in public schools pertaining to anything related to the Bible are well-known (although witchcraft, pagan

mysticism, Islam, “Native American” religion, et al., ...have free expression). The so-called “politically correct” speech and thinking that have been forced upon practically every facet of our culture and society are almost altogether anti-Bible and anti-Christian. For the most part, the public education hierarchy, from pre-school through university level, is under the control of radical, liberal extremists who despise rationality and exalt subjective “feelings.” ...Their sources are the powerful, rabid Atheism and Liberalism already mentioned. When it is more shameful in the minds of many to cry out against the abomination of homosexuality than to **commit the act**, the forecast of worse trouble for God’s people is evident. When our fellow-citizens count it more reprehensible to **display posters showing the graphic results** of the abortion industry in protest of the practice than the murderous act itself, the signs are ominous for what may lie ahead. When a majority of our citizens appear to be more upset with the prosecutor who exposes the corruption and crimes of a morally bankrupt president than with **the president’s pornographic and criminal behavior**, the precarious position of Biblical morals is manifest. It does not require the wisdom

of Solomon to see that if the militant homosexual and feminist forces continue to gain power, younger Christians may well eventually face federal legislation ordering congregations to install them as preachers, elders, deacons, and teachers or else face crippling fines, seizure of property, and/or imprisonment.

The Supreme Court ruling redefining *marriage* may prove to be the catalyst leading to the persecution foreseen above. To in any way endorse dragging this institution—originated, ordained, and defined by God Almighty “from the beginning” (Mat. 19:3-6)—into the sewer is territory into which we must not be willing to go. Paul described what we presently face:

For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places* (Eph. 6:12).

The preparation for dealing with such opposing forces is the same now as it was then—equipping ourselves with the “whole armor of God” and arming ourselves with “the sword of Spirit, which is the word of God” (6:10-11, 13-17).

Denton, TX

When Hands Are “Tied”

David P. Brown

One of the most difficult, perplexing, and heartrending situations is when one must sit back and watch others make decisions, the results of which will create more problems than the decision-makers ever thought. In fact,

what compounds the problem is when one knows that those making the decisions think that their choice is the solution to a legitimate problem or problems.

There is a further compounding of the

problem when the decision-makers have been taught correctly and yet to no benefit concerning the decisions they have made. In circumstances of this nature, some persons are moved to ask what they can do to help the situation. The answer many times is: At this point there is nothing anyone can do that has not been done.

To volunteer information to those who could have asked such of you, but did not, is folly. Under such circumstances people simply open themselves up to all manner of unwarranted charges and accusations. People need to learn where their responsibility begins and ends in trying to help others. Thus, under such circumstances and insofar as being able to help them, honest folks must finally conclude that their hands are tied.

God's hands were tied regarding Adam and Eve's decision to sin. God had informed them as to what was right and wrong and had told them of the consequences if they chose to sin. Their choice (and its blessings or consequences) was theirs alone to make (Gen. 3). Such has been the case with God and man to the present and will continue for all time. What else could or can God do? (Rom. 1:21-32; 3:23; Rev. 22:17).

Parent's hands are tied regarding their children's decisions. Besides setting a Christian example before their children, godly parents have the responsibility of teaching, training, and disciplining them (Eph. 6:4). Some children, while still in the home, will appreciate none of this and decide to go their own way. In such situations, when all is said and done, if children are rebellious enough, there comes the time when there is nothing that parents

can do to change the rebellious child. Remember, after others have done all that they can do, change is effected by the person who needs to change (Jos. 24:15; Acts 2:40; 8:22; 2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 2:5).

As a faithful member of the Lord's church many times one's hands are tied regarding the various decisions other church members make insofar as changing said members (2 Tim. 4:10; Rev. 2:21-25). Even when such decisions will have a detrimental impact on the whole church, there comes the time when the faithful child of God must conclude that, at least at this juncture, there is nothing else that can be done to alter the matter (Hos. 4:17; 3 John 9); especially is this true regarding false teachers. Some brethren just will not be warned.

Finally, when all is said and done, the faithful children of God can and must act to protect themselves and other faithful brethren from the consequences of wrong decisions made by others (Jos. 9:1-21). What else could or can a faithful child of God do?

I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them (Rom. 16:17).

Spring, TX

Gospel Meeting

with

Jerry Brewer

Lessons can be viewed at:

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Commitment

Brad Green

On Tuesday, February 5, 2008, I stood in line for about an hour with people I did not know and had never met before. I did so because I considered that which was at the end of the line to be very important. I was dedicated and loyal to the objective set forth. Though I was more excited to vote against a sales tax increase than I was about any of the Presidential candidates I had to choose from, it was the very act of voting to which I was committed. Millions of men and women have fought and died so that you and I can be free and have the opportunity to have a voice, though it may be small if standing alone, in deciding the direction of our country and the person who will best lead in that direction. It is unfathomable that any individual would forsake such an opportunity.

After decades of living in fear because of an ungodly and evil dictator, the people of Iraq got their first taste of freedom when they went

to the polls to vote on January 30, 2005. More than 8 million Iraqis, with about 58% turnout, proudly stood in line to let their voice be heard in their new, democratic government. They stood in line despite the fact that Islamic terrorists threatened and proceeded with at least nine different attacks at polling stations on election day. They were committed.

People will give their all to something to which they are committed. Sports fans loyally support their favorite team, buying tickets to games, wearing jerseys and hats, sitting in the rain or snow to watch a game, etc. Business owners and leaders watch enthusiastically for that next opportunity to increase their bottom line. Political activists patriotically defend their candidate or issue. Students, in some cases, are dedicated to receiving the most out of their educational opportunity. No matter what it is, those who are committed to a particular end will work hard to succeed. Sadly,

many get wrapped up in activities like these mentioned and many others. So wrapped up, in fact, that they will lie, cheat, or steal to obtain success in regards to that which they desire. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). There are many who will get their way here in this life, but when Jesus returns, what will they have profited?

In all of history, there has been no man more committed to a certain goal than Jesus Christ. While at Gethsemane, Jesus, “being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). He was betrayed by one of His friends (Mat. 26:49). He was spat upon, beaten, and mocked (Mat. 27). Between two thieves, He hanged and died by means of one of the cruelest punishments ever executed by man. He could have called twelve legions of angels (26:53) to save Him from that cross, but He did not. He did not because He was committed. He was committed to fulfilling His Fathers Will (26:54), to

offering a fountain for sin and for uncleanness (Zec. 13:1; cf. Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5), to granting forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14), and to justifying and reconciling man back to God (Rom. 5:8-10). Knowing the commitment Christ had for us, should we not be compelled to devote our lives to Him (2 Cor. 5:14)? We must commit ourselves to faithfully attending the worship services of God (Heb. 10:25). We must be committed to speaking only where the Bible speaks (1 Pet. 4:11). We must be committed to respecting the authority of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and the authority granted to God’s elders (Heb. 13:17). We must be committed to defending the Truth (Jude 3) and to seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10).

Though there are many things in this life to which we can be dedicated, let us be devoted and commit ourselves to obeying God above all else (Mat. 6:33). Let us give our all to the church for which our Savior died. Let us promote only the ideals of Biblical teachings and not those of personal opinion. Let us be more dedicated to God than we are to anything here on this earth. On the Day of Judgment, the heavens, the earth and all that

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is in them will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10). All that will remain is the souls of all who have ever lived (1 The. 4:16-17), the Word of God (John 12:48), and the book wherein is written the works which we practiced while we were alive (Rev. 20:12). Our eternal destiny

will be decided based upon how our works, in this life, compared to the commands of God. Therefore, let us commit ourselves, first and foremost, to the adherence and obedience to the Law of God

Lenoir City, TN

Praying for Our Leaders

Bruce Stulting

One of the quickest ways to get someone riled up is to discuss politics and/or religion. Some believe that these ought not be topics of discussion. Others believe that politics and religion are incompatible and should not be mixed. However, the Scriptures have much to say about both subjects and clearly demonstrate that religion and politics can and do mix.

Jesus demonstrated this point when He responded to a question regarding paying tribute to Caesar. After showing Caesar's image on the superscription, Jesus stated, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Mat. 22:21). As a Roman citizen, Paul made an "appeal unto Caesar" (Acts 25:11). The Christian is to submit to civil authority because "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). At this point it is important to note that the first century Christians lived under the Roman government which was corrupt and immoral in many ways. Yet, they still had the obligation to submit to this government and pay taxes.

Any government that operates, as God intended is (1) "not a terror to good works";

(2) "the minister of God to thee for good"; (3) bears the sword of justice; and (4) "a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil" (13:3-4). As anyone can see, a government that is just and righteous is truly a great thing. Every country must work toward establishing and maintaining such a government.

Prayer is one way that Christians can help their government become what God expects them to be. Paul instructed Timothy:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

One does not have to agree with a politician's platform to pray for him. In fact, when government officials deviate from God's will, they need our prayers the most. When we survey our own government, it is easy to see that our politicians have lost their way and have departed from the godly principles upon which our great nation was founded. Our leaders ought to be on the top of our prayer list.

Huntsville, TX

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Linda Ness (Pam Busch's sister)	

Please Remember

Every Sunday

Ladies' Bible Class will meet after the afternoon service, in the zone room.

October 26

Sermons Video Series at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

October 30

Fifth Sunday Dinner on the Grounds; singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

November 7

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Enough

Gary W. Summers

Several people said, when homosexual “marriage” was legalized, that the war to have perversion accepted was not over. It has not taken a year for the next assault on sane-thinking Americans to occur. Our president is pushing really hard for the “rights” of transgenders, even reading into laws what is not there. He apparently has the eyesight of Alice in Wonderland. When asked on one occasion what she say, Alice replied, “I see nothing.” “Such marvelous eyesight!” came the response. “To be able to see nothing—and at this distance, too.” The president is seeing problems that do not exist and in his usual dictatorial style is coercing his solutions on states whether citizens want them or not.

He insists that men be allowed to use the ladies’ bathrooms—or shower with young women in their locker rooms. When are people going to say, “This is ridiculous, as well

as dangerous!” and stand up to a man who has taken upon himself powers that he does not, as president, have? He has politicized the “Justice” department with Eric Holder and continues to do with the new Attorney General. The IRS has been proven to be prejudiced against those not of the president’s party. Oh, but do not forget, he promised to get to the bottom of it. Right! On the *Charlie Rose Show*, writers are laughing about the false claims they made to get Obamacare passed, such as, “If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.” They now admit that this and other statements were lies that they used to gain public support.

It is not unusual for elitists to think they can pull the wool over the eyes of the “rubes,” but how often do they admit their lies while still in office? And why don’t those taken advantage of muster up a little anger over these tactics? “He who sins is of the devil” (1 John

3:8). Why are not more people outraged by those who do what the devil, the father of lies, does? Now the elitists are becoming so bold that they no longer feel a need to use much subtlety. They want men to be able to use any restroom or shower without ever a formal intention (such as a doctor's evaluation that a procedure is in progress) of changing one's gender, which is both bold and sick.

Ultimately, the goal of such schemes must

be the destruction of both Christianity and the family. If it is not the intention, it will nevertheless bring about the same result. It is time for people to quit obsessing over entertainment and pay attention to what is happening in our nation. It is time that all people began to read the Bible again and resume standing by God's standards. Will Americans finally say "enough"?

Winter Park, FL

Real Hope and Change

Charles Pogue

My grandparents saw many changes in industry, technology, and lifestyle during their years. They saw a nation that went from the horse and wagon as the primary means of transportation, to airliners flying faster than the speed of sound. They could travel greater distances in hours in their sunset years, than they could in weeks in the days of their youth. My grandparents saw the transition from Kerosene lights to electric lighting on demand at the flip of a switch. Grandma went from a rub board to a ringer type washing machine, and finally to the modern washer she could turn on and leave until it cycled through. My grandparents lived through the transition of silent movies to live television shows beamed across the world live via satellite. From fireplace to furnace and root cellar to refrigerator, those are only a representative few of the changes they saw.

I have seen changes in my life, too. I have witnessed a nation deteriorate from a respect for marriage and the family, to runaway divorce and remarriage. Countless others live

together without the commitment of marriage at all. I have witnessed the departure from a time when most children respected their parents to a time when many kids do not even know who their parents are. Where there was once a general respect for life, now killing babies in the womb is embraced by a heartless mob as a right not to be questioned or denied. People once loathed sin, but now they loathe those who dare speak out against the abominable evil of homosexuality. During my life, prayer has been removed from the public schools, while the wearing of seat belts in an automobile is mandated. My nation once coveted the blessings of God, but now a growing number reject the fact of the Creator's very existence. The Bible was once debated as to its meaning, but now its origin and authorship are questioned, and its teachings are viewed as antiquated, and irrelevant to modern man. When I was a youth, the aged were esteemed for their wisdom and experience, but now someone needs to have their back, lest being denied needed medical care they are left to die

as burdens dragging down the vitality of the young, and as hindrances to the progress of society. That, of course, is true only if doctor assisted suicide does not enter the picture. Yes, grandma and grandpa saw changes in their world, and I have seen changes in mine. However, what a difference there is in the kind of changes they and I saw!

Now, I am a grandparent, and I must say that in many ways I am embarrassed by the world into which my precious grandchildren have entered. I cannot help but wonder if the world stands, and the United States does not collapse (which thing now seems not beyond the realm of possible), what changes will they see? It is hard to believe that in character things could get much worse though in scope they could. However, I would rather believe that the eyes of the very young will be opened to the debauched state of things, and that their vision, transformed into effort, will effect a restoration of the common character of our nation's people. A return to perambulatory travel would be progress if virtue ruled the day. Light by candle would be welcomed enlightenment over the moral darkness in which many stumble along today. Oh, for a rub board to scrub the contaminated souls of a people gone awry! Yes, I pray that positive changes will take place during the lives of my grandchildren. To help them bring about a return to a loftier degree of national morality, we parents and grandparents must start the ball rolling. After all, we are the ones who dropped it for them in the first place.

Let us show our children and grandchildren the evidence of the eternity of the "Great I AM," and of the never dying soul He has

given each of us. Let us provide them with the proofs, both internally and externally, that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God. Let us be sure that we ground our youth in the details and directives of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us establish them in eternal truth so they can reestablish a nation with a burning desire to offer oblations to, receive blessings from, the God of every man.

Let us reignite the passion for the history of our nation, and belief in both the United States Constitution and the republic created by it, then subsequently and graciously handed down to us at the hands of band of freedom fervent founders. Let us turn out in mass at the polling places this November, and clean the White House and the People's House, in hopes that a new chief executive will have, and make wise use of, an opportunity to redirect the nation's courthouse.

It is time for the pendulum to swing back in the direction from whence it came. It is time for a rebirth of the soul of a nation we have long called home so one day our grandchildren can call it home with the same sense of pride we felt toward her in the days of our youth. Unlike the hope and change candidate Obama had in mind when he deceived the minds of so many, let us do our part to start the encounter aimed at moral revolution so our children and grandchildren can thrive, most of all spiritually, in a nation where real hope and change has been produced and a commitment embraced by them to deliver it to those who one day bounce upon their knees. Failure on our part provides little if any option on theirs!

Beeville, TX

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November 7

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November 13

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November 20

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The Curse of Apathy

Dub McClish

Perhaps you have heard of the college professor who asked a rude and disinterested student what the meaning of *apathy* was. The student replied, “I don’t know and I don’t care.” Even if unintentional, his definition was right on the mark. *Apathy* (from two Greek words, literally meaning, without affection or feeling) is the curse of any enterprise or undertaking. The devil has certainly lulled many of the Lord’s people into the comfortable sleep of unconcern about the work we have been commissioned to do. It is always dangerous to make sweeping generalizations (including the one I just made), but if I had to suggest the one great curse among the saints I would suggest the curse of apathy.

Why do we have problems with ignorance of the barest essentials of the Bible among so many members of the church? Because there is not enough affection for the Word of God and the blessings that derive from an

ever-growing knowledge of the truth! “Hungering and thirsting after righteousness” will keep us studying till we are filled (Mat. 5:6).

Why do we have problems with able-bodied members who absolutely refuse to attend Bible classes on Sunday morning and Wednesday night? Why will they not come back on Sunday night or attend more than once or twice during a Gospel meeting series? And why, after elders and preachers teach and plead and sometimes admonish absentees, is there still no improvement? Again, it must be ascribed to total apathy, both to the solemn duties and the exalted privileges of faithfully assembling with the saints. Such is hardly in keeping with the exhortation to be “zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14).

Why has false doctrine and the elevation and informed use of those who teach it grown to be such a critical problem among us, where 25 years ago it would not have been tolerated?

And why, when we try to warn brethren about strange doctrines and unscriptural practices and those who are advocating them, do many brethren either turn a deaf ear or defend the teacher or the doctrine in error? A spirit of consummate apathy has settled over many and the greatest concern of such is peace, calm and quiet, regardless of cost. Apathy over doctrine will eventually bear the certain fruit of apostasy. Instead of ignoring doctrine, we are commanded: “Take heed...unto the doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:16—KJV).

Why are we not more concerned about the people all about us who are lost in sin? Our apathy may not only cause them to be lost, but us as well! The “I don’t know and I don’t care” attitude toward spiritual matters makes us enemies of Christ (Rev. 3:16)!

Denton, TX

A Pointed Question

A little boy once accompanied his mother to worship. The sermon was on the death of Christ, and as the preacher described the actual crucifixion, the boy began to weep, and soon was sobbing aloud. The mother, evidently embarrassed by it all, turned to her son and whispered, “Don’t take it seriously!” Perhaps this is the trouble with us. We are Christians and good ones, as long as it is convenient. Have we forgotten that He gave us eternal life and told us to spread the good news? Have we lost our first love? Or did we just **never take it seriously?**

Author Unknown

How Does One Know If He Is Saved?

Dub Mowery

Frequently someone inquires, “How can I know as to whether or not I have been saved from my past sins?” This is the most important question that an individual can ask concerning themselves. Unfortunately, many seek the answer in the wrong place and source.

Let us first consider some of the wrong ways in which men in general attempt to learn whether or not they are saved. Some claim, “I know that I’m saved because I feel it right here!” (pointing to the left side of their chest while making that statement). But Solomon stated by inspiration: “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: But whoso walketh wisely,

he shall be delivered” (Pro. 28:26). Also, the prophet Jeremiah declared, “O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *It is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

It is the inspired Word of God that gives us spiritual light to direct our path. The psalmist reverently stated unto the Heavenly Father, “Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). Thus, the realization of a person’s spiritual salvation is not derived by subjectivity—their feelings—but rather by objectivity—evidence outside their own being.

Others seek after a supernatural sign from Heaven as evidence of their salvation. The apostle Paul warns of those who seek after supernatural signs instead of receiving the truth in love (2 The. 2:9-10). God's inspired Word is the truth that saves (John 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:22-23).

Similar to those who look for a supernatural sign, there are those who claim to have received a message from "a still voice." However, what message could such a voice provide for us concerning salvation that is not already included in the Scriptures? According to the apostle Peter, we have already received "all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3).

There are still others who claim that they have seen an angel who declared their salvation. However, the apostle Paul warns against those claiming salvation by an angel that conflicts with the Gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-9).

Still others claim that they obtained redemption by receiving the Holy Spirit. There is not any example in the Bible of a person being saved by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. The truth of the matter is that those of the world cannot receive the Spirit (John 14:16-17). God's inspired Word is the instrument of the Spirit to convict us of sin (Acts 2:36-37). In adhering to that inspired Word, a precious soul is born into the spiritual kingdom of God, which is the church (1 Pet. 1:23; Jam. 1:18; Acts 2:47).

Many feel that they are saved because they have "accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior." But Jesus reveals that such a claim is inadequate in obtaining salvation. Recorded

in Luke 6:46, He declared: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Not only that, but our Lord informs us that professing religious allegiance unto Him is insufficient when an individual fails to do the Heavenly Father's will (Mat. 7:21-23).

In a positive way, how can we know whether or not we are saved? The apostle John tells us in 1 John 2:3-5 how we can know concerning this most important matter. He stated:

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

The apostle Paul further clarifies how a person enters into Christ. He reveals that an obedient believer is baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27). A person baptized into covenant fellowship with the Lord becomes a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:3).

The inspired Word is the medium in which the Holy Spirit has revealed what is necessary for our salvation (Jam. 1:21; Acts 11:14; 2 Pet. 1:3). The apostle Peter, by inspiration, revealed what a person must do to be saved from their sins: "they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). It is our prayer that you will place your trust in the inspired Word of God rather than the creeds of men, or your own feelings and preconceived concepts of salvation.

Clarksville, TX

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Please Remember

November 13

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

November 20

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

November 21

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

November 30

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.



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The Importance of Giving Thanks

Brad Green

Being thankful should be a natural characteristic. It is extremely easy to see that we have so very much for which to give thanks. The Bible teaches us to give “thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20) and “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 The. 5:18). Sadly, ungratefulness is common and many times expected. With so much ingratitude in the world, it is easy to understand why people are not flocking to the doors of faithful congregations of the Lord’s Church seeking to worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Ingratitude is also a big reason why so many are falling away from the Truth. Many see giving thanks as simply something “to do.” Giving thanks, however, is much more. It is impossible for an individual to truly honor God without being thankful and it is impossible for a Christian to remain faithful to God

if he fails to give God “thanks always for all things.”

Giving Thanks Keeps God First in Our Lives

How does God go from being first in an individual’s life to somewhere far down on the list of one’s priorities? It probably starts with failing to give God thanks. It could be seen as parallel to the “chicken or the egg” debate. Does one stop giving thanks after he has left God or does one leave God due to failing to give God thanks? Those who do not express their thankfulness to God are still accepting all of the blessings they enjoy, yet they have forgotten God. God asks, “Can a maid forget her ornaments, *or* a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number” (Jer. 2:32). Seeing all the things that we possess and enjoy, it should be impossible to forget God, but when an individual ceases to give proper thanksgiving to God, the “stuff” remains and the memory of God fades.

Giving Thanks Reminds Us of Our Dependence upon God

Many people refuse to obey God and others, “after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome” (2 Pet. 2:20). One big reason for this disobedience is that many conclude that they are self-sufficient and do not need God. Sure, those who think this way are not going to give thanks to God, but is it not also the case that failing to give thanks in the first place could have led to such thinking? If need compels a person to pray, then “Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God” (2 Cor. 9:11). Many people have prayed during times of need, but discontinued that practice after “being enriched.” Their failure to give proper thanks may have been that which led them to be “again entangled... and overcome.” Though their needs may have been met, “latter end is worse with them than the beginning” (2 Pet. 2:20) because at least when they did not have, they understood their dependence upon God.

Giving Thanks Helps Us Emphasize the Spiritual Rather Than the Physical

When needs are met or we are able to enjoy things in this life far above our needs, giving thanks keeps us grounded on that which is

truly important. It is nice to have *things* in this life, but it is far more important to be “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13). Those in Christ must “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-2) knowing to “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal” (Mat. 6:19). To many, the physical blessings we enjoy on Earth are considered the “end all, be all.” Remembering to give thanks to the One who allows us the opportunity to enjoy those physical blessings helps us concentrate on the spiritual blessings and on the true Source of those blessings.

The Bible teaches us to be thankful and a grateful disposition makes life better for everyone. However, giving thanks is immensely important to our lives—both here and for eternity.

Lenoir City, TN

Defender and Beacon

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Do You Have a Chloe?

Charles Pogue

When Paul penned his first letter to the Corinthians, the first problem that he dealt with that existed in the church at Corinth was

division. How did Paul know there were divisions in that congregation? He tells us himself in verse 11 of the first chapter. “For it hath

been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.” Upon the basis of what the house of Chloe declared unto Paul, he, by the Spirit, began to upbraid them for those divisions.

In Chapter 5 of the same letter, Paul began it in the very first verse with these words, “It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.” It is likely that among the sources Paul heard about the awful sin that Corinthian man was in, was the house of Chloe. Notice, however, since Paul said that it was reported commonly, there were doubtless others who brought this news either directly or indirectly to the ears of Paul.

These passages bring a question to my mind. Do you have a Chloe? By that I mean, are there individuals in whom you have enough confidence that if they tell you something happened, for instance, a certain person taught error, that you would believe them? Have you ever had someone tell you that they do not believe anything just because it is reported in a brotherhood paper. They might as well say, “David Brown, in the things you report in *Contending For The Faith*,” or, “Michael

Hatcher, what you tell us about in the *Defender*, I don’t believe a word of it.” I have confidence in these two men, and some others, to know that if they report something as fact, it is fact. To make matters worse, some who say they do not believe anything they read, neither will they make their own investigation of the evidence to see if what is reported commonly is right or not.

Personally, I have great pity for those who do not believe what reliable faithful brethren write. I could just as well say, I do not believe George Washington ever lived. I believe George Washington is a made up fictional character. I do not believe he was our Revolutionary War General. I do not believe he was the first President of the United States. After all, I never met old George, I never heard him speak. All I know about George Washington I read in those old history books. I cannot take their words for the claim that George Washington was a real man.

Of course, there are those people with a reputation for making things up or jumping to conclusions, and then reporting their own conclusion as facts. It is wise to always do our own investigation of what is reported to us. But dearly beloved we had better get to know reliable men such as the two mentioned above, and know that we can trust that what they report to us is true. If one cannot build trust in such men, he may find himself defending a false teacher, and he is the only one in the brotherhood who does not know the man **is** a false teacher.

Do I believe everything everyone tells me? No, but I do have trust in my Chloes!

Beeville, TX

Gospel Meeting with Jerry Brewer

Lessons can be viewed at:
<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

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Robert Burks (Nancy Travis'
step-brother)
Linda Ness (Pam Busch's sister)
Jane Myrick (Sheila Myrick's
sister-in-law)

New Arrival

Our congratulations is extended to Bill and Peggy Crowe in the birth of their great-grandson, Charles Douglas Vice, born on November 9. He weighed 7 lbs 13 oz and was 20 inches long.

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Man's Greatest Concern

Lester Kamp

The story is told of a preacher who preached a very graphic and descriptive sermon on sin. After the sermon one “well-meaning” and prominent church member approached the preacher with the following advice. The person said, “We don’t want you to talk so plainly about sin, because if our children hear you talking so much about sin they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but don’t speak so plainly about sin.” Shortly thereafter the “well-meaning” member was visiting in the preacher’s home. The preacher presented a bottle of strychnine marked “Poison” to his visitor. Reminding the “well-meaning” member of the earlier advice given to the preacher, the preacher then said to his visitor: “I see now what you meant in your recent advice. You want me to change the label. But suppose I take off this label marked ‘Poison’ and put on some mild label, such as ‘Oil of Anise,’ can’t you see what happens?”

“The milder you make the label, the more dangerous you make the poison.” Our Lord did not place a “mild label” on sin. He made it clear that sin is man’s greatest concern. It is the responsibility of the church (Gospel preachers in particular) to make sin as real and abhorrent to people as possible, if there is to be any hope of convicting anyone of sin and thereby truly converting them to Christ.

First, we must realize that God is the only one who can evaluate sin properly. Let us, therefore, strive to see sin as God sees it. Second, God defines sin to be “the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). Sin separates men from God (Isa. 59:2; Col. 2:13). Hence, to die in sin is to be lost eternally in a devil’s hell (Gal. 5:19-24; Rev. 21:8; Mat. 25:41-46). Third, one should notice how God moves people to come out of a life of sin. Jesus had more to say about hell than anyone else we read of in the Bible, and the reason why is that He does not

want anyone to go to that terrible place (Mat. 25; 2 The. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 3:9-13; Rev. 22:17).

Is it not obvious that one of the ways to understand just how God views sin is to understand the place that God has prepared for those who die in sin? Do we try to get people to see the eternal consequences of their sinful lives (Rom. 2:3)? God's great love for sinful man is the other factor that helps us see sin as God sees it (2:4). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (5:8; John 3:16). To study in the Bible the loving, sinless life of Christ and to meditate on His agonizing and shameful death is a great motivating factor for man. In so doing, one realizes that Christ freely left Heaven and the form of God to take upon Himself the form of man whereby He allowed Himself to be tempted as all men are tempted, yet without sin (Phi. 2:5-8; Heb. 4:15). Surely, few people meditate on what God has done for them that they never could do for themselves!

If the consequences of a devil's hell for the sinner and the love of God to redeem sinful man will not move one to turn to God in penitence and obedience to the Gospel, nothing else is available to turn the sinner from his

eternal appointment with the fires of hell!

People who take the Lord's name in vain, commit adultery, and other immoral acts, who lie, cheat, gossip, steal, teach false doctrine, etc., are going to burn in hell eternally. The unfaithful members of the Lord's church who have ceased to worship according to the Bible, who do not study the Bible, who are covetous, who murmur and complain, who are immoral, who repudiate Bible authority, who are hypocrites, and who hate their brethren who love and obey the truth will also suffer the torment of the raging fires of "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8; 2 Pet. 2:20-22). Assuredly, the elders and preachers who see a lost world and sinful members and do not try to confront boldly such sinful people with God's Truth, will occupy one of the hotter and lower pits of hell. If precious souls are to escape the horrors of hell, we must do our part as Christians to get men to see what sin is. Let us not mince words as we expose sin. Neither, let us forget to set forth the Christ who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

Aurora, CO

Castles Made of Sand

Geoff Litke

There is little as charming, well-planned, and skillfully made as a sand castle. Children of every age enjoy the hours of shaping sand into the grand palaces which exist only in the faraway lands of their minds. Along with this recreation comes a life lesson. A sand castle, for most, immediately calls to mind the thought

of that which is temporary. Too many toddlers' tears have been shed watching the tide take away the fruit of their tedious toils. With full knowledge of this adults still have an insatiable attraction towards sand castles. Every year thousands or more enthusiasts converge upon Imperial Beach, California, for the U.S.

Open Sandcastle Competition. There they build some of the most spectacular sand castles you could ever imagine. Exact replicas of the greatest architectural masterpieces built by man, and others that could only be built of dreams and sand.

While those in the competition may win prizes with skill exceeding child's play, they still are only making sand castles. Unfortunately, so many have approached life forgetting the lessons they learned. While one may become proficient and skillful at many things, where is the lasting benefit? Someone may build something beautiful and bring great joy to themselves and others, what real value does it have?

The tide of death is one that all men should see approaching (Heb. 9:27). As some learn of such an end, they find it almost unbearable to work towards anything. The faithful, on the other hand, do not find such torment as the day approaches. The psalmist said:

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me (Psa. 23:4).

The key to such confidence lies in a rock solid faith in Christ and His Word. Jesus said: whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a

rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it (Mat. 7:24-27).

Building one's house upon Christ is a sure way to ensure that the tempests of life will not overcome the structure. In these verses there is great similarity to the lessons learned from building sand castles. There is that which is unstable, situated in such a way that it is sure to fail. Wherein is the security? A denomination, built by men, is not built on a solid foundation (1 Cor. 3:11; Mat. 16:16-18). A life of successful business is one of fleeting glory (Luke 12:15-21). The goal of most is a merry heart, but without Christ that merriment will end like the smile on a child's face when the first wave crashes over the seemingly solid walls of the sand fort. On the other hand, there is Christ and His Word. When one does what Christ commands he is building upon sure ground able to withstand anything.

Spring, TX

Bellview Church of Christ Website

The website offers a vast amount of resources for your personal edification. Past issues of *Defender* and *Beacon*, written sermon outlines presented by Michael Hatcher, as well as Ira Y. Rice's Basic Bible course are available. Videos of lectureships, sermons, and Gospel meetings can be viewed. Why not check it out at: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

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Sheila Myrick	
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Sonya Chavez (Joyce Johnson's friend)	
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Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)	
Denice Barney (Nancy Travis' niece)	
Robert Burks (Nancy Travis' step-brother)	
Linda Ness (Pam Busch's sister)	
Jane Myrick (Sheila Myrick's sister-in-law)	

Please Remember

November 30

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December 5

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00
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December 11

Deacons' meeting will be held prior
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Are You in Fellowship with God?

David P. Brown

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed (2 John 9-10).

Spiritual fellowship between men is only possible with those people who are in fellowship with God. People are brought into fellowship with God when they are obedient to the Gospel. What does it mean to be obedient to the Gospel? It means: (1) People must hear and understand the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4); (2) Believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God; (3) Repent of one's sins; (4) Confess that one believes that Jesus is the Son of God; (5) Be immersed in water by the authority of Jesus Christ into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to obtain the remission or

forgiveness of one's sins (John 14:6, 15; Jam. 2:17-24; Col. 3:17; 1 The. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rom. 10:14; Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:16; John 8:24; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:10, 17; Mark 16:16; Mat. 28:19; Acts 2:38; 10:48; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21; Heb. 5:8-9; Rom. 6:17:18; Acts 2:41-42, 47; Mat. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-27; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:3). Please study very closely the preceding verses.

The aforementioned is God's great plan of salvation from sin for mankind (1 John 3:4; Jam. 4:17; Rom. 3:23; 6:23). More than this God does not require of anyone to be saved from past sins and, thus, be brought into fellowship with Him. Less than this and one cannot be forgiven of one's sins and, therefore, remains lost and out of fellowship with God, and God's faithful children, which children are only in His family, the church (1 Tim. 3:15). God's plan of salvation is that simple,

regardless of what others erroneously teach. Thus, the truth of God pertaining to man's salvation must be believed and adhered to before fellowship can be obtained with God. Those who have been saved from their sins by their obedience to the Gospel of Christ, and thereby brought into fellowship with God, are authorized by the New Testament to fellowship only those people who are themselves in fellowship with God through their own obedience to the Gospel, and who remain in fellowship with Him by living as the New Testament teaches Christians to live—that is what it means to be faithful in Christ's church.

In 2 John 9-10, the apostle makes it clear that to remain in fellowship with God, and all of those who are in fellowship with Him, one must continue to be obedient to the doctrine of Christ concerning those things the New Testament obligates one to do to be faithful to Christ in His church. There is no other way that is acceptable to God. Take it or leave it. Be saved or be lost. It is strictly up to you and no one else. Thus, with the Holy Spirit inspired James, we beg and plead with everyone, by the mercies of Jesus Christ, to "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jam. 1:21; also see 1:25; 1 Pet. 1:22; Luke 8:11, 15; John 12:48). Furthermore, we exhort all who are Christians

to, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10; Also see 1 Cor. 15:58; Mat. 25:21).

If you do not have enough interest to take the time to study the Scriptures, you do not have enough interest or time to go to heaven (2 Tim. 2:15). No one will accidentally stumble into heaven. It is a prepared place for a prepared people (John 14:3), and our life in the flesh on earth is the only place and time to prepare for eternity (2 Pet. 3:9; Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10).

All of us are but one heartbeat away from eternity. Think about the uncertainty and brevity of life in the flesh on earth, be honest with yourself (Luke 8:11, 15), and respond to the Gospel call accordingly. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light (Mat. 11:28-30).

Spring, TX

"A Great Door and Effectual"

Jimmie Z. Gribble

Paul wrote, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries" (1 Cor. 16:9). Beloved, when we look at our lives today, can we not see the same for

us?

There is a "great door and effectual" for us. Let us notice what Paul is saying in this phrase. *Great* means (from *meegas*), "of external form,

size, measure” (Vine’s). *Door* comes from *thura*, meaning “of ‘openings’ for preaching and teaching the Word of God, 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3; Rev 3:8” (Vine’s). Also, meaning, “to give access or present opportunity” (The Complete Word Study Dictionary). *Effectual* means, “Referring to energy, i.e., engaged in work, capable of doing, active, powerful, effective (1 Cor 16:9; Philem 6; Heb 4:12)” (Complete). Paul had a great opportunity to preach the Gospel that required much energy to accomplish. We, too, have a great opportunity to preach the Gospel, that opportunity is the whole world, even in our own neighborhood. This opportunity will require of us our energy to go through, or use this door opened unto us.

Second, Paul said that, “*there are* many adversaries.” *Adversaries* means, “from anti (473), against, and keimai (2749), to be placed, to lie. To oppose” (Complete). Additionally, “in the pres. Part., the one lying against, an adversary, opposer” (Complete). Paul had many adversaries. Luke wrote:

And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he

departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus (Acts 19:8-9).

There were false teachers, religious enemies, besides the wicked cities into which he would go and preach the Gospel. We, too, have our many enemies, the same kind as Paul, false teachers, religious enemies, besides the wickedness of our time.

What are we going to do? Are we going to look at our enemies and quit, or are we going to look at the open door, use our energy, and go forth and preach the Gospel? The choice is ours to make. Jesus said, “unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few” (Mat. 9:37). Maybe the reason that there are few “labourers” is because some are looking at the “many adversaries.” The few are looking at the open door. May there be more “labourers.”

Beloved, Jesus said, “My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it” (Luke 8:21). May all of us “hear” and “do” God’s Word.

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Realized Eschatology Debate

H. Daniel Denham & Holger Neubauer

Videos of the debate can be viewed at:

[https://www.youtube.com/
user/52MichaelH](https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH)

Portsmouth, VA

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December 11

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Some Guidelines for the Holidays

Roelf L. Ruffner

I love this time of year—Christmas and New Year's. It is a chance to reflect on the value of friends and family. However, the world tries to push things on the Christian at this time of year. **Remember** that we may be “in” the world but we should never be “part” of the world (1 John 2:15-17). The following are some guidelines for the New Testament Christian for the holidays.

Christmas Should Not Be Celebrated As Jesus' Birthday

No one knows the day of Jesus' birth; that notion came centuries “after the fact.” Many scholars think He was born in early spring not December 25. The New Testament is conspicuously **silent** on this topic—indicating the absence of authority. The early Christians worshipped the resurrected Lord, not the image a baby in a manger, each and every Sunday.

All those “holy days” associated with

Christmas are not from God, but man (Col. 2:16). “But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). Rather, the Christian **strives** to worship God “in truth” (John 4:24; 17:17). The pseudo-religious side of Christmas is not of “truth.”

The Salvation Army (S.A.) Is a Church, a Denomination, Not Just Another Non-Profit Organization

We all see the bell ringers by their kettles in front of stores this time of year, and we all feel that rush of generosity and compassion. But the **faithful** Christian must realize that the S.A. is a denomination, **not** the church we read about in the Bible. I have no doubt that they do help feed the hungry, along with a strong dose of **false** doctrine. So your donation would go to help support **false** teachers, however *sincere* they seem to be (Mat. 7:21). Rather than donating to them, use that

renewed spirit of generosity to contribute **more** to the Lord's work this Sunday (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Do Not Tarnish Your Influence (and Sin) As a Christian by Drinking Alcohol

The consumption of alcohol this time of year seems to be universal. Beer, wine, spirits, mixed drinks, and liquor can flow like water. Inhibitions and self-control are often

lost at office parties and holiday celebrations. But **remember** who you are: a "royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9). Just one drink is drunkenness. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Let us all have a spiritually safe and happy holiday season!

Columbia, TN

Right or Wrong, How Can I Know?

Is there any way I can be sure whether an act is right or wrong? Is it right because it appears to **be**? Because someone told me it is not wrong? Because my friends are doing it? Here are some rules for determining just what is right for us to do:

1. Is it specifically condemned in the Bible?
2. Is it among the "such like" in Galatians 5:21?
3. Will it hurt or harm me or my name?
4. Will it lead to something **that** is wrong?
5. Will it bring reproach upon the church?
6. Does it violate my conscience and leave me with a guilt feeling? (Rom. 14:23).
7. Is it harmful to my spiritual growth?
8. Would it cause others to stumble?
9. Would it be right for every Christian to do it?
10. Would **I** mind if Christ saw what I was doing?

Author Unknown

The Pattern of Acceptable Worship

Jerry C. Brewer

Neither the time, place, nor acts of acceptable worship of God have ever been left to man's discretion. That is seen in the first recorded instance of worship in Genesis 4. Abel offered his worship "by faith" (Heb. 11:4). That means that God prescribed the acts, items, and place of Abel's worship because, "faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The Word of God produced the faith in Abel that motivated

his worship. On the other hand, Cain offered worship that was a product of his own wisdom and device. Because he refused to offer what God prescribed, his worship was not offered "by faith" and it was rejected.

When God commanded Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, He said:

Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a

burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of (Gen. 22:2).

The time, following a three-day journey (22:4); the place, a mountain designated by God in the land of Moriah; and the specific act, a burnt offering, were all designated by God. Abraham was not merely told to “worship.” He was instructed how, when, and where to worship by God.

Upon arriving at the place designated by God, Abraham told the men who accompanied them, “I and the lad will go yonder and worship” (22:5). The Hebrew word *sachah*, which is here rendered *worship*, means, “to prostrate, to bow down, to crouch, fall down, humbly beseech, do obeisance, do reverence, make to stoop” (*Strong’s Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, 114). The Greek word for *worship* in the New Testament, *proskuneo*, is essentially defined in the same manner:

To kiss like a dog licking his master’s hand, to fawn or crouch, to prostrate oneself in homage, do reverence, adore (*Strong’s Dictionary of The Greek New Testament*, 61).

There is a pattern of worship, prescribed by God in the New Testament and which must be followed if He is to be pleased. Jesus said true worship must be offered, “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). While the specifics of New Testament worship are to be found in other places therein, Jesus stated the fundamental basis upon which acceptable worship is to be offered to God in that verse.

To worship “in spirit” is to prostrate oneself before God with the recognition that He is the giver of all life and that we are totally dependent upon Him. Furthermore, it is to offer worship from a heart that desires to worship

God—that longs to express gratitude to and adoration of Him in whom we live, move, and have our very being. Of necessity, such desire requires men to prepare for worship. Abraham made preparation by gathering the necessary items for his worship such as the fire and wood to carry with him on the three-day journey to the place God specified. As is often the case today, Abraham did not go at the last minute with no forethought of offering obeisance to God.

To worship “in truth” is to worship according to the pattern God specifies in His Word. Jesus said, “thy word is truth” (John 17:17). That eliminates the concerts, dramas, and sideshows that the denominational industry calls “worship” today. Any act of worship that is not “in truth”—authorized in God’s Word—is forbidden and to engage in it is sin.

In the New Testament, God has specified the acts of worship in which Christians are to engage. They are: singing (Eph. 5:19), praying (1 Tim. 2:8), preaching God’s Word (Acts 20:7), partaking the Lord’s Supper in memory of Christ’s death (Luke 22:19-20; Acts 20:7), and freely giving of our money to support the Lord’s work (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6).

This pattern of worship, prescribed by God, must be followed if we are to please Him. The manner of worship, in spirit and in truth—the time of worship, upon the first day of the week—the place of worship, in the assembly of the saints (Heb. 2:12; 1 Cor. 11:17)—and the acts of worship listed above, are all specified in the New Testament pattern. Only in this way can we offer worship to God, which He accepts.

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December 11

Deacons' meeting will be held prior to the afternoon service, in room 1.

December 18

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

December 19

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.



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“Jesus is the Reason for the Season” or Bah Humbug!

David P. Brown

What I am going to write deals with the observance of Christmas in the United States. Two extreme practices have always existed among the brethren regarding Christmas. One group desires to make out of Christmas everything the Roman Catholics and other sectarian Churches believe it to be. Others, say they do not want to have anything to do with the Christmas season for fear that someone will think they are observing December 25 as Christ's birthday.

The liberals in the church (those who teach doctrines that loose men from what God in the Bible has bound on them) will embrace anything regarding Christmas (observing it as Christ's birthday). Such people do not care one way or the other about right or wrong. Their motto is “I did it my way.” There is not much you can accomplish with those who are bent on doing their own thing and are determined to twist the Scriptures (if they appeal

to them at all) to justify their warped views. Hence, most of what I have to say is not addressed to such rebellious characters. Therefore, I am addressing myself to those who desire Biblical authority for their actions.

Assuredly, there is no authority found in the New Testament to observe Christmas as the birthday of Christ. Since we are to do only what is authorized in the New Testament, to observe any day of the year as Christ's birthday is to act without Divine approval (Col. 3:17). Such activity constitutes sin. Christians, therefore, are not to use any symbols or engage in any kind of activities that would lead anyone to think that we observe Christmas as Christ's birthday.

It takes Bible knowledge and some mental effort on the part of brethren to discern what upholds and promotes December 25 as Christ's birthday and what does not. When such mental effort is involved, some just

dismiss the whole thing, or they think they do, while others (as I have previously pointed out) embrace everything about Christmas. I do not subscribe to either view.

In the United States (in other countries, according to their customs, religions, etc., I would probably follow a different course regarding Christmas) even atheists have been known to observe Christmas as a national holiday. Some time ago, I received a Christmas letter from a secular humanist organization. All around the edge of the sheet of paper were holly leaves and red berries. The letter was wishing me “Season’s Greetings.” The point is this, everything connected with Christmas is not necessarily upholding December 25 as Christ’s birthday.

Some brethren who will not put up a Christmas tree for fear of causing someone to think they observe Christmas as Christ’s birthday, do not mind accepting a Christmas bonus. They may not have the “star of wonder, star of light, star of awesome beauty bright” in their eyes, but they sure do have dollar signs like “visions of sugar plums dancing in their heads.” Moreover, such brethren, along with their Christmas bonus, are thrilled to benefit from the Christmas season by taking advantage

of not having to go to work on December 25. Furthermore, they allow their children to enjoy time out of school, and sometimes go home to grandma’s house, “laughing all the way.” I will not even mention the eating on, around, through, and all over December 25. Such brethren, should not even take advantage of the “after Christmas sales.” If they are determined to cease and desist from, as well as sever any connection with the Christmas season, that is fine with me: just let them make sure that they truly, completely, and consistently do it. Such an effort will make for an interesting December. I do hope that you get the point I have attempted to make.

Let us not engage in anything that is not authorized in the New Testament. However, let us realize that customs do change; some from good to bad, others from bad to good (in other countries customs may and do differ from ours in the USA). I am not going to cease calling the first and second days of the week Sunday and Monday respectively, because they originally were connected with the worship of the sun and moon. Neither will I cease to call the fourth day of the week Wednesday because it is named after the Norse god Wodin (Odin), or the fifth day of the week Thursday because it was originally named in honor of the Norse god Thor. If we can understand how we may call these days of the week by their traditional names without honoring the false gods they were originally named to honor, we should be able to know what does and does not indicate to the public in general the observance of Christmas as Christ’s birthday and our observance of it as a national holiday.

Spring, TX

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Preaching the Gospel...Without Mentioning Baptism

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

An incident occurred in the Texas country years ago, the story of which I remember. The preachers of a small town proposed a union meeting in which all of the preachers of the town would take alternate turns to preach. There was a certain Gospel preacher in the town, who had not been consulted on the arrangement. When he heard about this meeting he called on the other preachers to request his turn to preach, and asked to have a time assigned to him. He was informed that an agreement had been made that the subject of baptism would not be mentioned—that they had agreed to preach Christ and say nothing about baptism. To their surprise this preacher promptly accepted the conditions, and agreed to preach without the mention of the word *baptism*. A night was assigned for his sermon, and he announced in advance the subject: “What Must I Do to Be Saved?”

The people wondered how that kind of preacher could preach on that kind of subject under that kind of agreement to not mention

baptism. They came from the necks of the woods and forks of the creeks to hear him preach that kind of a sermon.

He preached with much animation and eloquence on salvation, and the love of God that brought salvation to man through Jesus Christ. Reaching the point of the question—“what must I do to be saved”—he turned to Mark 16:15-16 and read the words of Christ: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth”—and doeth that thing I promised not to mention—“shall be saved.” He then read Acts 2:38: “Repent,” and do that thing I promised not to mention, “for the remission of sins.” And he read every verse in the New Testament on baptism, and called it that thing I promised not to mention!

It is a strange thing that denominational people will detour around such a plain and positive command, so simple to be understood and performed, so easy to accept and obey—and so much emphasized in the New Testament.

When Philip preached Christ, he preached the kingdom of Christ, he preached the all-prevailing name of Christ, and he preached baptism into Christ.

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.... But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:5-12).

Deceased

Gospel Meeting with Jerry Brewer

Lessons can be viewed at:
<http://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Realized Eschatology Debate

H. Daniel Denham & Holger Neubauer
Videos of the debate can be viewed at:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

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Henry Hignite	Cary Parks
Karen Ayliffe	Dot Dodd
Rheba Stancliff (Rehab in North Carolina)	
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)	
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Linda Ness (Pam Busch's sister)	
Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson's husband)	

Please Remember

December 18

Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held after the afternoon service, in room 1.

December 19

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the zone room.

Directory Updates

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BEACON

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December 19, 2016

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Bill Busch

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Abram—“Friend of God”

Gary W. Summers.

To determine why Abraham was called “the friend of God,” consider Genesis 15:1-6:

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?” Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!” And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.” Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for

righteousness.

In this text we find God’s assurance that He would be Abram’s shield and reward. However, something is troubling Abram. God had promised him a son, but so far he remained childless. The only *heir* was a foreigner named Eliezer. God reaffirmed that indeed Abram would have a child, one born from his own body. Furthermore, his descendants would be as the stars in the heaven. How many is that? It is estimated that there are 400 billion stars just in the Milky Way. In the universe itself, the best estimate is 1 septillion, which is 1 with 24 zeroes behind it. Abraham had no son yet, but his descendants would be countless. Scripture tells us that Abraham believed what God told him though it seemed to contradict the advanced ages of himself and his wife, Sarah. God accounted this trust in Him as righteousness.

From the text above, we know that Abraham

was a faithful man, but does this make him God's friend? Let us look at the three times this term is used and then answer the above question:

The first time this designation is used is in 2 Chronicles 20:7 by King Jehoshaphat. The king begins by appealing for help in an upcoming battle by citing several facts concerning the relationship Israel and God enjoyed. He ends by reminding God that Abraham was his friend. The second reference is in Isaiah 41:8 where God Himself names Abraham His friend. The third time is from James 2:23, which combines what we have looked at in

Genesis 15:1-6 with the fact of the friendship. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*" And he was called the friend of God.

James goes to great lengths to prove that faith without works is dead (2:26) and uses Abraham as his example. How did Abraham prove his faith? Was it by saying, "Yes, Lord, I believe you"? No. Was it through his good intentions? No. James us the answer in verses 21-22.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

Good intentions do not get the job done. Having kind thoughts or uttering eloquent words do not get the job done. Obedience does. Abraham obeyed God's command to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, proving his faith and fulfilling Genesis 15:6. It is not just words, but actions that convince God of our faithfulness. This is the reason Abraham was God's friend. If we obey, we can all be God's friends (Jam. 2:14-26).

Winter Park, FL

Bellview Church of Christ Website

The website offers a vast amount of resources for your personal edification. Past issues of *Defender* and *Beacon*, written sermon outlines presented by Michael Hatcher, as well as Ira Y. Rice's Basic Bible course are available. Videos of lectureships, sermons, and Gospel meetings can be viewed. Why not check it out at:

<http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Baptism—What for?

Johnny Oxendine

Because people are often looking for a way into something without having to do what is actually required for entrance, many have asked me the question: "Can you be taught wrong and baptized right [sic]?" In response, I have thought (and sometimes asked), "Can

you be taught wrong and repent right?" "Can you be taught wrong and confess right?" If we cannot do these things, then what makes us think that we can be taught wrong and baptized right?

The bottom line is that God has clearly

identified the purity of purpose for baptism. There is no reason for someone not to know what the purpose of baptism is when he is baptized, and if one is not following the purpose that God has clearly set forth, he is just getting wet.

When we really get down to the truth of the matter, baptism is an act of faith. When a person is baptized, he must believe that baptism is for the remission of his sins—that is the act of faith. In Colossians 2:12, the Bible says: “having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (ASV).

Without that act of faith involved in baptism, one is merely getting wet. If a person is just baptized “to obey God,” what is the act of faith involved? Where are you putting your trust when you are baptized “to obey God?” One might say, “I am putting my trust in God.” Great! So what are you putting your trust in God to do? When faith trusts God, it trusts God to do something (Rom. 4:20-22; Heb. 11). Baptism is not needed to show that one merely believes God; confession of one’s faith accomplishes that. Baptism is not just a restatement of one’s confession. It is much more than that. Notice what Peter says on the matter of baptism:

The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3:21).

Please notice what this passage says:
(1) Baptism saves us. (2) Baptism is not merely

taking a bath. (3) Baptism is the response to God of a good conscience. (4) Baptism saves by the resurrection of Jesus. Notice item number three. When we are baptized, we have to have a good conscience about it; **one must do it with the right purpose in mind.** The good conscience, when taught properly, is going to understand that baptism is necessary for salvation and is going to motivate the individual to take the appropriate action. To say that one can be baptized correctly without understanding the purpose of baptism denies the role of the conscience in baptism.

There is nothing magical in the waters of baptism. The water is just water. So dunking a person under the water just for the sake of dunking someone under the water will not suffice. If the proper motive and purpose are not present, it is meaningless, just like all the other steps of salvation. If a person is not baptized from the proper motives and purpose, he is just getting wet. The Bible clearly teaches that the purpose of baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

We must, therefore, insure that those we teach clearly understand the purpose of baptism. One cannot feel safe just because he went through the motions, and we should not feel that his has somehow relieved us of the need for more thorough and detailed teaching before baptism. We do no one any favors by putting them in the baptistery if they have no real appreciation for the fact that their sins are being forgiven by Jesus’ blood in that act (22:16).

San Mateo, CA

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Please Remember

January 8

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January 9

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Beacon

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BEACON

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Supreme Court Rules Against Same-Sex Marriage

Lee Moses

I know what many of you are thinking. You read the above headline and thought, “Lee, you got it all wrong—the Supreme Court ruled in favor of legalizing homosexual marriage.” Unfortunately, it is true that the United States Supreme Court on June 26, 2015, a date which will live in infamy, ruled 5-4 in favor of legalizing so-called same-sex *marriage* nationwide. This is one of the darkest days in the history of the nation’s high court, approaching the murderous *Roe v. Wade* ruling which legalized abortion throughout the land. That Friday’s ruling threatens religious liberty, as the steamrolling political climate has already caused dissenters from homosexual marriage to lose jobs and to be slapped with outrageous unrepayable lawsuits even before this unjust ruling was handed down. That ruling went against the entire history of civilization, which has always regarded marriage specifically as a union of a man and a woman.

All this was done by means of a narrow ruling in which five unelected people were able to impose their own unreasonable (mis)definition of marriage upon the entire supposedly democratic nation. Yes, it is true that this has taken place.

However, I am not referring to the United States Supreme Court in the headline of this article. There is only one court which is “supreme” in the true sense of the word, and that is the Divine Court—“*there is none good but one, that is, God*” (Mat. 19:17). Men are prone to errors; God is incapable of error. Men sanction evil; God never has and never will (Mic. 3:1-3; Psa. 5:4-5; Hab. 1:13). As Abraham rhetorically asked, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25). Indeed, God shall, and indeed, God is the Judge of all the earth. Someday, all men and women of all nations will stand before that judicial seat to give account to God (Mat. 25:31-46;

Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10). While all sentencing has yet to be officially pronounced, that great and perfect Court has already made clear its stance on every issue:

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

Christ's Word, the New Testament, has spoken with regard to homosexual *marriage*:

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Mat. 19:4-6).

For out of the heart proceed...fornications...These are *the things* which defile a man (15:19-20).

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which

is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet... Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (Rom. 1:26-27, 32).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, **nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind**, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for **them that defile themselves with mankind**, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust (1 Tim. 1:9-11).

Deity provided each of these texts, and Deity will also head up the Court which will eternally judge mankind. On the final day of the universe's existence, that glorious day when Christ shall come to judge the world, no pronouncement will contradict the rulings that have already been made in the New

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Testament. The New Testament has limited marriage to exist between a Scripturally eligible man and a Scripturally eligible woman. The New Testament classifies any sexual union between persons of the same sex as fornication, against nature, unseemly, worthy of death, unrighteousness, a disqualification from entering the kingdom of God,

and contrary to sound doctrine. Human courts will say what they will, but we are all accountable to a far higher Court. Let us concern ourselves with preparing ourselves to give answer at **that Court**—the Court which has definitively ruled **against** same-sex “marriage.”

Union City, TN

The “Golden Rule” or the “Iron Rule”

Paul Vaughn

Jesus teaches man the “Golden Rule” in the “Sermon on the Mount.” It is written, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Mat. 7:12). In this verse, Jesus commands all to treat mankind with a proper moral conduct. Treat your fellow man in a way you desire to be treated. It is an essential element of Christianity. Man has developed his own rule that many are living by today. It is called the “Iron Rule.” It teaches man should do unto others before they do unto you. The “Iron Rule” is the standard for too many people. It is selfishness and greed exhibiting itself in blatant disrespect for the Lord and the “Golden Rule.”

During most natural disasters one of the first problems law enforcement officers must deal with are looters. These are people without any moral fiber who are eager to steal from the weak and suffering members of society. Once the looters are forced back and people begin to rebuild their lives, another pack of vultures emerge on the scene who are equally bankrupt morally. People who are bent on fraud, work at schemes and scams to rob the wounded.

Society condemns such activity and rightly so; this evil behavior is easily seen as morally corrupt.

There are other activities that are just as morally wrong that many are willing to close their eyes so they cannot see and stop up their ears so they cannot hear. A movie star cheats on his spouse and they are excused from such immoral behavior. A teenager steals music off the internet and no one is alarmed. A popular sports hero uses steroids so he can reach the top of his game and that is considered as normal. Do not all of these practice the “Iron Rule?” People who are governed by selfishness and not righteousness.

Jesus desires all to practice the “Golden Rule.” That means no cheating, stealing, or illegal drugs of any kind. There is a moral standard for man to live up to and follow. Changing values of many Americans have convinced multitudes that it is alright to take advantage of the weak, to make a profit from the suffering, and it is acceptable to cheat just to get ahead. However, the Lord teaches different. How about you?

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